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**Habits of the Heart: A Sketch of a Bourdieusian
Theory of Study Selection using the Example of
German Economics Students**

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Abstract

The project aims to explore the relationship between social origin, habitus and study selection of successful German Economics students in order to better understand the disciplinary reproduction of academic Economics as well as its current state.

It uses Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, as applied to the areas of education and science, to develop a sketch of a theory of study selection that mirrors the relational, structural and analogical character of this particular viewpoint. In this, the work differs from the rather substantialist and subjectivist literature on the topic to be found in contemporary British and German Social Science. It questions common sense assumptions about study choice such as the concepts of an 'intrinsic' or 'extrinsic' motivation, as well as an easily distinguishable 'reflexivity' of structures on the part of agents. Indeed, it questions the very concept of study 'choice' in favour of a more relational approach.

Combining in-depth interviews with successful and interested ('recognised') German Economics students about their educational trajectory and study selections with socio-demographic descriptive statistics, the project attempts in essence to suggest a theoretical sociological interpretation concerning the 'subjective' viewpoint of the specific groups that make up this rather extraordinary group. To this end, it formulates three ideal-typical models that each link social origin, habitus and study selection differently. The Inheritors, coming from a 'cadre' origin, tend to favour technical-mathematical thinking while at the same time rejecting more 'literal' approaches, both of which attract them to Economics and its orthodox thinking. The Fallen Nobles, who come from more bourgeois backgrounds which have however lost parts of their capital, are geared towards symbolic ostentation and partial revolution, which in academic Economics tends to be bound up, at least at the moment, with ultraliberal positions. Finally, the Parvenus, coming from more petit-bourgeois backgrounds, tend to have a very faithful, that is, indulgent and docile relationship to their chosen ethical-academic framework which varies considerably even within Economics. They end up with rather technical specialisations.

In summary, it is suggested that the study selection of a group of students who are all 'intrinsically' motivated can in fact be attributed to quite different sociological processes and relations. This opens up new ways and fresh empirical questions to view and assess study selection.

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Author's declaration:

“I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.”

Printed Name: _____Tim Winzler_____

Signature: _____

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Not to laugh, not to lament, not to detest, but to understand.

Spinoza

Academic Economists and Economics seem to be constantly in the spotlight, especially (but not exclusively) after the outbreak of the financial crisis of 2008-9. They tend to be consulted, criticised, sometimes renowned, often despised, and almost always are a more or less manifest part of the wider discourse and knowledge circulation of western societies (Fourcade 2018). Economists have become part of ‘general culture’ and ‘general discourse’. Nowadays, many of us use, or at least hear on a daily basis, terms such as ‘interest’, ‘profit’, ‘human capital’, ‘investment’ or others from the vocabulary of economics, even when we speak of areas of our lives that were not considered within the sphere of economic reason (at least not in the narrow sense) before.

Consequently, the Social Sciences have picked up on that interest, especially during the last 10 or so years. First of all, of course, there has been a process of reflection going on within Economics (see Piketty 2014; Krugman and Wells 2015[2005]; Jacobs and Mazzucato 2016), mostly dealing with its failures and general methodological preliminaries, and there have been quite heated debates as to how to reform the education and scientific direction of the subject on various levels (ISIPE 2014; Hill and Myatt 2010; Mirowski 2014). Before that there already was a steady stream of individual intellectual biographies that thematised (and consecrated) the lives of Economics’ most influential figures of recent decades (Ebenstein 2001; Caldwell 2003; Ebenstein 2007). Apart from this there has been the reaction within the other Social Science disciplines, such as Philosophy, Political Science, History and Sociology. These works often deal with underpinnings of the world-view of certain

influential Economists (or the schools they form), their standpoint. This might entail historical analyses of the ‘neo-liberal revolution’ within Economics (for Germany see Janssen 2006) or, more generally, its ‘rhetoric’ (McCloskey 1985; Klammer, McCloskey, and Solow 1988), or more philosophical-methodological-ontological examinations (Mirowski 1989; Blaug 2002[1980]; Lawson 2009; Morgan 2012; Thieme 2013; Kapeller 2013). Or they take as their object the often numerous and intricate entanglements of these Economists with the outside world, with networks, think tanks, policy associations, parties and the like (Plehwe, Walpen, and Neunhöffer 2006; Stedman-Jones 2012). Often this research is performed from a historical viewpoint (Backhouse 2005; Mirowski and Plehwe 2009), proceeding chronologically and noting ‘what went wrong’ in the development of Economics, and the wider society in the last 40 or so years.

The Internal and the External

The list could very easily be extended and, just as many people are aware in one way or the other (should they frequent the relevant intellectual circles) about the discourse *of* Economists, they are also familiar with the discourse *on* Economists. But there are certain aspects of this discourse that are disconcerting to the critical reader. It seems to be structured along, on the one hand, an axis of substantial approval vs. rejection, and along another axis of autonomy vs. reduction to circumstances in terms of situating developments in Economics socially. Positions on both axes of analysis seem to coincide and to overlap, so that writers who approve of the content and direction of Economics tend to concede a large degree of autonomy (or, perhaps better, indeterminacy) to its scientific outputs (Ebenstein 2001; Caldwell 2003; Ebenstein 2007), whereas those who disagree with the coherence and outlook of prominent economic writing also tend to link it to outside interests (Mirowski 1989; Plehwe, Walpen, and Neunhöffer 2006; Mirowski and Plehwe 2009; Mirowski 2014). Philip Mirowski for example links the mathematisation of western Economics discourse in the early 20th century to “[...] a fervent desire to apply the scientific method to the social betterment of mankind [...]” (1989: 152)

but also to the availability of money and posts related to this research. More examples could easily be cited, such as Mirowski's exposure of the 'double standards', inconsistencies of thinking, links to business, and other failures, of the 'neoliberal thought collective' (see Mirowski 2014: 68-83), or again Plehwe and Walpen's (2006: 27-50) analysis of the entanglement of the intellectuals of the Mont Pelerin Society with various think tanks and universities which makes for "[...] an expansive network that ranges across diverse institutional arenas, including academic, business, politics and media." (ibid.: 39).

It is evident that in these approaches what happens in the mind of these Economists and between them in closed intellectual discussions (the 'internal') and what sort of support and associations their intellectual products eventually draw in the wider world (the 'external') are everything but clear in their relationship to one another. If what these (and other) Economists thought is inconsistent, irrational, not backed up by facts and so on, why and how did they arrive at it anyway? Are they simply stupid, incapable of moving beyond an intellectual world in which everything has to be formalised and geared towards individual utility maximisation? Are they perhaps cynics who somehow act out what they preach, and take any opportunity to gain posts, money, status and power, whatever the cost? Or even both? These are important questions that, in my view, tend to be dodged when dealing with academic Economists. And one cannot help but to wonder whether the sarcastic undertones in which the writings of Philip Mirowski are drenched are not the signs of an essentially embittered, frustrated and deep non-understanding of those individuals whom he - and here he is a role-model for others in a similar predicament - so aggressively shuns and dismisses.

The questions, however, remain. Why do mainstream Economists think what they think? What forces make them choose this kind of reasoning? How do they justify for themselves and others their links to businesses, parties, think tanks and the like?

The Task of Sociology

It therefore seems reasonable to utilise specific intellectual tools that are capable of providing clearer and more fruitful answers to these questions, and which entail the taking up of a fresh attitude towards this object. Sociology, and in particular the Sociology of Knowledge, seems exceptionally equipped to this task. Unlike other disciplines, it tends to entail an empathetic understanding of its objects-subjects (Dilthey 1977), the process of ‘putting oneself into the shoes of the other’ by theoretical and empirical means, while also trying to situate the knowledge socially (Mannheim 1948[1929]). Indeed, the Sociology of Knowledge is the sustained effort to investigate and to understand the link between specific social conditions of existence and forms of thought which, especially when it comes to matters of science, are used to justify (directly or indirectly) forms of power or domination (Weber 1978[1922]). However, the complexity of these issues demands a multifarious approach: in for a penny, in for a pound. That also means that there will have to be numerous sociological specialities engaged in this endeavour, including the sociologies of culture, stratification and education. The point is to connect material conditions of existence with habits of thought, and so to develop a better and more scientifically grounded understanding, perhaps even empathy, for academic Economists.

Yet, unfortunately, empathy seems not what most Economists can count on when being objectified by Sociologists, who tend to follow their colleagues from History, Philosophy and Political Science in the aggressive-rejecting attitude described above (see for instance Maeße 2015, 2016). The empathy of Sociologists, more or less openly, in practice tends to be restricted to those groups with whom they can easily empathise. Within academic Economics, these tend to be heterodox, marginalised groups. In the course of this sociologists often enough become quasi-Economists, engaging in the discourse for or against specific epistemologies or models, aligning themselves with heterodox Economists to bring about the ‘revolution’ that they hope for. This often also implies a dilution of the original

sociological techniques and epistemological standpoints. Nevertheless, the discipline's tools offer a great potential and treasure that is all too seldom tapped. Indeed, it seems that Sociologists have absolutely no reason to needlessly (that is, not coming out of their own logic of reasoning) imitate foreign approaches to objectification and verification, whether coming from Economics (orthodox or heterodox), other Social Sciences or from outside academia altogether (Inglis and Howson 2002). Sociology is truly a sleeping giant (and often, unfortunately, also a truly sleeping giant), and great gains can be made by putting its tools to work. I will therefore take a position towards my object that might be compared to that of a criminal defence lawyer towards the defendant in a trial (indeed, within social scientific discourse outside of Economics, a negative verdict seems to prevail before the hearings). I want to make better understandable to the reader why it is that Economists have this peculiar way of viewing the world, and what might be the sociological causes and processes involved. In doing so I hope to provide to the wider audience what might be called 'mitigating circumstances'. Without denying the problems and harms that economic thinking can cause when applied to reality (MacKenzie 2008), I wish to make a contribution towards understanding how it comes about that Economists think and do what they do. That essentially entails the attempt to contextualise the views of Economists within their wider social and intellectual environment, beyond polemics and beyond the scientific consecration of prejudices.

Confessions

I have to confess that my choice of Bourdieusian field theory springs from my deep belief and perhaps almost reflex to link cultural practices to material interests, to 'economise' them, so to speak. I know that, as somebody with a male petit-bourgeois origin, this can lead to a short-circuit in which practices are *reduced* to their material interests, and the agents of these interests reduced in particular to devious theatre-players - and this all the more so with those agents who are dominant in a particular social field, in particular the one in which one is situated

oneself. Still, I also believe that there are ways to evolve from this position towards a more nuanced, more fruitful and more scientific position, as there are different paths for people with different social and sociological starting points that, I think, converge in the process of scientific maturation (something that can be viewed, I believe, with so many famous Sociologists of the most diverse schools). So I present to you the path taken here, without holding that this is the only path, but with the hope that we may meet each other 'on the other side'.

The second thing to notice is that in order to write about academic Economics in a sociological way, one should know it in terms of its discourses, basic schools, history and current topics. Unlike what Bruno Latour (Latour and Woolgar 1986[1979]) implies, it is not always helpful to be a stranger to universes that one wishes to investigate, even though it has its advantages. It would, however, be best if one could combine both a familiarity with academic Economics and the strangeness of view won by sociological objectification. I have to state right away that I have no advanced expertise in academic Economics. As an individual I shared the feelings of alienation and rejection of my colleagues in Sociology and elsewhere towards much of (western) academic Economics, the world-view that is attached to it and the methods used to control and to develop it. But I have not always thought in this way - indeed I did study Business Administration and Political Economy as minors during my initial degrees in Germany. Back then it seemed to me to be a pragmatic choice (Political Economy in particular), combining my interest in politics and wider societal issues with the decent professional prospects one (allegedly) has with this sort of knowledge certified in a Diploma.¹ It kept all the options for future career tracks open, just as Sociology promised to do, according to the sources I consulted at the time. I originally pondered over studying History or Philosophy but did not take these in the end because they seemed too risky for me, not secure enough. Furthermore, my grades did not allow study of another interest of mine (veterinary medicine), whilst engineering subjects seemed to me too dry and formalistic, so

¹ The Diploma (Ger: Diplom) was, alongside the Magister which was awarded in most Humanities disciplines, one of the pre-Bologna-reform degrees. It was roughly equivalent to a Masters-degree. I should clarify that these were students' first degrees, rather than the Bachelor degrees that take this place in the Anglo-American systems.

that I went, in the end, with a combination of Sociology and Political Economy. This provided me with a thorough insight into academic Economics in terms of its *initial education* as well as with a certain further knowledge of the depths of academic Economics. Eventually, I came to wonder about how and why Economics students, especially those who seemed most successful and/or most at ease with their subject, came to this discipline at all, and in the end decided to approach this topic in the context of a PhD, the results of which the reader can assess here. I will also admit that, here too, my reflections comprised interests that were both pecuniary (for it was easier to obtain funding for a topic that involved academic Economists and the research into what they think) *and* intellectual (for I genuinely aimed at making a contribution to this knowledge within the realm of the Sociology of Science and Knowledge). In this respect the postgraduate choice was similar to my earlier choice of academic Sociology, thus trying to facilitate the convergence of my own intellectual interests with broader societal, or sociological, concerns.

Choice of Subjects

In the light of this it seemed necessary, in order to ensure a certain intellectual depth for the project, to shift the attention from the investigation of '*mature*' Economists to those apprentice Economists whose level of education and actual practice I had most experience of during my initial studies. I therefore quickly lowered my sights - given the non-feasibility of researching what are often highly technical, mathematised symbols of a specific social universe - to the study of the *formation of that taste and preference* for just this way of thinking. This seems all the more important and necessary since the processes, the factors and decisions that form and compound these preferences are very important direction-setters for the eventual academic Economics that these scientists will produce (what Max Weber calls switches, see Ringer 2004: 146f.).

We must first try to figure out how and why specific groups of people choose certain subjects and not others. That entails both a thorough engagement with the

existing (here: mainly British and German) literature on the topic, as well as its theoretical formulation of study choice. The reader will find both in chapters 2 and 3, respectively. Against these approaches, I will, for the rest of the work, attempt to construct a Bourdieusian theory of study choice, developed on the example of certain German Economics students. This means first to formulate the specific epistemological principles of a Bourdieusian theory of the educational and scientific field which directs specific enquiries into the state of German higher education and academia, as well as Economics' / Economist's position in it both in contemporary and historical terms (chapter 4). On the base of this 'objective' positioning of the subject and its representatives within German academia, it is possible to interface it with the 'subjective' world-views and attitudes of its up-and-coming scientists. Using semi-structured interviews with selected Economics students, this is first done with regard to other subjects (chapter 5), and finally with regard to the differences within Economics (chapters 6 to 8). These chapters represent first tentative steps towards a specifically Bourdieusian theory of study choice (Bourdieusian because three particular habitus are held to be central to explain and to understand the student's selections and the state of German Economics). These tentative steps are summarised and their theoretical consequences, ensuing research questions and conditions for verification spelled out in the concluding section (chapter 9).

PART I - Objectivations

You know, when I write, I fear many things, that is to say many wrong readings. That explains the complexity of my sentences, with has often been complained about. I try to discourage in advance the wrong readings that I can often predict. But the precautions that I insert in a parenthesis, an adjective or a use of quotation marks only reach those who don't need them. And in a complex analysis, everyone selects the aspect that disturbs him least.

Pierre Bourdieu - Sociology in Question

[...] the intellectual world is a terrain where we are particularly exposed to using operational definitions as an unconscious manner of satiating social pulsions of categorisation, of labelling, and where the uncontrolled construction of the object allows us to exclude those who do not fit the image that we have, or would like to have, of ourselves.

Pierre Bourdieu - For a Socioanalysis of Intellectuals

It is obvious that in order to say anything about study choice sociologically, one needs to turn towards the existing literature for advice and guidance, if only not to 'invent the wheel twice'. But at the same time, as a Bourdieusian perspective was adopted for this research, I will try to formulate the usual critical assessment of this literature in the style of rational polemics in the Bachelardian sense (Bachelard 1980[1940]). I will proceed as follows: I will first describe what I perceive to be the conceptual divisions structuring the work hitherto on study choice and relationship to subject mainly in German and British Social Science². I will try to show what I believe to be the partial quality and ethnocentric tendency of these concepts and their rootedness in a specific form of an individualistic

² This includes contributions from Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy, but also Economics.

philosophy/epistemology of the Social by embarking on an in-depth analysis of some characteristic studies of both currents of thought. I will attempt to trace each of them from their social philosophy and its inherent assumptions to the methodologies and research operations that give rise to the eventual results and interpretations of those results. For this I will use a form of presentation which operates on two levels: the first level offers a rather conventional reading of the existing literature. The second level represents a counterpoint to the first and is inserted in the form of framed boxes, in which I contrast what I believe to be genuine Bourdieusian epistemological positions with the ones used in the established literature.

I will indeed argue that all of these positions are profoundly influenced by the original social philosophies that may be characterised as variants of subjectivism. These, I will hold, give rise to variants of ethnocentrism.

Chapter 2 - The German Literature on Study Choice

The Break

Identifying, and breaking with, unquestioned and unexamined presuppositions of thought is a vital starting point for any enquiry performed in the Bourdieusian spirit, especially when one deals with very self-confident, outspoken exponents of science and perspectives (see for example Fourcade 2009: 63-72).

“All techniques for performing breaks- logical critique of ideas, statistical testing of spurious self-evidences, radical and methodical challenging of appearances- remain powerless, however, until one has overthrown the very principle of spontaneous sociology, i.e. the philosophy of knowledge of the social and of human action on which it is based. Sociology cannot constitute itself as a science truly separated from common-sense notions unless it combats the systematic pretention of spontaneous sociology with the organized resistance of a theory of knowledge of the social whose principles contradict, point by point, the presuppositions of the naïve philosophy of the social.” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 15).

It is obvious to many Sociologists and Social Scientists working in the field of the Sociology of study choice and/or academic Economics that one of the doxic assumptions of Economics discourse is its individualistic, monistic view as to how knowledge is arrived at and how and why people act. Much less often, however, is the critical gaze turned back onto those who themselves gaze critically at the ‘bigger brother’ of Economics. Therefore, I want to first present, in a synoptic schema (Figure 1), what, in my view, are the major divisions structuring the perception and the work of German and British Sociologists as well as other Social Scientists when they think about the choice of academic discipline that young

people perform, the relationship they have to this subject when studying it, and in turn its relationship to their cultural traits and to the tradition of the discipline. In a word, these divisions seem to me to be *a culturally idiosyncratic system of oppositions*, interrelated but not completely (i.e. logically) reducible to one another, related in their kind to that what Bourdieu found for the Kabyles (for example in the *Logic of Practice*, 1992[1980]: 216-23). It is these dichotomies that immediately and ‘naturally’ seem to come to the mind of the Social Scientist when he thinks about study choice, student life style, relationship to subject and student cultures. They are, however, rarely reflected upon.

Of these, **the division between intrinsic and extrinsic study motivations and attitudes** seems the most wide-spread, at least where German Sociological literature on the topic is concerned. Paul Windolf, for instance, in his article on disciplinary culture and study choice (1992) builds on the Parsonian 4-tier-typology of specialised vs. generalist knowledge and practice vs. theory (Parsons and Platt 1973) to derive a model of academic disciplinary cultures to which there exists, he argues, an ‘elective affinity’ on the side of the students and their motivations, which are internalised ‘norms and values’ (Windolf 1992: 77f.)³. Developing the Weberian distinction of value rationality vs. purposive rationality, he effectively models students’ motivations after the subjective goals of practicing scientists: “The ‘pure’ scientist, who conducts his research without consideration of practical interests of application, follows a different rationality of action than a management consultant for whom ‘truth’ only in rare cases is a criterion of decision.” (ibid. : 77, my translation). Thus, the student who declares that she studies a certain subject out of interest in itself is to be seen as expressing an ‘intrinsic professional motivation’ (ibid. : 80, my translation), whereas the student who admits that his studies, for him, are a mere stepping stone towards “[...] success, high income, social ascension, prestige and a secure living perspective [...]” (ibid.), is to be labelled as the ‘extrinsic’ type.

³ All of the English expressions taken from studies in German in this chapter have been translated by me.

Figure 1 System of Oppositions structuring the Perception/Investigation of educational or Study Choice and Relationship to Subject for German/British Sociologists and various Economists

Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Soft	Hard
Communicative	Non-communicative
Altruistic	Egoistic
Non-alienating	Alienating
Loose	Rigid
Reflexive	Unreflexive

In the same vein, Peisert, Bargel and Framheim (1988: 105-16), conducting a (still on-going, regular) nation-wide survey of students of all disciplinary groups, structure their empirical investigation after the same dichotomy: “It is often discussed whether students are led, in their choice of subject, more by their interests and talents or whether the applicability of the studies on the labour market is more important to them.” (ibid. : 105, my translation). In their preliminary discussion of the results of their study, they state: “Among the motives of study choice the interests and talents (intrinsic motivation) have a clear priority over income- and work-related ambitions (extrinsic motives).” (ibid. : 32f., my translation).

Georg, Sauer and Wöhler (2009) make the same distinction: “. An *extrinsic study motivation* consists in the expected consequences of the studies, like income [...], security of employment [...], social prestige [...] and a certain profession [...]. The motivation thus springs from the use that the studies have for later career plans and less from the contents of the study subject. *Intrinsically* motivated are, however, students whose interests mainly relates to the study subject [...] and its

knowledge stock. Here the scientific education and not a concrete career plan are in the foreground. The development of abilities and interests [...], to expand one's own horizon [...] and to get a good scientific education [...] are important for the students. Moreover, there is an interest in getting to know like-minded students [...].” (ibid. : 358, emphases in the text, my translation).

Großmann's analysis of study motivations (2012) uses the very same opposition as the base upon which to build his argument and empirical investigation. He describes the 'intrinsic motivation': "It is assumed that study motivations correspond with the value orientations of the bearer [of the motivations]. So that one will find that students with a general conviction of self-fulfilment have a study motivation which aims above all for the unfolding of one's person and realisation of respective ideas.” (ibid. : 447, my translation). As opposed to this there is the 'extrinsic motivation': "The studies above all serve to get an academic degree, through which one hopes for better income chances, chances of ascent and good labour market chances. This type points primarily to a material direction and should also encompass interests in social security.” (ibid., my translation).

This general perceptive lens seems very prevalent within German social scientific literature on the topic. Thus Preisser's article on study choice (1990) also uses the same divide, for example distinguishing between (and thus empirically producing) 'inclination' (the 'intrinsic') and 'prestigious professional standing' (the 'extrinsic') as options in an empirical survey on the topic (ibid. : 56ff., this and all following my translation). Schölling (2003), in his work inspired by Bourdieusian thinking, uses the same categories. American scholars like Michèle Lamont (2009) , even though in reference to a slightly different context (that of committees deciding about research money), make a very similar distinction.

It can be seen that this primary dichotomy is associated with **secondary divisions** in the German social scientific works on study choice and relationship to discipline.

Liebau and Huber most openly exhibit this combination of the antinomies when they contrast different disciplinary ‘cultures’: “It immediately [...] suggests itself to grasp these [disciplinary] worlds as *cultures*, as distinguishable relationships, systematically connected in themselves, of perception, thought, evaluation and action patterns. [...] The rough distinctions among the disciplines force themselves upon [the observer]. ” (1985: 315, all terms here and forthcoming my translation). Thus, they deem the Social Sciences and Humanities to be more ‘communicative’ (and less ‘hierarchical’) than the rather ‘non-communicative’ Economics and Engineering Sciences (ibid. : 319). Likewise, the former are more ‘loosely framed’ as against the ‘rigid’ latter ones (ibid. : 321). Study strategies in the former are more ‘independent’ and ‘integrative’ as opposed to the ‘utility-oriented’ and ‘strategic’ orientation of Economics and Engineering students. (ibid. : 322ff.). Similarly, Köhler and Gapski (1997) investigate the relationship of the Life-world of students to their disciplinary studies by taking one ‘hard’ discipline (chemistry) and one ‘soft’ discipline (history). Elsewhere, Peisert et.al. (1988: 147-49) also assign to the Humanities and Social Sciences the label ‘friendly-communicative’, whereas Economics and Law are characterised by their ‘rough climate of competition’. The same disciplines make up the distinction between politically apathetic vs. politically active disciplines (ibid.: 242f.). A similar division in regards to alienation was made earlier by Portele (1981: 138ff.).

An analogous distinction can be found in much of the British literature on educational choice, which are very often pursued in a Bourdieusian vein. Here, however, the focus is on whether the observed practices are reflexive with regard to specific educational and social history of the persons or not. See, for instance, the works of Diane Reay and her colleagues (Reay et al. 2001; Reay, David, and Ball 2005; Reay, Crozier, and James 2011) but also related works (such as Bathmaker et al. 2016).⁴ The reflexive-unreflexive (or determined) dyad, in this case, takes the place of the opposition between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

⁴ I will engage in a discussion about the meaning of ‘reflexive’ in the next chapter.

Thinking in these sorts of dichotomies is certainly not restricted to Sociology or Social Psychology or Pedagogy alone. Further examples of the intrinsic-extrinsic divide adopted and applied can be found in pedagogical work, such as in Liebau (Liebau 1982: 99) Liebau and Huber (1985: 322f.) and Portele (1981: 21, 76). It can be found in Economics as well when it deals with the relationships of its students

The **habitus** is a system of cognitive structures and guides that informs social practice and is produced by specific social structures, in a specific and limited, historically contingent culture. The habitus structures the perception of the social world and thus helps to (re-)produce it. It can be shown empirically that these cognitive structures are often organized around mutually exclusive, yet complementary dichotomies, such as the raw and the cooked, or male and female, or day and night (Levi-Strauss, Bourdieu). The arbitrary, contingent character of these dichotomies is often not apparent to those who apply them. They have become **doxa**.

“Doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a *habitus* and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that follow from practical sense.” (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 68, emphasis in the text).

and its teaching. But these dichotomies take on a different form there: Is studying or teaching Economics making people more egoistic or not? The question, posed among others by authors like Rubinstein (2006), Frank et.al. (1993), Marwell and Ames (1981) or Frey et.al. (1993), effectively also narrows down the way to view study choice, and the effect of studies exclusively in terms of mutually exclusive categories and concepts of thought.

The list of authors using this basic dichotomy could easily be extended. What can, what must, study choice and relationship to subject inevitably be, to these authors? Here we have a **forced choice**, one between “[...] inward; genuine; inherent; essential, belonging to the point at issue [...]” (Chambers 2011: 800) and “[...] external, not contained in or belonging to a body; foreign; not essential [...]” (ibid.: 548), that is imposed a priori to the topic of study choice and relationship to studies. What justifies this di-vision of student motives? Is it a Popperian-style context of discovery which does not need further elaboration since it is part of the ‘private’, cognitive assumptions of the Social Scientist who merely needs to prove (or falsify) his theories? Or is it understandable, socio-logically, as an outflow of

social positions and judgements which are, or at least were, part of the same universes which are claimed to be grasped objectively?

Doubt

The divisions introduced in figure 1, though often enough part of a seemingly rigorous empirical, quantitative study, are themselves never really scrutinised. Instead, they seem rather hastily assumed. Nevertheless, it might be worth asking what it means to make an ‘intrinsic’, ‘altruistic’ or ‘egoistic’ study choice, to choose ‘soft’ or ‘hard’ subjects, or to be ‘reflexive’ of social structures, in the sociological sense. And that would imply to ask about the history of these concepts as well as their real explanatory power.

At first, the answers to these questions seem obvious. An intrinsic study choice, for example, is *evidently* done for its own sake (like l’art pour l’art). Egoistic choices are done *evidently* for pecuniary or other gain. And, in terms of hard and soft subjects, one might refer to the *evident* degree of codification of the curriculum, for example how mathematised it is. Indeed, the literature discussed above takes the experiences of ‘actors’ as well as official common-sense definitions very seriously.

As we will see, the contentious point concerns the word ‘evidently’. In each of the divisions discussed above (and below), it refers to actions or attitudes that are seemingly clear in definition and meaning. Everybody (or most people, anyway) ‘knows’ what an ‘intrinsic’ or ‘egoistic’ or ‘reflexive’ choice is. There is a certain everyday consensus that Social Science students are more ‘communicative’, ‘soft’ and ‘reflexive’ than, say, Informatics or Physics students. But that is exactly where the problem lies, in the *common sense* foundation of these concepts. The problem is one of nominalism (Kolakowski 1972[1966]: 13-16) or what Bourdieu called the effects of doxa.

Types of Students

Who, then, are the more ‘intrinsic’, ‘communicative’, ‘non-alienated’, ‘altruistic’ students and disciplines, and what are the ‘softer’ sciences? What sort of empirical Social Science is erected on the basis of the divisions presented in the last section? The basic oppositions shown in Figure 1 are usually transformed into statements on study motivation, satisfaction with the curriculum, professional goals, political involvement at various levels, and other study-related issues that are put to the students, mostly in the form of surveys. I present here only one way to operationalise empirically the above stated system of oppositions on the question of study motivation as it is used by the Konstanz Student Survey, a long-term Germany-wide survey on students that has been running for 30 years now (see for example Ramm and Multrus 2014; KonstanzStudentSurvey 1983-2013). One immediately sees that options 1 and 3 - special interest and own talent, skills- are put to work in this survey as indicators for an ‘intrinsic’ motivation, whereas options 2 and 6 and 7 - income chances, secure employment and the chance to get into an executive position later on- are the operationalised indicators for an ‘extrinsic’ motivation. The other options- fixed professional aspiration, variety of professional abilities, and 2nd choice option due to non-admission for 1st choice studies, are neither completely attributable to one or the other. What happens usually in these studies, then, is that certain ideal-types of study motivation are constructed or ‘discovered’ by way of exploratory statistical methods (i.e. factorial analyses) which are expressed in various statements like the ones shown in Figure 2. Paul Windolf (1992: 79-82), in his widely circulated study of 1st year-students in South-West Germany, for example, constructs four types of study motivation which allegedly match with what the researchers define as four ‘disciplinary cultures’:

1. *Career*: Studies are here perceived as a mere tool, a stepping stone towards “[...] success, high income, social ascension, prestige and a secure life perspective [...]” (ibid.: 79f., for this quote and all following my translation).

Figure 2 Question for Study Reasons as appearing like this or similar to this in many German sociological Surveys on Study Choice

How important were the following reasons for your decision to study your current subject?
 (from 0-very unimportant to 6-very important)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Special Interest for the subject.....							
2-Income Chances in later employment.....							
3-Own talent, skills.....							
4-Fixed professional aspiration.....							
5-Variety of professional possibilities through these studies.....							
6-Good prospects/outlook for secure employment.....							
7-Good prospects/outlook for executive position later on.....							
8-2 nd Choice option, since not admitted to aspired studies.....							

It is options 2 and 6 which, among other options, correlate very highly with this motivational pattern. Of course the motivational pattern, for Windolf, is clearly 'extrinsic' here. Furthermore the students tend to be more 'conformist'

2. *Lifestyle*: Students here lack orientation, don't know where to go in life, something that Windolf calls 'anomie'. Neither science or professional practice are appealing to them. The type is represented by statements such as: "Via commencing studies I want to win time to come to grips with my future plans"

(ibid.: 80). In addition, students are labelled as rather ‘non-conformist’ because being a student becomes a ‘lifestyle’ in itself to them.

3. *Reform*: The emphasis in this ideal-type is on the practical use of science for ‘healing and helping’. Windolf attests a clear orientation towards ‘value rationality’ against the ‘extrinsic’ functionalism and purposive rationality of type 1. Clearly, for him there is “[...] an intrinsic professional motivation to be expected.” (ibid.: 81). This type correlates very highly with statements like: “I expect to gain insights about societal problems and relationships.” (ibid.).

4. *Science*: Actors here are interested in ‘pure’ science ‘for its own sake’. There are very high correlations with options 1 and 3. Windolf thus concludes that “[...] there can be assumed to be an intrinsic motivation.” (ibid.: 82).

As is to be expected, the types created or constructed do not vary too much in their outlook in other studies. Großmann distinguishes between the ‘status-oriented’ (a clear parallel to Windolf’s career-type), the ‘developmental/creative’ (the reform one in Windolf’s work), the ‘science-oriented type (very similar to type 4 above) and the ‘traditional type’. (Grossmann 2012: 447-50). Georg et.al., including not only study motivation but also other cultural preferences such as clothing and music taste, produce the types of ‘anti-conventional moratorium’ (close to Windolf’s type 2), ‘creative cultivation’, ‘culture-distanced materialists’ and ‘career, prestige and high culture’ (the latter two being close to Windolf’s ‘careerists’ and Großmann’s ‘status-oriented’) (Georg, Sauer, and Wöhler 2009: 358-65, as always my translation).

The Ethnocentrism of a Profession?

The empirical matching of the types extracted by ‘exploration’ from the students’ answers within the various disciplines reveals a quite uniform picture throughout the surveyed literature. In short, it is the Sciences, the Social Sciences and Humanities which are taken to have the least ‘extrinsic’ students, whereas Law and

the Economic Sciences have the most 'extrinsic' students. In Windolf's study (Windolf 1992: 82-89), it is Economics and, secondarily, Law, which are chosen most by the 'careerist' type of students (type 1 above), whereas the students in the natural sciences are most likely to be 'scientists' (type 4). The Cultural Sciences and Social Sciences are likely to be 'lifestyle' or 'reformer' (esp. the latter) students (types 2 and 3 respectively). In any case, they "[...] have chosen their subject not in order to make a career [...]" (ibid.: 84). In the same vein, Georg et.al. (Georg, Sauer, and Wöhler 2009: 362-65) find that most students that they classify as falling into the 'anti-conventional moratorium' type are Science (and secondarily Sociology) students. They attest that they have "[...] a proximity to a released protest culture and the rejection of established consumption-oriented disciplinary cultures (ibid.: 363). It is Sociologists which make up most of the students of the 'creative cultivation' type, a camp which, according to Georg et.al. exhibits "[...] style consciousness, creativity and cultural-social orientation [...]" (ibid.). Again, it is Law students that most comprise the 'extrinsic' camp of 'career, prestige and high culture'. They also have a high share of 'culture-distanced materialists' for which Georg et.al. formulate the 'characteristic' statement: "I want a good income, a secure employment and a high social status." (ibid.).

Preisser, who foregoes type-construction, nevertheless also records empirically the lack of agreement on the part of German Economics students (relative to those students of other disciplines) with 'intrinsic' statements such as 'I study my subject out of special interest' (option 1 in Figure 2) and the high level of agreement with 'extrinsic' statements such as 'I want to have a proper professional standing later on (1990: 56-60). Peisert et.al. (1988) make just the same observation, slotting Economics into the 'extrinsic', the Social Sciences and Humanities into the 'intrinsic' camp: "The disciplines of the Social Sciences/Social Affairs (as the Humanities) form, with their eminently dominant orientation towards interests, the one pole, whereas the Economic sciences of both higher education forms [i.e. universities and polytechnics], with frequently 'economically'-driven study choice motives, forms the other pole." (ibid.: 32f.).

It is the Economists who draw a more nuanced picture of their own students, although they, too, acknowledge the differences between Economics students and others (Frank, Gilovich, and Regan 1993: 160f.; Frey and Meier 2003: 457f.; Rubinstein 2006: C3f.).

On the other hand, educational scientists and social psychologists are perhaps the most outspoken and pronounced in their typology of certain groups of subjects. Liebau and Huber for example, in their Bourdieusian-inspired analysis of the culture of disciplines, group these into three main groups. First, there is 'the cultural sphere', made up by the Humanities. The orientation here is clearly 'intrinsic': "Within the students of these subjects orientations of professional autonomy, societal betterment and self-development prevail- overall, then, the emphatic study orientations for a professional practice, emphatically understood, prevail." (Liebau and Huber 1985: 329). Then, second, there is 'the social space', epitomised by Law students. These are the 'producers of order', of norm-making through interpretation. Liebau and Huber find 'power-related, strategic action' here, and furthermore a 'power-related internal structure'. The studies are largely 'instrumentalised', the picture painted of these students- and the discipline- rather gloomy: "[It] is not the gaining of a new insight, rather the enforcement of one's own opinion in the publications of the court which forms the main point of reference of 'success'." (ibid.: 331). Almost needless to say that they locate the discipline of Law and its students in the 'extrinsic' camp, since they have "[...] a largely functionally interpreted professional practice." (ibid.). Lastly, they form 'the economic sphere', including Economics, the Sciences and Engineering. Here they see 'unified paradigms', 'pronounced' hierarchies', in a word, again 'extrinsic' motivations: "A strategic study and professional motivation oriented on individual utility [...]" (ibid.: 332ff.).

As opposed to this, other sciences appear as a beacon of light: “[...] text appropriation with a view to the foundational meaning [...] linking of ideas, association, analogy (*relating ideas*), intrinsic motivation, independent attitude towards the curriculum regulations, altogether ‘*comprehension learning*’ are [...] to be found relatively more often with students of the Humanities, then also Social Sciences, than with those of the Natural and Engineering Sciences.” (ibid.: 322f., emphasis in the original).

Gerhard Portele’s work on alienation with scientists comes to a conclusion similar in spirit: For him, it is the Humanities and Social Sciences which are ‘meta-theoretical’, ‘critical’, ‘self-conscious’, in short non-alienated. On the other side are the power- and violence-riddled natural sciences, unable to reflect properly on what they are doing. (Portele 1981: 21, 76, 138ff.).

Thus, from a taken for granted distinction between ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ study motivation and the associated oppositions, which is indeed ‘perfectly clear’ and intuitive, these Social Scientists have been led, via the ‘explorative’ construction of types of students and/or disciplines, to something that can be considered, from a sceptic’s viewpoint, as ethnocentric. What ‘protest culture’, ‘creative cultivation’, ‘critical political attitude’, in short all the associated characteristics and concepts (and their negative counterparts), designate is always a *specific* culture which is presented as the epitomisation of scientificity and whose material basis and preconditions are not really investigated. This implicitly ethical position is reflected also in the very vocabulary used. The notion of ‘extrinsic’ study motivation can refer positively to a rationality of action which indeed sees one’s studies merely as a stepping stone towards money, status or whatever. But it can also carry a normative assessment in it as well that, unconsciously, devalues and derides these motivations as ‘not essential’, not ‘sincere’, indeed not ‘genuine’. The same is true, a contrario, of ‘intrinsic’. And it can be seen how these unchecked, ambiguous concepts produce empirical results and analyses which are equally ambiguous. Thus when Paul Windolf tries to answer the question what exactly

disciplinary cultures are by referring to “[...] a syndrome of attitudes and norms [...]” (1992: 96f.), this can refer to a sociologically pertinent group of characteristics that belong together, but also to a pattern of disease, of indicators of ‘being sick’ (Duden 2010: 1014). Eckart Liebau shows this even more clearly when he attests that Economics students have an ‘authoritarian syndrome’ (1982: 103). Likewise, when Peisert et.al. declare Economics and Law students to be ‘conventional democrats’ in their political engagement and orientations, opposed to the ‘critical democrats’ (which can mean ‘progressive’, ‘more scientific’ for example) who can be found in the Cultural Sciences and Social Sciences (1988: 273), they refer to ‘sticking to existing conventions’ on a positive level. But they also inevitably also evoke the normative side of this phrase, i.e. being stiff, ordinary, usual, not special, not going to the heart of the matter (Duden 2010: 576; Chambers 2011: 340). And don’t Georg et.al. (2009: 363) use the term ‘culture’ inevitably both in the ethnological (positive) and ordinary (normative) way when they deem certain Sociology and law students to be ‘culture-distanced materialists’? This invokes such adjectives as vulgar, uncivilised, coarse. The same could be said about the label ‘apathetic’ which is attached to certain students (like those of Engineering in the study of Peisert et.al., 1988: 242ff.) when discussing their degree of political interest. The word, on a positive level, can mean indifference, but again refers to a defect, and thus carries a normative dimension.

Of course, one does not have to see the normative dimensions of these scientific analyses in this particular way. The same is true of the basic oppositions such as ‘hard’ or ‘soft’, ‘rigid’ or ‘loose’ which might be used with a different meaning or in a different set of oppositions. One just has to look at some Economists to see that contrary normative meanings can be attached to the same pairs of oppositions. Thus one professor during the pilot interviews conducted for this study (which are discussed in more detail later on) expresses his conviction that Economics

“[...] teach[es] skills, right? It teaches a way of thinking, it teaches a way how to do things. It's very structured, right? And it's very cumulative.” Economists 'think differently', even more they have a 'unique skill set' which is 'hard to understand'

and “[...] this is something that employers like, they like this critical thinking [...].” “[...] the Economists as a group think that their level of understanding and their academic ... integrity and the quality of research they do is vastly superior, right, and this is largely to do with the fact that [...] it's much more empirical, it's much more mathematical, and, and, it's much more theory-driven, right? [Business Administration on the other hand is] just a hotch-potch of different ideas, different courses put together [...] right? You know, one day they are doing this, the other day they are doing that.”

Not much different in nature are statements by some of my informants that Sociologists want to ‘change’ things whereas Economists want to ‘rule’ (which is merely an abbreviated form of the type of the ‘reformer’ and the ‘careerist’ as described above).

From whatever standpoint one looks at it, then, the initial divisions seem indeed justified and corroborated in their analytical worth by the empirical results.

The different groups in a given society acquire, due to the different material conditions in which they grow up and live in, different yet interconnected (namely via doxa) habitus and so cognitive guides. The groups tend to universalize their material conditions in their specific mental representations about the social world and to judge other groups by their own standard. This is called **ethnocentrism**. Which group is successful in imposing its mental representation, its assessment of specific characteristics, onto others depends on various types of resources or **capital** – economic, cultural, social and symbolic- that are used in the struggle of the groups. One specific kind of ethnocentrism connected to an intellectual way of life and corresponding to high cultural capital is ‘**scholastic ethnocentrism**’ which “[...] leads [the intellectual] to cancel out the specificity of practical logic, either by assimilating it to scholastic knowledge, but in a way that is fictitious and purely theoretical [...], or by consigning it to radical otherness, to the non-existence and worthlessness of the ‘barbarous’ or the ‘vulgar’, which, as Kant’s notion of ‘barbarous taste’ pertinently reminds us, is nothing other than the barbarian within.” (Bourdieu 2000[1997]: 51).

Doubt, again

One may try to arrive at an interim conclusion after this review of type construction. It seems at first as if the concepts discussed so far - intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, and so on - can be used very fruitfully to explain different attitudes between students of different disciplines, as well as to explicate the cultures of these disciplines. But then these data, from a different epistemological standpoint, can be interpreted differently as well, namely as succumbing to ethnocentric definitions which cast substantial groups of students, and disciplines, into a realm of the 'culture-distanced'. From this view, these distinctions are rather premature and essentialising differences which may have a common sense, but not necessarily a sociological, materialistic foundation.

That is why a closer look has to be taken at the reasons for a rejection of a more materialistic explanation of study choice.

Conjectures and Refutations

Among the literature discussed here, quite a few authors bring into play an interpretation of study choice, disciplinary cultures, value systems and relationship to subject that is grounded in materialistic concepts such as gender, social class, and the educational trajectory of the students. Windolf (1992: 90-94) for example tests the influence of various determinants on study choice via a multivariate logistic regression: "The dependent variable is the study subject; the independent variables are the [...] listed 'determinants' of study choice. The analysis is supposed to answer the question which variables have a significant influence on study choice." (ibid.: 90). Likewise, Georg et.al. (2009: 365-67) perform a logistic regression to test the influence of social origin on study choice. They are not alone in this. Van de Werfhorst et.al. (2003: 41ff.) and Bratti (2006) also perform similar operations. All of these come to results that ultimately reject any (or at least a

strong) influence of social class on study choice: the analysis ‘shows’ that “[...] social origin only marginally has an effect on study choice.” (Windolf 1992: 93). The conclusion is similarly clear for Georg et.al.: “In no group does the social class [Schicht] of the father play a role for the affiliation to a latent [Lifestyle] class. This means that the [student] life styles develop independently from the socio-economic situation of the family of origin [...] The subject-specific socialisation has a distinctively more pronounced influence on the life-style than social origin [...]” (Georg, Sauer, and Wöhler 2009: 469f.).

This practice reveals another assumption that all of these studies, more or less explicitly take, namely the linear and substantial character of social mechanisms. For them, a phenomenon like study choice can and must be traced back to specific social characteristics. Furthermore, they imply that the statements with which they confront the students (such as ‘I did choose my subject because I want to have a high-status job later on’) all have the same *meaning* for all the students asked. In short, they are nomothetic (Kolakowski 1972[1966]). Any regression analysis assumes the existence of ‘independent’ variables which are seen and computed in *isolation* to one another and which have a *separate* influence on the ‘dependent’ variable. This would be true in this case, for example, for the relationship between two important influences on study choice, i.e. the overall A-level grade and the social origin of the student that receives that grade. Compare this assumption, however, to the way in which an Economics PhD student from my interview sample describes the relationship of these variables in his case:

“Yes, I had a very conflict-ridden school career. Hm, yeah, so from grade 1 to grade 4 I was at a school for children with special needs due to behavioural problems, hyperactivity. As the only one of my class I went to the Gymnasium [high school]. [...] Some teachers also said to me I wouldn’t stand half a year at the Gymnasium, because it’s rather atypical that someone goes from the school for children with special needs to the Gymnasium. These are not the pre-defined career paths that a student of this school should follow. Also relatively

clear[cut], so this I realised only afterwards, where you see how strong our educational system is dependent on parents. Right? Two parents who care a lot about education, who of course campaigned for me to make this rather atypical leap and to achieve it, and yeah, let's say until grade 10 [chuckles] I was permanently in danger of being put off school [...] As a child you don't completely get what's going on but my parents had to absorb a lot, and always did this [...]" (Economics PhD student, app. 30 years old, male, Eastern German, Father PhD Engineer, executive employee at large company, Mother PhD engineer, executive employee at state institution, interview 24)

This example, in line with much anthropological research (for example the overview of the manifold meanings of various symbols in different archaic cultures, see Levi-Strauss 1966[1962]) casts doubt both on the assumption of the linearity of singular variables with the phenomenon at hand as well as the supposed unanimity of meanings for all subjects in a given society and time.

One can see therefore that it is reasonable to be sceptical - both based on both theoretical and empirical grounds - about the separation of variables which *in practice* might operate together - in this case, the verdicts of the school system are counter-balanced and neutralised by their rejection on the side of the upper class parents, a fact that would be very different if the parents were of a different class, or if the same student had better grades.

Any habitus/cognitive guide operates within culturally and temporally specific spheres of action and social struggle for dominance, or **fields** (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 94-115). This means that within these fields, a specific action or practice has a certain meaning only within it, in relation to it, its inhabitants and their habitus. Any practice therefore is **relational** and may change its meaning with the change of the field. The bearers or **agents** of habitus – the structured structure that is a structuring structure at the same time – tend to react to changes of the field in accordance with their habitus, by activating their resources, their capital, to struggle for the improvement or preservation of position within the fields.

We can therefore see that the initial individualist and substantialist epistemology is indeed consequently extended towards techniques of verification, and also to the researchers themselves. The sociologist, observing study choices statistically from the ‘outside’, merely records and interprets faithfully with the help of Weberian ideal-types what the students tick on the survey that he hands them. He deems himself independent, is assumed to be independent a priori due to his status.

Each social practice has two dimensions to it – a practical, implicit and an official, explicit or **symbolic** one. Both are knowledge in the wider sense of the term, both “[...] are the product of the same generative schemes [habitus], [but] obey a different logic.” (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 200f.). In a field, a dominant group with a high amount of field-specific capital tends to impose its specific combination of practical-implicit and explicit-symbolic representation of it. It has an **interest** (as any other group) in a specific symbolic representation of reality which, again, will change according to habitus and specific field environment. But this interest in its sociological reality will be usually unknown to the agents which is why it has to be recreated theoretically, with the help of **ideal-types** that might be called structural (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 49f.).

Interpretations without Alternatives

What are the practical consequences if the aforementioned substantialist and individualist perspective is taken? I want to show to what kind of empirical analysis and interpretation it leads? For this I use data from the Konstanzer Studierendensurvey (KSS), a Germany-wide survey of students of all higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics), subject groups, semesters and degrees (up to the PHD degree), that has been carried out since 1983 (AG_Hochschulforschung 1983-2013) . Of the 12 waves that have been collected in the meantime, I will use the last 5 (wave 8-200/2001 to wave 12-2012/13), mainly to assure comparability. The KSS waves contain a sample of about 39,000 students which is, according to the conductors of this survey, roughly representative in terms of regional distribution and gender-distribution of the whole German student body (measured against the numbers of the German federal statistical office).

Let us, once again, have a look at the distribution of the motivational structure of 'intrinsically' and 'extrinsically' motivated students as they are operationalised in this often-utilised data-set: i.e. *special interest for the subject*- and - *income choices in later employment* (Figures 3 and 4). At first, it surely looks as if the originally presumed opposition has been 'proven' by the facts. In other words, it appears that you can clearly see differences between the different subject groups. On the one hand, there are the 'intrinsic' subjects of the Humanities and Social Sciences (secondarily perhaps the Sciences) where the students (or many of them, at least) score high on the special interest scale, but low on the importance of income scale. On the other hand there are the 'extrinsic' subjects such as Law, Engineering and Economics whose students score relatively low when it comes to the special interest in the discipline, but high when it comes to later income chances. Other subject groups like Medicine (which comprises human, veterinary medicine, and dentistry) tend to rank somewhere in the middle. All this is very well in line what the authors stated above have found.

Of course all this is also premised on the assumption that *all* the students of *all subject groups* understand *the same thing* by the terms 'special interest in subject' and 'later income chances'. Now, how are these empirical divisions of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' disciplines to be explained?

Figure 3 Answers on the assigned Importance of special Interest in the Subject for choosing one's Subject, various Subject Groups and higher Education Forms⁵

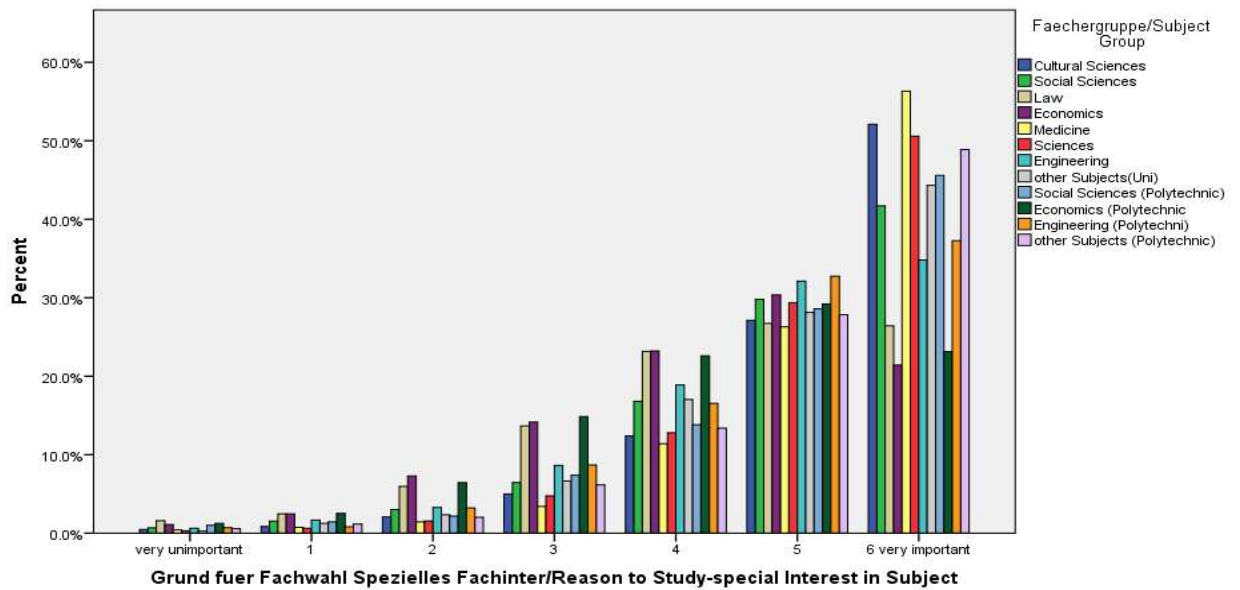
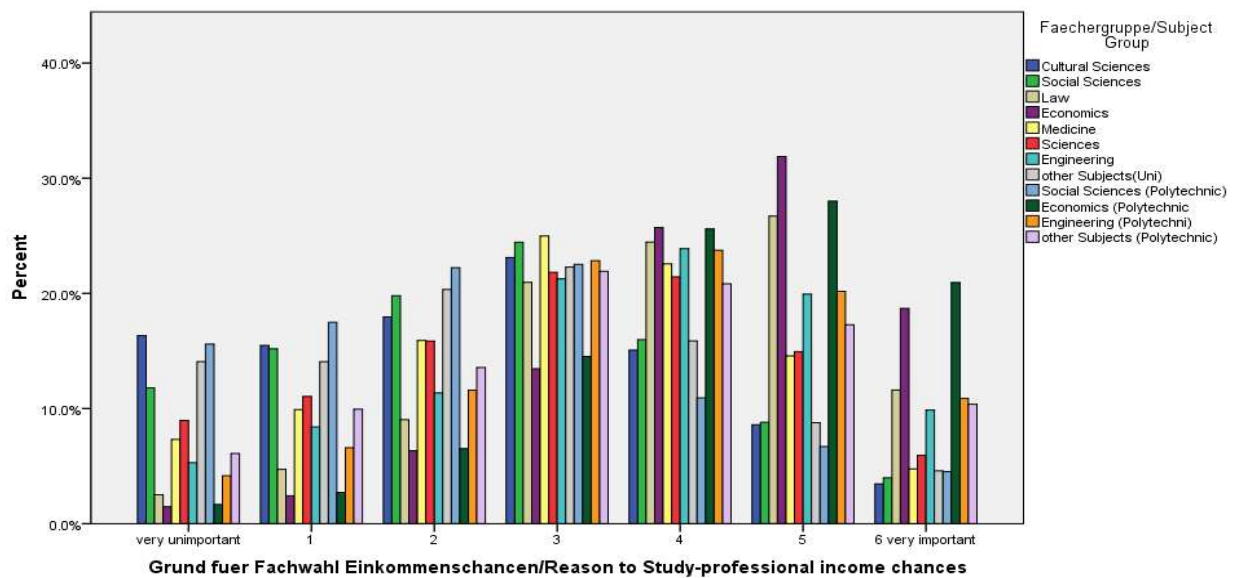


Figure 4 Answers on the assigned Importance later professional Income Chances for choosing one's Subject, various Subject Groups and higher Education Forms⁶



⁵ KSS waves 8-12

⁶ KSS waves 8-12

In Bourdieusian epistemology, the dominant symbolic representation of reality tends to be inculcated as a norm and ideal of excellence by way of education (Bourdieu and Passeron) into all members of a given field, and thus tends to become doxa, even if practical, implicit practice is different from its symbolic representation. One must therefore follow a '**principle of non-consciousness**' (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 15f.), leaving the Sociologist to ask and think about the '**surplus meaning**' in social practice.

The answer seems to be oscillating between two options: 1. The values are, somehow, preadapted to the disciplines. They are 'cognitive orientations': "These orientations and the connected forms of the rationality of action are not acquired at the university, that is, late on, but are already mediated by the familial and school socialisation. Contemplative or ascetic forms of lifestyle, the idea of 'vita activa' or the ethos of a professional career have their roots in societal norms and values, which have minted the orientations and expectations of the students, long before they have matriculated at university. The various academic disciplines offer different possibilities to realise such 'life plans'." (Windolf 1992: 77, my emphasis). 2. The other hypothesis which these researchers uphold is that, with the ongoing progression of studies, individual values and lifestyles *adapt* to the disciplinary cultures, if this was not already the case (see for example Georg, Sauer, and Wöhler 2009: 369f.).

Thus, according to this latter argument the discipline and its culture 'rubs off' on the students, their values, life-styles, political orientations and so on, and the detectable influence of variables of social origin tends to disappear as the individual personality of the student is absorbed, adapted or even 'vanishes' into the discipline's values and standards of thinking and behaviour. This makes sense from the standpoint of linear, substantialist causality and fits with the assumption of singular meanings since the change of original values automatically signals a cessation of the influence of social origin variables (principle of non-identity). On the other hand, a continuity of these values would, in this mode of perception, signal the persistence of influences like class origin, gender and/or ethnic origin.

One arrives at a model of change or adaptation which must be called mechanistic, since it is either the student that changes her or his fixed-meaning attitudes via studying the respective disciplines or not. A scenario where a student changes her values towards education and still, precisely *through* this change, expresses her social origin, is impossible and might be seen as metaphysical speculation by the proponents of this epistemology, since there is nothing that is taken to exist analytically beyond the assertions of individuals. One is therefore left, depending on the results of the statistically discernible, static relationship of social origin, values and disciplinary choice, with two options of interpretation: if the data 'show' regularities between all three (or at least between social origin and one of the other two) then one infers a pre-adaptation of students to their discipline which is quasi-deterministic.

If the data, on the other hand, 'show' no regularities to this effect (i.e. no significance between social origin and values), then one is obliged to grant either freedom from any social origin, or one may again interpret this as a quasi-deterministic adaptation to a new social environment (the discipline) with new values and rules. Either way, one only has a choice between radical *continuity or radical discontinuity* with regards to previous conditions and values on the level of the individual student.

But it seems doubtful that this actually provides a very adequate picture of how human beings make their choices, whether and how they adapt. For example, in a study on the effect of studying Economics at various universities in Israel and the United States, Rubinstein (2006) finds a strange variation in the answering pattern. He asked students of multiple disciplines to put themselves into the shoes of a vice president of a company in market trouble. Having to decide between doing the best for the company (by laying off a certain percentage of people) or for the employees (by taking losses), the students had to decide, hypothetically, how many employees were to be laid off. But Rubinstein asked the question twice, once in a verbal way (perhaps one might say 'social scientific' way), with a table at the end showing the

possible outcomes, and once in a mathematical way (the ‘Economic’ way), showing a formula instead of the table. He shows that the recommended number of layoffs is much higher (and thus different) in *all disciplines* when the question is asked in a mathematical, ‘Economic’ way (ibid.: C3-C7). This clearly speaks against the assumption of static values that only change slowly, and for the existence of something that might be called a creative response, ‘activated’ in the students only in particular contexts, indeed present tacitly all the time from the very beginning. The interpretative categories of change vs. consistency do not seem to be able to grasp this reaction. Could the same accrue to values and their relationship to cultural environments such as academic disciplines?

Agents in Bourdieusian epistemology are **cunning, creative** beings that are able to react to changes of circumstances very quickly without necessary (or even likely) full consciousness of what they are doing. They tend to **bend the specific norms of the field** in which they are, and they do so in **strategies** that spring out of their habitus and corresponding interests (Bourdieu 1992[1980]).

Homologies and unexplained Phenomena

It cannot be denied that much of the German literature on study choice and disciplinary cultures, by its comparative character, constantly produces data on attitudes which form homologies, in the sense of “[...] a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing [...]”, as Wittgenstein describes it for various language games (Wittgenstein 1958[1953]: 32e). The overlaps are

Part of the adaptable strategies of agents is **analogical reasoning** which uses available cultural resources to give a certain, yet limited coherence to their symbolic representation of their own practice (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 201-23).

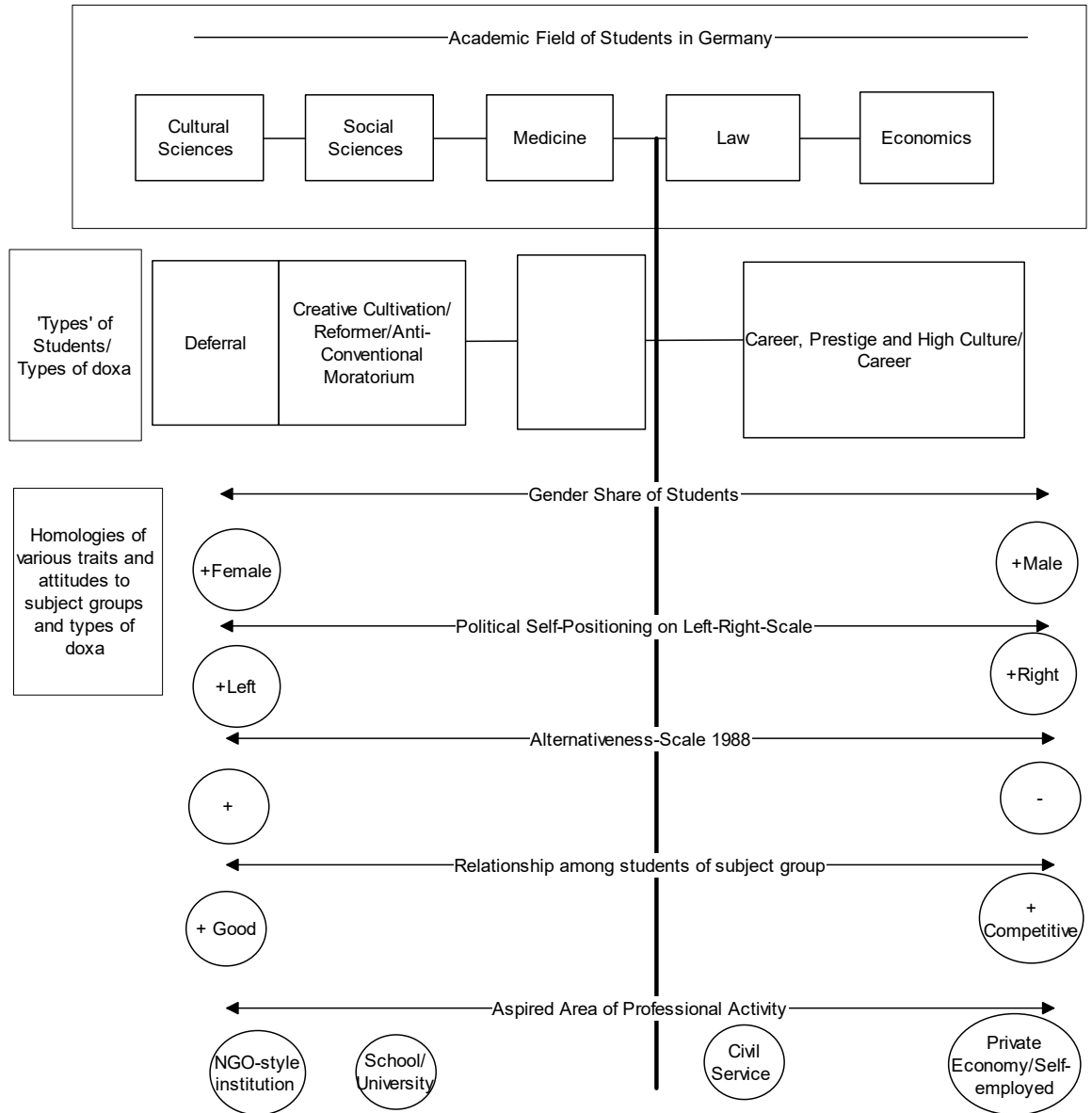
summarised in Figure 5. Certain subject groups correlate very highly, or ‘occur’, alongside distinctive study motivations, gender composition of student body, general and specific political orientation, attraction to alternative styles of living,

view of the social climate among students, aspired professional areas, and quite a bit more.

From the individualistic, linear-substantialist epistemology this proves and extends the validity of the original theory and model as it was laid out in Figure 1 and already applied empirically to the student's reason of study choice itself. This perspective then sees the superimposition of this dichotomy with others as the empirical discovery of the link of ideal-typical groups of free individuals with distinct life-styles, job, salary and political preferences to specific disciplines. This reminds one of the associations usually described in the political arena. Still, what one faces when taking this viewpoint is: one needs either to accept a substantial loss of explanatory power (in the case of non-pertinence of social origin variables) or taking away completely human agency (precisely when this pertinence occurs). Moreover, it also leaves us with quickly-changing phenomena that are produced but not accounted for.

Peisert et.al. for example are astonished about the 'profound dissent' (Peisert, Bargel, and Framheim 1988: 265) in terms of political preferences between students of different disciplines. They also show how the range of agreement or disagreement with various political orientations *within* subject groups, diminishes sharply as one moves from the 'left' sciences of Cultural and Social Sciences to the 'right' sciences of Law and Economics (ibid.: 258-60). In the former the degree of acceptance of social-democratic ideas is much higher than for Christian-conservative ones.

Figure 5 The theoretically and empirically constructed Homologies of academic Disciplines, Types of Doxa and various Traits and Attitudes of the Students, Synopsis of various empirical Studies



Other open questions concern the consistently low awareness of gender discrimination for all subject groups, even among female students (Peisert, Bargel, and Framheim 1988: 149f.), and the degree of acceptance of the received grades,

which comes as a surprise to the authors: "Astonishingly, even with the lower-graded students, only one fifth is completely dissatisfied with the achieved formal grades (12% are even totally satisfied). In this group, then, the disappointed expectations of achievement turn only partially into dissatisfaction with performance results." (Peisert, Bargel, and Framheim 1988: 176).

These and other sorts of phenomena, such as the *change* in expressed political attitudes within disciplines over a course of various decades, or the 'extrinsification' of formerly 'intrinsic' disciplines, pose a serious problem for this sort of individualist-substantialist epistemology, since it entails the frequent re-adjustment of the ideal-types formed to account for these changes. Astonished recording of 'data' is therefore a constant companion of this sort of Social Science. Could this data perhaps be constructed, and therefore used, in a different way?

What became increasingly clear during the last sections are the differences between a Bourdieusian epistemology and the epistemology applied in this sociology of study choice regarding the unanimity of concept meaning to survey participants, regarding the possibility of causal isolation of individual variables and their influence on study choice.

The Problem of Class

Part and parcel of the production and interpretation of data is of course the classification model used for social origin. Here, too, one may see the pervasive influence of an individualist-substantialist social philosophy and epistemology. This is true for both short-term and long-term considerations of the potential relationship of social origin with study choice.

What is usually used in the above-mentioned studies are one-dimensional models based on a single category which is more or less differentiated. For example, both Windolf (1992) and Georg et.al. (2009) use scales that essentially combine various

categories and sub-categories of rather abstractly formulated professions (Workers, Employees, Civil Servants, Self-employed, Others) to model their 'independent' variable of 'Social Status'. Georg et.al. (ibid.) use an 'autonomy of action scale' of Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik (2003: 119-21), which groups together 'varying degrees' of autonomy of action in an attempt to measure 'social layers'⁷ more 'economically'. This one-dimensional scale encompasses diverse groups such as higher civil servants (which includes university professors), very highly qualified executives, free professionals with more than 10 employees and big entrepreneurs that are all put into one single category ('high autonomy of action'). Another sociologist, working along the same ordering idea of 'autonomy of action', puts together the ticket controller, the small retail shop owner, the physician with her own practice and assistant nurse, the farmer with 40 hectares of land and the foremen of the construction company into a single category (ibid.2003: 121).

In the same vein, Windolf (1992) uses Mayer's scale of Social Status (Mayer 1979: 106f.), which assigns scores to various occupational categories, with the free professions and higher civil servants at the top, which represents a further generalisation from the initial abstraction. Yet other models construct the 'educational origin' of the student's parents by combining their professional status with their highest educational qualification. The problem with all these classifications, it seems to me, is their arbitrariness and their nomological character. The scales are either overtaken from state statistical classifications or constructed alongside abstract categories which seem to have little real grounding in the actual living conditions of the people grouped together.

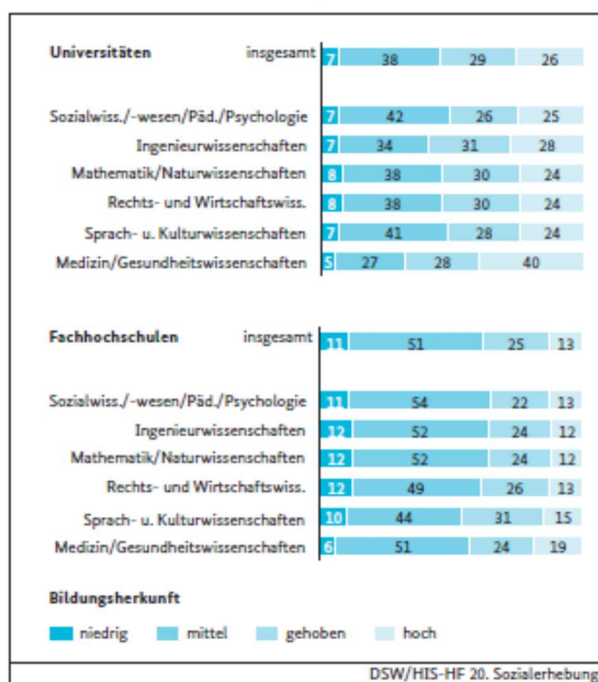
Hence it is barely surprising to see, at least apparently, a rather fundamental *social equality* between disciplinary groups in many of these studies or data sets (see Figures 6 and 7). Social class origin, as well as disciplines (which are also grouped

In Bourdieusian epistemology, social classes represent general, abstract tools of cognition that are understood in terms of their position in a specific social space, or field, and which may have very different phenomenal expressions at different times and places. Classes therefore are a type of structural ideal-types. (Bourdieu 1985)

⁷ This is a term prominent in the German sociological literature on stratification. See Geißler (1992) and Hradil (Hradil 2001) as standard references.

together alongside state statistical categories), in the epistemological world of these study choice Sociologists, are peculiarly external to the individuals and their decisions, either as ‘independent’ or ‘dependent’ variables. They are not theoretically connected to study choices, which forces these Sociologists to concede direct ‘dependence’ from social class in case they find statistically ‘significant’ differences between groups of students and/or disciplines, or direct ‘independence in the absence of these ‘significances’.

Figure 6 Composition of Student Bodies of various Subject Groups by ‘educational Origin’ (Bildungsherkunft), according to the Social Survey of the DSW⁸ (DeutschesStudentenWerk 1951-2016), ranked from low (niedrig) to middle (mittel) to elevated (gehoben) to upper (high)

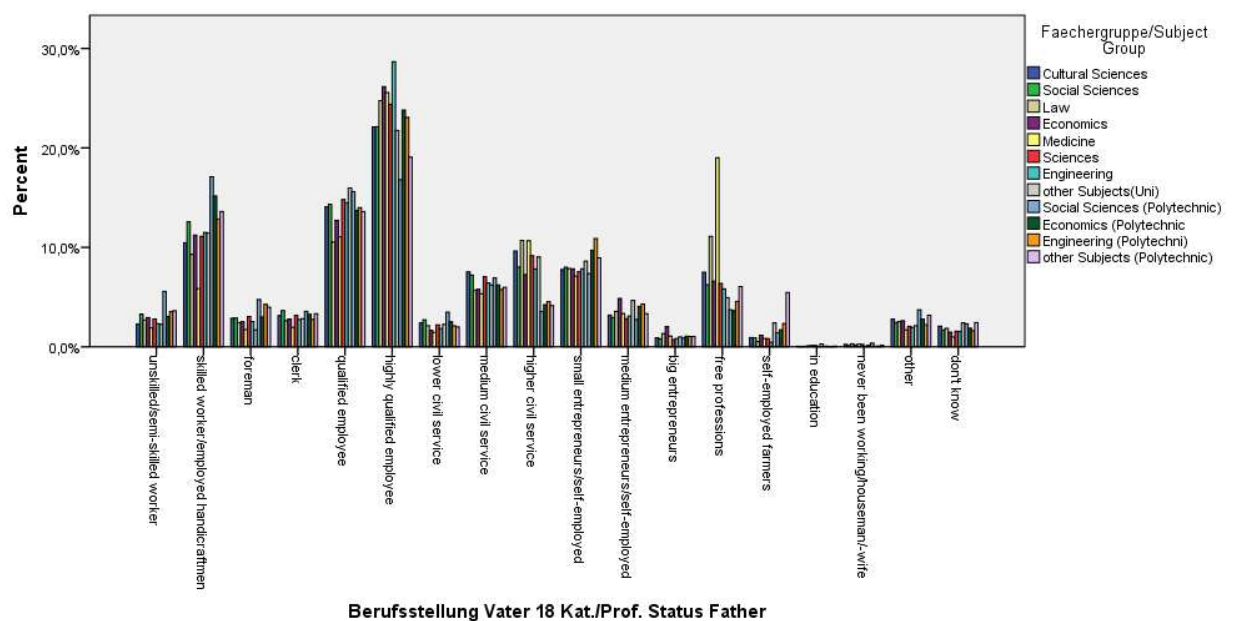


⁸ 2012 report, p.98, picture 3.14

Still more, there are further problems if one looks at long-term processes which some of the data sets (like the KSS and the ‘Social Survey’ of the federal German student services) and researchers aim to cover. If one makes no guess about the meaning of the relationship between social class, or social origin, and study choice at the moment, then one runs into even greater difficulty when looking at it *over time*.

Naturally so, because professional and educational structures and stratifications change over time with cultural and economic changes.

Figure 7 Social Status of Father cross-tabulated with Subject Groups⁹. Shown is a differentiated Classification along the Lines of Worker - Employee - Civil Servant - Self-employed -Other, most of which are segmented into lower, medium, and higher.



⁹ KSS waves 8-12

Therefore, in Germany as elsewhere, these changes during the last decades have led to the significant decline in what is called the 'industrial' or 'second sector' in favour of the 'service' or 'tertiary' sector (for example Schmidt 2010: 538), leading to massive changes in the numerical relations of various professional groups. This quite likely explains the high share of what is called the 'employee' category among all students. For example it can be shown that the share of the manufacturing workers within the whole working population in Germany decreases from about 30% in 1991 to about 20% in 2009 (the span is even bigger for Eastern Germany, see FederalStatisticalOffice 2012: 25). The same downward tendency is true for agricultural production and construction employment.

On the other hand, employment shares of public and private services and especially finances, renting and commercial services (in short, services) rose from a combined 35% to about 47% of the work force in the same time span (and the difference would be higher if the time span was widened). Millions of people (most likely represented within the surveys discussed here) have therefore changed their occupational types of activity within their working lives, and switched from a manual job of the 'secondary sector' which would likely fall in the 'workers' category or perhaps into the 'clerk' sub-category, into the 'Employee' camp. At least some of them are likely to have also undergone re-training or further training to meet the new demands of the labour market, a process which makes them formally 'qualified Employees'. The picture gets blurred even further when one knows that formal self-employment can likely disguise a quite different real occupation (like the parents of the 3rd year Economics student I interviewed who work on an assembly line but who are, officially, self-employed in order for the employer to save social security contributions). These socio-occupational changes show through also in the relevant statistics, so that it can be shown that for the 20-year span from 1993-2013 the highest professional degrees of the parents of students taking part in the Konstanz Student Survey (KSS) changed considerably towards higher education certificates (an increase of 10% alone for university degrees) and away from employee or worker-related certificates (apprenticeship and especially master craftsmen exam holders decreasing accordingly in the same

time span). It is likely that with the change of profession and education comes a massive change of attitudes and general outlooks on politics, the possibilities in life, education, culture, and many other aspects of life.

But what to make of all this? Without a theoretical exposition of how social groups are connected and dependent upon each other, and how this relationship changes over time, there is little more one can do than to register the changes, if indeed these changes are captured with the given instruments of measurement.

It is not surprising that other scientists that observe similar processes therefore tend to largely see phenomena of 'individualisation' and 'de-traditionalisation' occurring in the social structure in most recent times (Clark and Lipset 1991; Giddens 1991; Pakulski and Waters 1996; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). But what parts or aspects of the original relationship has been retained, and how? What does that mean for grouping classes, or social origins, for the 21st century? How are these changes linked to the study choice of contemporary students? The perspective of study choice remains quiet on these questions because they do not appear from its point of view.

What one may therefore say, as an intermediary summary, is that the epistemology of the literature discussed in this chapter is, so to speak, rather self-confident. It believes in the unanimous and valid definition of its concepts and the class distinctions it applies to make sense of 'study choice'. Qualitative designs of method seem to be regarded as preliminary, which is why it seems appropriate to engage in a further (and last) critical examination of a slightly different Sociology on educational choice, mostly rooted within the British context.

Chapter 3 - A (slightly) different World of Sociology

Unlike in the German literature on study *choice* or *motivation* the general focus of British authors lies more on *admissions* - often with regard to prestigious institutions of the stratified British system. This is perhaps due to different reasons that lie both in the factual differences of the educational systems that exist between the two countries *as well as* in differences in the sociological traditions of both.

One influential body of literature that attempts to give a sociological answer to the challenge of educational expansion for class analysis - and which is rather close to the German approaches just discussed - is that of John Goldthorpe (Goldthorpe 2010[1996]; Breen and Goldthorpe 1997; Goldthorpe 2007). He tries to cultivate his own style of rational action theory - in part developed against what he terms 'culturalist' approaches, under which fall the works of Bourdieu as well as that of Paul Willis. For Goldthorpe, these attempts are unable to single out the factors that explain sufficiently the continuation of what he calls "[...] the persistence of class differentials in educational attainment." (Goldthorpe 2010[1996]: 314). This is because, for him, they are stuck in a kind of circular argument in which class cultures influence the performance of children in school which in turn serves to cement the different cultures that classes live in. This seems to be a variant of the charge of 'determinism' that is often levelled at Bourdieu's work. It is therefore Goldthorpe's goal to look for "[...] evidence of the independent variable that is sufficiently removed from what constitutes the dependent one [...]" (ibid.: 331).

Goldthorpe attempts to distinguish both by approaching the topic of educational attainment from a theoretical angle of methodological ('though not ontological') individualism and rational choice. Class differentials in educational attainment therefore have to be explained by recourse to "[...] the action and interaction of individuals." (ibid.: 315), actions that can be modelled as being *rational*: "I assume that actors have goals, have usually alternative means of pursuing these goals and, in choosing their courses of action, tend in some degree to assess probably costs

and benefits rather than, say, unthinkingly following social norms or giving unreflecting impression to cultural values. I also assume that actors are to a degree knowledgeable about their society and their situations within it - in particular about opportunities and constraints relative to their goals - rather than, say, being quite uninformed and ideologically deluded. In sum, I take it that actors have both some possibility and some capacity for acting autonomously and for seeking their goals in ways that are more or less appropriate to the situations in which they find themselves.” (ibid.: 315). Given this epistemological starting point, Goldthorpe then tries to construct a theoretical argument in relation to educational expansion that accommodates the ‘enlarged opportunities’ it creates while nevertheless also preserving inter-class differences. He does so by distinguishing, following Boudon (1974), *primary* from *secondary* class effects on education. The former designate rather direct influences of class culture onto early school achievement (such as in primary school), the latter the influence of class-formed *aspirations and evaluations* on future professional ‘destinations’ and trajectories within the numerous ‘branching points’ of the educational system. Goldthorpe’s theoretical focus is on the secondary effects. It is there where, for him, differences in ‘cost-benefit balances’ in the various paths open to people at various points of their educational career produce the empirically visible class differences in educational attainment. In these differences of attainment Goldthorpe perceives transformed original class differences. By doing so, Goldthorpe wishes to account for the fact that the educational system re-defines and indeed relativises aspirations (ibid.: 320). By this is meant that a specific aspiration at a particular junction of the educational system, such as at the point of deciding for what university and discipline to apply - say, for the famous Politics, Philosophy and Economics degree at Oxford - are de facto *different in magnitude* for students with different class-backgrounds. This is due to the differing distance of class cultures to develop the aspirations needed to study PPE at Oxford - a very large gap to fill for students of working class origin, a much smaller gap from those students who come from the ‘service class’.

To my knowledge, there is no empirical validation of this specific theoretical approach by Goldthorpe himself. Nevertheless, it seems that his approach has had a profound influence on the way in which the sociology of higher education entrance and progression was, and is, conducted in Britain and elsewhere.

The epistemological position that Goldthorpe asserts seems (apart from the different focus on ‘attainment’ rather than ‘choice’), in fact, not so different from the German ‘study choice’ literature. Both approaches start from a rather widespread interpretation of Weberian Sociology (see Bourdieu 1987[1971]) which entails a principle of unambiguousness and, in a sense, timelessness, of meanings and concepts. For example, it is assumed in the German study choice literature, as we have seen, that professed and measured ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ choices are generally, across times and across social ‘layers’ and disciplines, the same. They are seen as comparable. On the other hand, it is assumed with just as much confidence that a ‘natural’ distinction of concepts can be made between ‘intrinsic’ vs. ‘extrinsic’ study choice, or again between influence of ‘social origin’ vs. influence of ‘disciplinary socialisation’. In the same vein, Goldthorpe, and all those who follow him in this, assumes an equally unequivocal meaning and possibility of separability of notions like ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ class effects on educational attainment, of individual ‘cost-benefit analyses’ across classes, or of ‘continuity’ and ‘change’. The meaning of these concepts is always clear and ‘obvious’ - it seems to be inherent, intrinsic in them. Connected with this seems to be a rather outdated, rather philosophical epistemological position that blends epistemological with theoretical propositions (see Bourdieu 1991: 30; Polanyi 1974[1958]: 361-64). If concepts and terms mean the same across time and space, then so do the resulting theories that use them to formulate specific hypothesis about such topics as class origin and educational attainment.

From this vantage point it is then logical that Goldthorpe rejects the Bourdieusian theory of cultural reproduction as well as one of its constituent concepts, that of cultural capital, as being at best *outdated*, outdone by the developments that have taken place ever since the 1960’s. This is because for him “[...] educational expansion [...] implies not the reproduction of cultural capital but rather its very substantial growth.” (Goldthorpe 2010[1996]: 319). John Goldthorpe is unable to

think together change and reproduction other than in a way which sees the former as an 'illusion' to the latter, as he is unable to think together symbolic violence or consecration with lack or existence of 'ability' and 'talent', or the 'primary' influence of the family with that of 'secondary' considerations (Goldthorpe 2007; and Fowler forthcoming for a defence of the Bourdieusian theory of transformation). Those concepts 'naturally' should be separated, he seems to hold. It is this clinging to 'obvious' meanings and categories which, rather than his exact theoretical stance of rational action, he has already bequeathed on current British approaches to the question of study choice. Given the usual division of intellectual labour, these studies understandably tend to *narrow down* their focus - away from theoretical critique and consideration towards a more straight-forward acceptance and empirical execution, and elaboration, of the substantialist-realist epistemology.¹⁰

This disposition can clearly be seen in the works of Alice Sullivan (Sullivan 2001; Zimdars, Sullivan, and Heath 2009), who, for the casual observer, seems to apply a Bourdieusian theory to the British case. Others (Boliver 2011, 2018) exhibit it as well. A closer look, however, clearly reveals her epistemological kinship with someone like Goldthorpe.¹¹ To begin with, she expresses her disapproval of a lack of precision in Bourdieu's work, "[...] about exactly which of the resources associated with the higher-class home constitute cultural capital, and how these resources are converted into educational credentials." (Sullivan 2001: 894). Here one can once again see the desire to clearly distinguish and to catalogue 'independent' from 'dependent' variables, to find complex causal procedures which presumably cannot be found in the 'crude' and 'confounded' (Zimdars, Sullivan, and Heath 2009) bivariate analyses as Bourdieu and colleagues performed them. Out of this, Sullivan and her colleagues construct a kind of reproach while thinking

¹⁰ This may be interpreted, from a different viewpoint, as a certain tragedy of the Goldthorpean research programme which started out from such a promising, and wide-ranging, open perspective (Goldthorpe et al. 1968ff.). This pattern of 'regression' can be found with other Sociologists as well - just compare the early (1975[1933]) with the later (1955) work of Paul Lazarsfeld. Mills (1959: 74f.) calls these "[...] abdications of classic social science."

¹¹ This is not restricted to British or German studies alone. There is now a whole body of literature that starts from a very similar epistemological position and which attempts to compare educational inequalities across a large variety of countries. See for example Shavit and Blossfeld (1993).

about applying Bourdieusian categories to British cases: “Simply looking at the bivariate association between private schooling and acceptance at Oxford would merely tell us that there is a link between the two, but does not allow us to assess whether private schooling increases the chance of admission to Oxford for children of the same social class background. The relationship between social class, private schooling, and Oxford entrance, is something which restricts the extent to which we could analyse this relationship. This sort of blanket rejection of a particular research method is unfortunate, acting as a barrier to informal critical engagement across research traditions.” (ibid.: 651).

In consequence, they proclaim that they will narrow down (to ‘limit’) both the topic of research - educational attainment thus boiling down to admission to universities¹² - as well as the tools to investigate it - cultural capital thus boiling down to specific practices that can be, or are, almost always gathered in surveys, such as reading, book ownership, museum attendance or TV viewing habits (Sullivan 2001: 899; also Boliver 2018: 40-42). The end-result of these successive simplifications and restrictions are the ‘data’ - sometimes acquired by a survey conducted on one’s own, sometimes simply borrowed for secondary purposes from state institutions - such as the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). These ‘data’ are then usually subjected to rigorous multivariate-causal statistical techniques, above all regression analysis Sullivan (2001: 900); (Zimdars, Sullivan, and Heath 2009: 657; Boliver 2018: 44). Out of this standardised procedure emerge ‘facts’, for example the ‘fact’ that high grades in secondary school, *ceteris paribus*, tend to increase the offer for admission at a Russell Group university (Boliver 2018: 44), or the ‘fact’ that reading or TV habits, *ceteris paribus*, indeed count as cultural capital in Britain and help to ‘explain’ educational attainment (Sullivan 2001: 909-12), or the ‘fact’ that social class, male gender and white ethnicity by themselves, *ceteris paribus*, do influence the admission to Oxford university (Zimdars, Sullivan, and Heath 2009: 659-61). But all of this is neither new, nor is it surprising. Nor does it show sufficient depth to go beyond simple social engineering recipes, such as to

¹² Indeed, researchers like Vikki Boliver seem to write about little else than university admissions, conceived in a rather narrow sense. See <https://www.dur.ac.uk/sociology/staff/profile/?id=9700>, last accessed April 22, 2019.

push for some kind of positive discrimination (Boliver 2018: 46-48), or to suggest policy programmes to increase the number of books in a household (Sullivan 2001: 909-12; Zimdars, Sullivan, and Heath 2009: 661). But this kind of research does not really contribute much to our understanding of whatever social processes are at play, and therefore neither helps us to change things effectively for the better: “The particular relations between a dependent variable [...] and so-called independent variables [...] tend to mask the complete system of relationships which constitutes the true principle of the specific strength and form of the effects registered in any particular correlation. The most independent of ‘independent’ variables conceals a whole network of statistical relations which are present, implicitly, in its relationship with any given opinion or practice.” (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 103).¹³

Indeed, it seems to me that it is not the researcher who is serving to finding out something about the object at hand. On the other hand, it is the object - after it has been mutilated and cut down to handy bits and pieces - that seems serve the needs of the researcher. This is what Charles Wright Mills calls the ‘methodological inhibition’, the “[...] pronounced tendency to confuse whatever is to be studied with the set of methods suggested for its study.” (1959: 51), and that under more or less disregard for “[...] the historical and structural confinement [...]” (ibid.: 51f.) a problematic is embedded in, which ultimately results in what Mills calls ‘thin results’.

What this kind of research does is to abstract from the real processes of the relationships between class, or social origin, and educational trajectories so much that what results is a more or less fine-grained, and overall rather irrelevant, ‘dust of facts’ produced by a conspicuously meticulous methodological and statistical procedure (‘The Scientific Method’, as Mills calls it). The preliminary logical endpoint of this more administrative-bureaucratic than scientific development seems

¹³ See also the examples given from the engineering policies of the then socialist bloc in Bourdieu and Passeron’s *The Inheritors* (1979[1964]: 68f.). The quote above also implies that Bourdieu (and Mills both also push for a ‘falsifiable’ empirical procedure, but one that is more *systemic*, and in a way more risky. This is because it is a whole *set of hypotheses*, put together into a model, that is tested in an empirical validation attempt rather than simply a conjecture of a relationship between two singular, isolated variables.

to be the various forms of regression analysis, or what we might call, following again Mills, 'THE METHOD'. All of the followers of Goldthorpean epistemology discussed above solely use THE METHOD, THE WHOLE METHOD and nothing but THE METHOD to empirically 'explore' and to test their proposed relationships¹⁴. There are neither in-depth interviews nor ethnographic elements in these works. Nor do those seem to be used in any serious way to inform or question the categories and distinctions employed. In other words, what one finds in these works is a ritualised science (ibid.: 71f.) based on a dogmatic use of a specific and arbitrary epistemology which, to be sure, may be economically bolstered as having "[...] commercial and foundation value [...]" (ibid.: 72, one may add political value here as well), but which in the end "[...] eliminates the great social problems and human issues of our time from inquiry" (ibid.: 73). Zimdars' et.al. indignant protest against Bourdieu's "[...] blatant rejection of a particular research method [...] acting as a barrier to informed critical engagement across research traditions." (Zimdars, Sullivan, and Heath 2009: 651) may therefore be read as only another sign of their dogmatic epistemological position which views any deviation from THE METHOD as an unforgivable lapse¹⁵. I must therefore in advance apologise to those readers who are inclined to THE METHOD that this work will not be able to satisfy their needs of 'precision' and 'scientificity'. All I can say at this point, again with Mills, is that "[...] no one need accept this model as a total canon. It is not the only empirical manner." (Mills 1959: 73). Are there, then, perhaps other ways to empirically engage with the relationship of social origin and social class?

I will now focus on the work of educational sociologist Diane Reay and her colleagues, particularly on choices in secondary (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011) and higher education (Reay, David, and Ball 2005). These works extensively draw on, and use, Bourdieu's notions of habitus, class, field and capital to make sense of

¹⁴ They are not alone in this: see for example Noden and colleagues (Noden, Shiner, and Modood 2014) on issues in educational admission related to ethnicity.

¹⁵ Or, in Bourdieu's own words: " [the critics] don't criticise my work, but the imagination of it which has been priorly distorted. All this because one constantly measures my work with forms of thought, especially differentiations, opposites, dichotomies, which it precisely wishes to destroy and to transcend." (Bourdieu 1989, my translation).

the data they produce which consists mainly of large in-depth interview samples (150+ interviews) and contextual information (on class, from informants etc.).

Just as with the German literature on study choice, this body of work operates with a model of disciplines arranged around antagonistic dichotomies as well. Here, however, the decisive opposites are not 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' - as with the literature discussed above - but rather 'reflexive' vs. 'un-reflexive' approaches to study choice, as well as well as structure vs. agency.

No Construction Work

The first thing to notice about these works is the peculiar approach to *object construction*, the specific use of Bourdieusian ideas. In the field of educational choice the authors pose, families and individuals have been interviewed to “[...] explore the effects of individual, familial and institutional influences and processes on choice-making.” (Reay, David, and Ball 2005: 11). The major goal of the research is thus the exploration of relationships and meanings. Moreover, the adopted definitions of social origin, especially social class, are taken from pre-defined state statistics (ONS 1994-2010) and are conflated into two classes - middle class and working class (Reay, David, and Ball 2005), so that in the 2011 book we find teachers of any kind (primary, secondary, university), businessmen, accountants, media executives, government officials, journalists, barristers and trade union executives put into the 'middle class' category. From this perspective a more nuanced class scale indeed makes little sense since it nevertheless homogenises the very plural, and in a way incommensurable, experiences of the interview partners, so that Reay et.al. stick to the rather crude classification:

“Although we are working with what are, in effect, notions of an upper, lower middle, as well as working class, based on educational background and occupation, we would caution that such simplistic divisions convey only a

fraction of the story of social class. Rather, we try, through our qualitative data, to tell a more nuanced, inflected tale.” (ibid.: 16).

Hence, while the German sociological literature on study choice, mostly quantitative, is content with the socio-demographic classifications offered by federal statistics and sociologists of social structure, this much more ‘qualitative’ approach wishes to *complement* this classification, but not to *replace* it: “So our shorthand division of the qualitative sample, particularly in relation to an upper, middle and lower middle class, are further overlaid by attempts to read class in a range of practices of distinction and reproduction. These focus as much on affective responses to the higher education choices process, such as sense of security or insecurity, familiarity or unfamiliarity, and attitudes and inclination, such as solidarist or individualist tendencies, among the working class students [...]” (ibid.: 16). We also see this approach when they talk about cultural capital which, for them, “[...] is much more than the high status activities that have traditionally been operationalised in empirical research within education [...]” (ibid.: 20).

Reay and colleagues criticise the existing class classifications as too narrow, as necessarily omitting important aspects of social life and experiences, against which they want to put a “[...] wider and deeper conceptualization of class [...]” (Reay 1997: 226). This for them means utilising Bourdieusian ‘cognitive tools’ such as habitus, class or reflexivity as templates that help to structure the otherwise unstructured, empathic and ‘free’ interpretation of the interview material. In that sense, their epistemology slightly diverges from classical grounded theory approaches. Even though they criticise the deficiencies of the existing class distinctions for their crudeness, Reay and colleagues are forced to use these same distinctions as interpretative guides. Working classes have a habitus of necessity, middle-classes one of ambition. But whether, and how, these abstract characteristics of the classes are confirmed in the concrete cases at hand is up to the interpretative judging of the researchers. And these interpretations are not undertaken with a view toward developing new tools which might explain the

phenomena at hand, but are rather a purely descriptive effort to *map out practices and experiences as seen by the researchers*: “As interpretivists we reject the notion of objectivity and absolute truths.” (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011: 169).

At the same time, paradoxically, they seem to have no problem citing ‘objective’ statistical studies that run counter to this epistemological principle (see for instance Reay 2017: 175ff.), which of course makes it look as if Reay et.al. are happy to cite empirical ‘evidence’ so long as it conforms to their pre-conceived moral values and assumptions, no matter how this ‘evidence’ was obtained or produced. It can be seen that these researchers are moved by strong commitments and values to give oppressed groups room to make their voices and experiences heard in scientific, and public, discourse. This strategy in itself would lead to an endless recording and re-recording of specific, unclassified and unclassifiable - as well as hardly comparable - practices. It would make it extremely hard to utilise the analyses generated in this way from another perspective, or to compare them with findings from a different national or temporal context.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with these critical intentions of ‘lending a voice’ to marginalised groups. This is always commendable and understandable in itself. However, it seems to me that both the critique of Bourdieusian ideas as well as the ‘inflected’ use of his concepts are based on an essential break with his epistemology, namely the distinction of a theory to construct theories (or meta-theories) as against theories (or perhaps descriptions) of social phenomena or spheres. Tools such as habitus, class or reflexivity as such always belong to the former and are put, in Bourdieusian epistemology, into a specific theoretical model that is quite coherent logically. It ‘rationalises’ the values and commitments the researcher brings into the field. It thus makes a certain set of predictions about the specific practice or experiences of the groups of agents in focus. Through the production of facts that this model generates (in method as well as in things to look for, and their interpretation in the model), it itself, and the values at its base, can be tested for their explanatory power, their use as tools.

Hence when Reay simply demands, for example, that we need “[...] to include race and gender differences [...]” (Reay 2004: 436)¹⁶ in habitus, she is stating her personal values that inform her meta-theoretical standpoint. She *believes* that race and gender are *just as important as class*, against which there is nothing to say at all. However, this would call for a, however preliminary, construction of a theoretical model that spells out a demonstration how gender and race are on par with class in a particular field. It still implies a need to reduce, to simplify, the influences that are supposed to explain social phenomena, to distinguish the most pertinent (like presumably gender, race, and class) from the less and least pertinent factors (like presumably eye colour, body weight, degree of physical disability or sexual orientation), and to conjecture how they intersect and are *expressed* in a particular field and time. To reject that sort of modelling in the name of a supposed ‘complexity’ and ‘inflection’ (if only this is an outcome of one’s study) in effect means to deprive oneself of any possibility of scientifically grasping this complexity. It means to pick out of the infinite complexity that *reality* already is bits and pieces that are not held together by meaningful, coherent relationships, but rather by vague impressions, by one’s emotions that are put into research practice rather without being subject to any checking first by way of objectivation. No ‘qualitative’ research design, however comprehensive, will ever be able to record the full complexity of social reality. But if it is not a coherent theory that gives orientation as how to navigate in this ‘sea of facts’ (Elias 2002[1969]: 63) where does this orientation come from? It must have a more or less pre-scientific character. It therefore seems likely that it includes common-sense notions.

¹⁶ see Hradil 1989 for an early, German, realist critique of Bourdieusian categories.

Bourdieuian epistemology always distinguishes between a theory aimed at constructing theories (or meta-theory) and **a theory of specific social phenomena** or areas (Bourdieu et.al. 1991: 30). Construction of the latter is necessary because “[...] the sociologist who refuses the controlled, conscious reconstruction of his distance from the real and his action of reality may not only impose questions on his subjects that their experience does not pose them and omit the questions that it does pose them, but he may also naively pose them the questions he poses himself about them, through a positivist confusion between the questions that objectively arise for them and the questions they consciously pose themselves. Thus the sociologist is spoilt for choice when, led astray by a false philosophy of objectivity, he undertakes to nullify himself as a sociologist.” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 38)

Thus, what one finds in this British literature on study selection is a bit of a mirror image to that found in the German one: rather than an individualistic model of study choice there is no real model at all; rather than more or less total trust in survey methodology and data there is rather total distrust and conspicuous rejection of all ‘objectifications’. This is often justified by reference to representing repressed groups or people which is, from this viewpoint, best done by bringing their narratives to publication as fully and undisturbedly as possible. Therefore the objectives of this kind of literature are as much scientific as they are political. Consequently, one needs to turn critical attention to the relationship of values to one’s scientific practice.

Values and the Model

Perhaps one must examine this inflected epistemology in action to see how it fares in actual research practice. In my view, the practical consequences of the confusion and conflation of meta-theory and theory are two-fold: first, the inability to identify and distinguish different habitus in adequately rigorous terms, which is identical to the inability to verify the (missing) model. And second, the compulsion to oscillate, in the interpretation of data, between determinism and voluntarism according to one’s own unchecked value-judgments, paradoxically not unlike the German authors discussed previously.

This can be shown in the work on middle class parents' secondary school choices for their children. Reay and colleagues conduct a large number of interviews with parents on this topic. They admit there are structural restraints in study choice and choice of secondary schools by middle class parents: "The spatial representation maps out a geography of taken-for-grantedness, possibilities, improbabilities, relationships and identities." (Reay, David, and Ball 2005: 50f.). These however remain unclear and vaguely defined. They also group the parents into the rather crude classifications of social origin mentioned before. These are of course already the beginnings of a model (based on a more Weberian class schema). But this is not followed by the construction of a *more precise* model which maps out, for the concrete British case of contemporary parental choice of secondary schools, the factors that allegedly contribute most to this choice process via the habitus. The interview data seem to be interpreted and judged by the 'subjective' criteria of the interviewers. This is because the slimmed-down version of a (rather Weberian, that is, one-dimensional) model (ONS 1994-2010) is so loose and vague that interpretation is checked only by the assumption (and presumption) of empathy and understanding of these parents rather than a consciously constructed model - in other words, by the author's personal values and views. This leads Reay et.al. to point out the alleged *movement, reflexivity, change* in habitus and behaviour of at least some of their respondents. The decision by some 'middle-class' parents to send their children to state rather than private schools is thus interpreted as an awareness of their own habitus, as genuine reflexivity with regard to structural constraints, in short "[...] a great departure from their family habitus [...]" (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011: 39). The authors see a new 'collective, moral vision' of 'reciprocity, care, empathy' on the rise within some respondents, at least potentially (ibid.: 167), as a consequence of their becoming 'sociologically conscious' of what is going on. They call these 'out of habitus' thoughts and actions (Reay, David, and Ball 2005: 71-73).

But this assessment seems not to be embedded within mapped out assumed relationships of a *proper* model, but, quite simply, on the *impressions* that these authors have of the answers of their interlocutors. The reference to a change points to an earlier state of the educational field (rather than to the practices of other groups in the *same* field) and thus is, in itself, no evidence of a change of habitus. Here one sees how the meta-theoretical - the level of the tools of theory-construction - and the theoretical level - the level of data-production - are conflated. The weak and flabby class model is effectively brought in as an excuse to dispense with model-making altogether under the guise of criticism of 'objectivism', and thus serves to sanction the direct, unchecked submission of interview data to the value-driven interpretation of the authors. The result of this procedure is, of course, the seeming affirmation of these values of reflexivity and change, congealed here in the notion of 'out-of-habitus'-experiences.

In a straight Bourdieusian perspective and corresponding specific model, out-of-habitus experiences¹⁷ would be simply impossible since we cannot get out of our habitus, our very own - and only- perception of reality (in the same way as we cannot screw out our eyes and put in another, foreign, pair). Habitus transformation is then only possible *within and through* itself, in other words by controlling it after having become aware of it, after it has already changed to a certain degree. This can happen by way of reflection and experience which, again, must be theorized properly in their *practical context*, theoretically rather than merely meta-theoretically. This does not mean that one denies the existence of reflexivity, or of habitus-*changing* experiences. But it should be explained theoretically, taking account of the concrete conditions of context in which these experiences occur, before it is proclaimed as such.

One would need to ask questions like these:

¹⁷ These are to be distinguished from practices where habitus, after thorough reflexivity of one's dispositions, is controlled consciously. This practice is at best a consequence of experiences which make one reflect upon, and then potentially change, one's habitus.

What about checking statistics about the school choices various fractions of the middle classes take? What about possible changes in the ranking of certain private schools vs. certain state schools? What about the school choice of other social groups and classes? Reay and colleagues refuse to deal with these questions under the notion that their analyses are not generalisable and not reproducible (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011: 172f.). There is no interest in refining their model, for example by introducing theoretically a dimension of capital volume and composition, or age, into it in order to better account for these school choices. To do so, of course, would generate questions that can be checked *empirically*: do middle-class parents with higher cultural capital take different school choices than those with higher economic capital? How do they justify that? Which statistics would be able to show that? One would get definite answers to these questions which would then induce further questions: If there are no detectable differences in school choices of middle-class parents with different capital compositions, perhaps a further distinction has to be made, for example by ethnicity? Could it otherwise not be that school choice is not even part of a field in the Bourdieusian sense? What would that mean for the role of education in the theory of reproduction? And so on... And so the dialectics of theoretical questions and empirical answers would be induced, a process that seems to me to be at the genuine heart of Bourdieusian epistemology and which is short-circuited by Reay and colleagues).

Perhaps one must briefly discuss another concrete example, the school choice of John, a middle class lawyer, for his children, to reiterate the characteristic method that follows from this perspective (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011: 32f., 36):

“Whilst habitus reflects the social position in which it was constructed, it also carries within it the genesis of new creative responses which are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced [...]. John, speaking

of his brother who became very ill during schooling, reflects ‘public school was supposed to make upper-middle class men of us but it crushed my brother’. A strong family tradition is therefore challenged by his experiences and those of his brother, leading John to declare that private schooling is ‘something you just would not contemplate for my own children’:

‘I knew I never wanted that for my own children. Pat [his partner] must have told you about my parents’ trust fund for the children. Well I knew despite any trust fund that I didn’t want either private or selective schooling for my own children. But then it was so difficult because that was the accepted behavior in my family, that’s just what everybody did in my family, go to private school. And I think the seminal moment came when I read that Daniel Day Lewis had been to an urban comprehensive. I remember thinking that’s alright then. I don’t know how many qualms his father had but he’s come out creative and and fairly sussed so you can choose that for your kids and they can survive. And I do remember thinking when I read it- and the children were very young at the time- this is good.’

John worked as a criminal lawyer, a job that needed empathy with a wide range of people and a capacity to deal quickly with difficult situations. He was adamant that it was not his schooling *per se*, but the witnessing of his brother’s illness and some subsequent voluntary work (translating benefit claim forms and rules for claimants) that had equipped him for his work: ‘People just know. They can see ...if you are some middle-class kid with no depth, or you have got a sympathetic approach, you know, someone who is going to listen.’ Despite his established middle-class background, John’s assessment is that private schooling, and even the more selective kinds of state-schooling, were to be avoided. As he put it, ‘I wanted (my own) ... kids not to be detached from society really.’

This last point, rather than specifically negative experiences of the sort outlined by John, was the most common reason for parents to react against their own

schooling as part of the making of choices and decisions for the education of their children. [...]

In these and similar cases there are middle-class families making similar kinds of school choice but with differing underpinning rationales: put most simply, for some families the choice of an ordinary state school might amount to an opportunity to *avoid* history repeating itself, whilst for others the same choice can provide an opportunity for *making* history repeat itself. Yet in both sets of cases, there is also a strong common feature - the desire for contact with social diversity. Examples like these illustrate the importance of background social class locations in shaping current practices, but they also suggest that even with something as specific as against-the-grain secondary school choice, it is much too simplistic to think of 'the middle-classes' in an undifferentiated way."

Witness how their perspective forces Reay and her colleagues to abandon any real attempt to explain and to understand why people like John choose the schools they do for their children. Even though the authors end on a warning of the simplicity of certain classifications, their own analysis does not lead to any suggestion as to how to change or refine these classifications. In fact, the 'undifferentiated' classes that form the de facto model of these authors - their incomplete and weak theoretical construction of the school choice of these parents - serves nevertheless as the basis behind which their unchecked, indeed arbitrary impressions of the interviews are disguised as an inflected 'Bourdieuian' interpretation. This is the case when Reay and colleagues claim the 'transcending' of 'social conditions' of the initial habitus of John and other parents in this study, or when they claim that there is a close link between 'middle-class backgrounds' with forms of selective schooling, against which John turns, or when they claim that this choice is "[...] against their own schooling [...]." (ibid.: 33). It is obvious that the overtaking of some (but, as we have seen, by no means all) Bourdieusian epistemological principles, forces them to adopt a perspective in which they must distinguish different groups of parents along 'pertinent' principles. The principle in this case is obviously the hopelessly crude

notion of the ‘middle class’ which serves as a surrogate for a real explanatory model. Again, the very crudeness of this notion allows for the surreptitious return of rather arbitrary, unchecked impressions and thus particular, and limited, values, creeping into the cracks and gaps of the weak, flabby model provided by the given categories (that are collated from NS-SEC). The yardstick for whether history is made to ‘repeat itself’ is simply the general, traditional practice of private-schooling.

It now also becomes clearer how contradictory these operations are: If Reay and colleagues call themselves interpretivists, why do they hold on to this weak model which they themselves call ‘undifferentiated’? If they really did not believe in objectivity, they should shun these classifications altogether, and simply interview and record parents on study choice *at random*, or take the model as a stepping stone towards a better model. But the adopting of Bourdieusian tools such as habitus or class indeed forces them to adopt at least some sort of model. Having an interest in retaining their interpretivist principles, they thus, very creatively, choose the least specific (or least determining, explanatory) model and classifications, an operation which they obfuscate, most likely to themselves as to others, through widely accepted criticisms of these very same classifications.

In fact, to more fruitfully say whether the choice of this and other parents *really* transcends the social conditions in which it was created¹⁸ (and of course, social conditions should be understood here in *relational* rather than substantialist terms, which would be almost banal to say), whether the school-choices really evaded a

¹⁸ It may be wondered how, and if, it is possible at all to transcend the social conditions in which one is immersed. Does that not entail an ‘out-of-habitus’-thinking which is eschewed above? It seems to me that there is no necessary antinomy between being immersed in social conditions and transcending their usual consequences, at least partially, in thought and in practice. In fact, reflections that spur far-reaching transformations of their initial environment seem to have very definite social pre-requisites, as the rise of modern science, among others, shows. But if the question is not if there can be a connection between social conditions and their transcendence it is a question of how, i.e.: what precise dynamics and conditions produce individual or group reflections that take as their object not the objects of the world, but the objectivators of the world? That is, of course, an empirical question, not a philosophical or teleological one.

middle-class background, whether these groups actually acted “[...] against their own schooling [...]” (ibid.), a much more refined model has to be put to the test of the facts. This could cover, for example, the inclusion of educational expansion into the model: What impact does that have on the reproduction struggle of the classes? Do they develop new strategies compared to 30 years ago to reproduce their capital? Do they then also adopt new strategies of justifying this choice? Does the expansion of education and struggle within education not mean that one might need to look for a more nuanced differentiation within the middle classes, such as in terms of level of education, age, gender, or ethnicity? Most importantly, one would need to situate these answers within a specifically British context, on the basis of its specific, and dynamic, *history* of class conflict in and through education, its specific, changing meanings and lines of distinction, one that goes beyond basic distinctions of Oxbridge vs. the Rest or independent/private vs. state schooling. In short, one should create a model that is *fitter* for reality, that has a *better* chance of explaining the produced facts more sufficiently, to be successful in competition with positivist models, so to speak.

One might therefore say that the initial refusal of constructing a more precise model forces a production and interpretation of data that has to take answers at face value (practical reflexivity is basically equivalent to sociological reflexivity, see above). But that does not exclude the possibility that the specific values of the researchers have entered into their interpretation and classification of these results. In this these authors, once again, are not too far away from their German counterparts.

The Ethnocentrism of a Profession?

The actual ‘objective’ results coming out of these studies, understandably then, are rather meagre: for instance the finding that middle-class children from private

schools have more support in getting into Oxford and Cambridge than working-class kids, or that “[...] the sorts of constraints [on higher education choices] vary enormously.” (Reay, David, and Ball 2005: 49), or that the middle classes would have the symbolic capital to challenge the established order (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011: 166; see also Bathmaker et al. 2016).

In terms of interpretative results, these studies are forced, due to the absence of a rigorous model, to switch quite arbitrarily in the assessment of the produced interview statements between either a liberation, a process of “[...] avoid[ing] history repeating itself [...]” (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011: 166; see also Reay 2002) or simple reproduction, that is “[...] making history repeat itself [...]” (Reay, Crozier, and James 2011: 33; also Reay 1997). In the end, within the flexible theoretical model provided by crude statistical classifications, it seems to be at the discretion of the researcher and her value-informed impressions of her interview material whether practices are to be labelled ‘liberated from’, or ‘chained to’, structures. Consequently, it is hard to see why a concept like habitus, which is supposed to be the theoretical counterpart in the model of the practical mediation of structures and agency in specific circumstances, should be a central or important pillar of this perspective.¹⁹

Rather, it reminds one of the attempt and wish to recuperate/to revitalise the free, unrestrained individual as evident, for example, in Sartre’s philosophy (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 42-46). Even though Reay et.al. often start out with the ‘determined’ subject, somehow ‘misfirings’ emerge eventually, and ‘reflexivity’ and ‘creativity’ shine through the iron cage of determinism via the clash of the multiple ‘habitus’ (individual, familial, institutional)²⁰. It can be shown that this Sociology “[...]”

¹⁹ Bridget Fowler’s critique of Derek Robbins’ interpretation of Bourdieusian ideas finds a somewhat similar gap to the core of Bourdieusian thought, which consists in combining both objectivist and subjectivist moments instead of privileging the latter (Fowler 2007: 370f.).

²⁰ Once again, this is against the Bourdieusian claim of the existence of only *one* habitus within a single agent. This might be cleft *in itself*- and once again, this would have to be shown within a proper model applied to specific circumstances that allows for systematic validation.

constantly oscillates [...] between an objectivist vision that subjects freedoms and wills to an external determinism or an internal, intellectual determinism and a subjectivist, finalist vision [...]" (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 46). With regard to this 'transcendental overcoming' (ibid.: 44f.), see exemplary the stories of Shaun (Reay 2002) or Christine (Reay 1997) for respective analyses of this kind of human constraints²¹, is at least possible and appearing to start within the near future. Thus, for Reay et.al., we could also apply what Bourdieu writes about Sartre whose "[...] typically Cartesian refusal of the viscous opacity of 'objective potentialities' and of objective meaning leads him to entrust the endless task of tearing the social whole, or the class, from the inertia of the 'practico-inert', to the absolute initiative of individual or collective 'historical agents' such as 'the Party [...]" (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 45). This tendency of eagerness seems, in the work of Reay and her colleagues, especially applicable to subordinate groups, whether these come from petit-bourgeois or working-class backgrounds.

This can be seen, for example, in the readiness with which school choice is interpreted as reflexivity or in the way in which the reflections of working class students on their place in university are read as revealing an awareness of being a 'fish out of water'²² (Bathmaker et al. 2016) which is then construed as leading to a

²¹ Another example of this mode of thinking would be Angela McRobbie's analysis of British TV fashion programmes (2004: 99-109). An object - here certain TV-shows- is given deterministic powers over the subjects that are exposed to it, in line with the needs of abstract social fields: "My claim here is that [Bourdieu's] writing allows an understanding of how social re-arrangement along gender lines takes shape within media and popular culture by means of habitus adjustment to ensure conformity with the contemporary requirements of the fields of employment, consumer culture and sexuality." (ibid.: 108). But what are the historical, and social, conditions of affirmative reception of these TV-programmes? What sort of habitus, in what aesthetic field, is spoken to by these programmes? All these questions, once again, remain unanswered, and so one seems to be left with a statement of dislike that claims objectivity with little, if any, means to check its validity and to respond to it in terms other than *pure taste*- I don't like that! Very quickly, then, it seems to me, one is tempted to leave sociological discussion altogether and enter the world of smart, pointy essays. See Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975) for a proper theoretical model of the French field of fashion at the time.

²² Once more, one must point towards the fact that it is neither clear how the 'fish' stands against the other 'animals', or who these animals are anyway, and what exactly makes them so adapted to their 'natural environment'. With the de facto flabby model used, to say that 'working class' children are 'fish out of water' in certain educational establishments without clarifying first what this 'water' is in which working-class children are supposed to move smoothly, has the same cognitive value as simply stating that dinosaurs are unfit to live in our contemporary Eco-system.

form of ‘resistance’²³. The direct exposure of interview statements to the unchecked values of the researchers in this perspective becomes especially visible when the authors reflect on their own practice²⁴: hence Mellor et.al. (2014), using the same crude middle- and working-class model, are forced to express not much more than their likes and dislikes among the statements of their interlocutors: “[...] feelings of unease, irritation or bitterness [...]” (ibid.: 142) when ‘middle-class students’ describe their privileged upbringing, ‘warmth and intimacy’ when ‘working-class’ students “[...] discussed very difficult backgrounds and present circumstances without shame [...]” (ibid.), and again ‘frustrated’ and saddened’ when ‘working-class’ students are disgusted with friends of theirs (ibid.: 143f.).²⁵ In the absence of a proper theoretical model or an intention to construct such a model, these idiosyncratic interpretations can, then, lead very quickly to an imposition of the specific meanings and cultural values of the authors onto the statements of the subjects they claim to understand. This, too, has its predecessors in sociological thought. This danger was seen, too, in the case of German literature on the topic.

²³ Once more, it has to be asked: ‘Resistance’ against what, from what original initial point, conditions of existence and habitual dispositions, and in which social context?

²⁴ These authors seem to be in tune with a wider tendency within current British Sociology. This tendency consists in claiming an objective disadvantage (such as belonging to a particular group, for example the ‘female working class’) in fields like higher education. This makes them outsiders or ‘fish out of water’ which have to fight their way up against adversity and the odds. But where is the proper evidence that this applies to these groups within British academic Sociology, the ‘water’ in which these ‘fish’ swim and live? At the very least, then, one should clarify what or who is meant by ‘water’ and ‘fish’. Otherwise, one might say with just as much justification that a very peculiar ‘water’ it must be where ‘fish’ like these can survive, and even thrive, by continuously claiming to be ‘out of water’.

²⁵ Once again, for a more thorough reflexivity, it would need to be asked how the specific habitus of the authors and interviewees are *expressed* in the academic field of British Sociology and in the field of study choice. These expressions would then need to be related to each other to arrive at a more sociological reflection of one’s own feelings against interviewees during the research process. Once more, one needs to construct theoretical models.

Another kind of ethnocentrism connected to intellectual living conditions and corresponding habitus is '**scholastic populism**' "[...] which leads some to credit working-class people with a 'popular aesthetic' or a 'popular culture' [...] it performs a tacit universalization of the scholastic viewpoint which is not accompanied by the slightest real intention of universalization of its conditions of possibility. [...] One cannot, in fact, without contradiction, describe (or denounce) the inhuman conditions of existence that are imposed on some, and at the same time credit those who suffer them with the real fulfillment of human potentialities such as the capacity to adopt the gratuitous, disinterested posture that we tacitly describe [...] in notions such as 'culture' or 'aesthetic'. (Bourdieu 2000[1997]: 75). This by no means implies disrespect for lower classes or marginalized groups, to the contrary. It acknowledges as completely as possible the **material conditions of production and reproduction** of culture by being aware of the dual nature of social reality which has an **ethnological dimension**, where popular cultures exist, and a **sociological dimension**, where a clear, empirically discernible hierarchy reigns and specific cultures are devalued. "The social world, with its hierarchies which are not so easily relativized, is not relativist" (ibid.: 76).

And so, one final consequence of taking up an individualist and subjectivist social philosophy and epistemology of this kind also seems to lead to a kind of scientifically proffered assessment of social space. It seems to reflect and to exalt more the tastes of the researchers than making sense of the subject's attitudes or norms.

One may now see more clearly the differences between a Bourdieusian epistemology and the method applied in this literature on study choice. The latter rejects the reductions of reality into models via reference to a sort of Weberian-style intellectual that is, in their view, artificially remote from the struggles and suffering of the everyday life. The former, on the other hand, defends the right and necessity to reduce and hopes, nevertheless, that this can go together with political efficacy and solidarity with the weakest.

Conclusion - Beyond epistemological Obstacles - towards a new Formulation of Study Motivation

I do think that both main bodies of social scientific literature discussed here - the German and British studies of educational choice - have assumptions at their base with which a rigorous rational polemic would take some issue. The mainly German tradition²⁶ starts out from a thoroughly individualistic viewpoint which grants students (as well as themselves) independence from their social surroundings, at least until proven otherwise. It also assumes unambiguous and clearly discernible meanings of statements on study motivation for all participants of its studies. Lastly, it believes in the linearity and possibility of isolation of potential causal triggers that can influence study choice and motivation. These assumptions make for a Social Science that constructs ideal-types of study choice along a distinction of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' study choice. This distinction depicts certain patterns of educational attitudes that distinguish disciplines. It sometimes can also link variables of social origin to these attitudes and choices. On the whole, however, it frames educational attitudes at universities as rather autonomous processes happening solely with respect to scientific disciplines. The perspective thus oscillates between radical individual freedom and deterministic tethering of 'actors' to structures (whether it is that of social origin or the attitudes of their discipline of choice). Its principle of unambiguity of meaning (both in its theory and in the interpretation of student's understanding of, and relationship to, statements and concepts) induces it to construct educational choice as a more or less radical *discontinuity*, both in the short and long terms.

²⁶ One might include the British examples of John Goldthorpe or Anett Sullivan, although of course there might be very different sociological mechanisms and habitus behind this work.

On the other hand, the mainly British interpretivist strand²⁷, at first glance seemingly diverging from its German counterpart, emphasises the relative and multifarious nature of 'truth'. This, together with a strong belief that moral-ethical values and scientific practice should and can be closely intertwined²⁸, leads it to engage in mainly in-depth interviews and ethnographic research on educational choice that focusses on individual struggles against the odds, on reflections of the educational system as well as strategies for succeeding in it. While there are no ideal-types constructed, the interpretation of interviews or 'stories' is, peculiarly, also ending up with a similar form of oscillation. The interpretivist-empathetic stance taken induces the authors in question to attribute interviewees and statements (at least implicitly) to one of two poles: on the one hand mechanistic chaining to structures or, on the other hand, their transcending and challenging by developing fresh strategies of coping with the difficulties. Furthermore, due to the absence of any serious model, the researchers are forced to take interviewee's statements at face value. In this is expressed a strong moral argument, celebrating 'resistance' and 'resilience' on the one hand (for example Bathmaker et al. 2016: 93-100), condemning 'elitism'²⁹ on the other.

Aside from obvious differences like chosen methodology (largely quantitative vs. largely qualitative), there seems to exist a number of deep-seated commonalities between both epistemologies. Both in effect have an individualistic philosophy of the social which applies to both themselves and to the students they study (albeit in different ways). Both, consequently, do not enquire into the nature and origin of

²⁷ Again one finds proponents of it in the other country as well, for example Bremer and Teiwes-Kügler (2007), undoubtedly again inflected by national intellectual traditions, such as objective hermeneutics.

²⁸ "I often despair. But I have an anger about the unequal way things are that is still as strong as it was 50 years ago. I will continue to struggle against social class injustices, and this book is part of my struggle." (Reay 2017: 195)

²⁹ This seems to be the case not only within educational research. Witness the frequent declarations of solidarity with what is imagined as 'working-classes' and their suffering and the condescension and ridicule of some of their practices, such as misogyny or racism, which can be seen in the disgusted reactions to the Trump or the Brexit vote. The point here is not to condemn the political position-takings of Sociologists, but to challenge them to supplement, and perhaps even somewhat to replace, these political stances with a more scientific understanding of what they criticise or celebrate. Presumably, what might be found through this reflexive procedure, may be a cultural distance to these vulnerable groups that is larger than expected or assumed at first.

their concepts of distinction (intrinsic vs. extrinsic here, reflexive vs. not reflexive there) that help to produce and assess their data. It remains a pending problem to explore these issues further in a sociological-reflexive study.³⁰ Nevertheless, the individualistic philosophy of the social can be framed as an obstacle to scientific progress, as two variants of ‘subjectivism’ that need to be overcome (Bourdieu 1992[1980], 2000[1997]). Bourdieu’s theory holds that the effect of scientists’ un-reflected assumptions is such that they tend to be smuggled into the objectivating operations of their science. The results, then, are inevitably partial and biased. A critical examination indeed shows that this criticism can easily be sustained here. The German authors tend to systematically consecrate a specific disciplinary culture and relationship to the educational system (namely, their own) through their substantialist definition and objectivation of ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ study choice. The British authors tend to systematically consecrate a specific type of reflection of the educational system (namely, one which conforms with their own reflections and that of their own discipline). What we have here, I argue, are two forms of empiricism. “Sociology cannot constitute itself as a science truly separated from common-sense notions unless it combats the systematic pretensions of spontaneous sociology with the organized resistance of a theory of knowledge of the social whose principles contradict, point by point, the presuppositions of the naïve philosophy of the social.” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 15). But what does this epistemology look like? We must bring together the hitherto dispersed epistemological boxes into a more coherent standpoint that might serve as an alternative to the subjectivisms discussed so far.

Towards a new Mode of Thinking

The first major difference of this epistemology to the paradigms discussed before is its rejection of the assumption of individualism: Instead of free-floating monads, individual beings are embedded in particular, culturally specific environments

³⁰ I am thinking of works like that of Stefan Collini (2006) that enquire about the national peculiarity of British intellectuals vis-à-vis their western counterparts. Its historical habits and traditions arguably lie in a relatively moral colouring and motivation of science.

(more or less prosperous, more or less educated, and so on). These environments, that can be classed and classified, entrench themselves not necessarily in a unified ethic, but rather, preceding such a thing, in a *system of dispositions* that tends to be adapted to its original socio-cultural environment and which tends to be hidden from conscious view (if not necessarily unconscious either). The agents that carry this system of dispositions (which can also be classed and classified) into new social environments with more or less different rules and conditions as well as their own forms of struggle (i.e. the fields). This is the normal case in highly differentiated societies. But through this change of environment what also changes is the relationship to the system of dispositions, the habitus. In each new environment the formerly acquired dispositions adapt, but adapt within their own limits, not endlessly or arbitrarily. That also implies that the same or similar dispositions (like that of cultural good-will of people of a petit-bourgeois origin, for example; Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 318ff.) can be expressed in different ways in different environments, or in terms of a different ethic.

But that poses new problems: if the original system of dispositions, the ethos, is not really consciously known to the individual that bears it, neither is its adaptation to a new social environment. First, this opens up a new, partly sub-conscious dimension which operates clandestinely but which nevertheless is expressed in a specific, visible position-taking in a specific field. The job of the Sociologist is now to decipher this expression, to uncover and discover its dispositional root. Second, this fundamental insecurity about the *meaning* of a practice questions established certainties of meaning - the same practice may mean different things according to its different embeddedness, and different practices may mean the same thing. The point is to search for, and find, these hidden differences and similarities through theoretical construction. Hence this perspective rejects the singularity of meaning assumed by both perspectives discussed above. Instead of substantialist interpretations of practices, it leads us towards a more multidimensional, structural view (much like with the theory of the planetary system). All that is solid melts into air. It leads us to question and to rethink received groupings of individuals *and* practices.

How is one to do this then? This perspective encourages thinking in models, comparing models of thinking. The eventual goal is to reconstruct objectively the system of dispositions expressed in the field-specific position-takings, to dare to construct its most important aspects and material influences³¹, and then to show how this particular habitus reacts to the particular field in question to bring about the empirically observable position-taking. Instead of rejecting the construction of models or in producing linear models, one must therefore engage in producing models that reproduce abstractly the practical dispositions that make agents do what they do. I will attempt to sketch such a model in the closing part (chapter 9) of this work.

Furthermore, the introduction of particular dispositions, their preceding conditions of existence and their *relative distance to each other* introduce a dimension of relativity that allows for the comparison of different historical worlds and times. In other words, once a model that links specific dispositions with a specific ethos and position-taking in a specific field has been constructed, this relationship may be *compared* with those of other times, agents and fields. This method of comparison can even be used to construct the model for the field in question in the first place. This *analogical* reasoning is another important difference to the subjectivist epistemologies depicted above.

“The *ars inveniendi* therefore has to aim to provide the techniques of thought that make it possible to perform the work of hypothesis construction in a methodical fashion while minimizing its inherent risks through an awareness of the dangers of this undertaking. The reasoning by analogy which many epistemologists regard as the first principle of scientific invention is called upon to play a specific role in sociological science, the specificity of which is that it

³¹ That no doubt means to exclude other influences, which might earn this perspective moral charges of neglect and discrimination. But, to the contrary, it is through this objectivation of our own assumptions that, in this perspective, has the most chances of escaping ethnocentrism.

can only constitute its object by the *comparative approach*. To escape from idiographic consideration of cases that do not contain their own reason, the sociologist has to multiply the hypotheses of possible analogies until he reconstructs the family of cases that gives an adequate account of the case in question. And to construct these analogies themselves, he can legitimately make use of the phenomena already given form by other sciences [...]" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 51).

In summary therefore, this alternative vision of understanding and investigating upon human practice proposes its thorough embeddedness in specific times and places. It assumes systems of dispositions that are acquired in specific conditions of existence that mark differences to that of other conditions of existence. These dispositions or ethos are transferrable to other contexts or fields in which they 'react' differently. This opens up the question of meaning of various practices or position-taking in fields, of the underlying structural mechanisms that act in and through the 'free' dispositions of the agents. It thus forces us to question the doctrine of singular, substantialist meanings, and to work towards constructing models that make visible just this link between structures, habitus and position-taking. But in order to be able to do this we must first determine what exactly the structures, both of the field and of the agents within it, are in their historical and local specificity. Before one can start explaining things, one needs a framework (i.e. the epistemology) of a certain puzzle, and, of course, one must start collecting pieces. That is exactly what I will try to do in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter 4 - Preparing a Bourdieusian Theory of Study Choice and its Application to the German Case

It is clear that different groups can be involved with the same cultural items and yet take different homological meanings and effects from them. It is also clear that what a particular group makes of a particular item can change over time, so that what was once accepted is rejected. A particular item is not, then, changeless, absolute and specific in its cultural meaning. It is not as if a fully constituted 'content' always draws forth a predictable response. Objects, artefacts and institutions do not, as it were, have a single valency. It is the act of social engagement with a cultural item, which activates and brings out particular meanings. On the other hand, there is not a limitless scope for the production of cultural meanings. I argue for a more structural analysis of the 'objective possibilities' of particular items in an assessment of their role in cultural relationships.

Paul Willis - Profane Culture

After having highlighted the differences of a Bourdieusian approach with that of established subjectivist perspectives on study motivation, we must now transmit its principles to the concrete object at hand. What are the basic epistemological principles of a theory of study choice, and what forms of enquiry does it lead it to? We may know now that this approach is relational and structural, that it works by way of controlled analogies, but how are these applied to the 'bread and butter' issues of the German academic or educational field? For our purposes this is the relationship between the social field and the scientific/academic field, with its own peculiarities and laws. This implies that we are concerned with exploring the question of the degree of fit of habitus and disciplinary environment, and the objective distinction of individual students according to differentiating degrees that are reflected in the minds of students. But what specific habitus could that be, and

to what academic field precisely do they fit? To put more flesh to the bones, answering these questions necessitates us to enquire about the longer-term constitution of habitus of both students and the general outlook of the discipline which they study (here it will be Economics). In short, we must first construct the way we look at things ‘from the outside’ (Smith 2012: 99) before we look at how others look at things ‘from the inside’.³²

Habitus and Field(s)

No seriously Bourdieusian perspective can do without a proper application of Habitus and Field to its specific object of study. Any agent within this perspective owns, and tends to be owned by, a habitus which is the product of definite social origins and definite social trajectories. These mental dispositions are therefore objectively formed as well as giving rise to ‘subjective’ attitudes. But as such, these dispositions and their origin are likely to be, at best, vaguely known to their bearers (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 121f.). But a habitus, historically minted and situated, only functions within “[...] a network [...] of objective relations between positions.” (ibid.: 97) , definite relations that represent, themselves, a historical process of genesis and change. A habitus can only be understood and explained properly within a concrete, specific field, when its specific expressions and position-takings vis-à-vis the position-takings of other types of habitus validate the theoretical construction which it represents in the first place. Hence it is vital to define specifically both habitus and field and the relationship between the two.

In this perspective study choice is one expression of habitus. Contrary to what is assumed by a subjectivist epistemology, study choice is a priori not viewed as the free choice of individual tastes or talents, and neither (as in objectivism) as purely

³² This perspective also assumes, by default, a primary importance accorded to the national academic field vis-à-vis international relations. It is true that the international field is very important in Economics, particular via its American pole (Hesse 2012). Nevertheless, it is also true that, in a Bourdieusian perspective, it is only through a specific national field and its groups of agents that this international influence is executed.

determined by social structures, but is a decision guided by the sense of one's place within society, and, later on, within the specific profession that one takes up (understood as a field in the Bourdieusian sense). Study choice is then an expression of the specifically cognitive and substantive interests of the particular social group from which the particular student comes, whether conscious or not. It can be posed that, by choosing a certain discipline and a certain institution, a student acts *as if* she or he is making an investment, similar to an *as-if*-investment in life-style (Bourdieu 1984[1979]) or the marriage market (Bourdieu 1992[1980]). The educational trajectory of any student can be conceptualised as a series of manifold choices (whether to opt for elementary school A or B, whether to learn or not to learn, whether to take this or that subject for specialisation in his Abitur exams³³, whether to study this or that discipline, whether to focus on this or that sub-field of his discipline, and so on), where the preceding choices influence the later choices as part of one's trajectory. This work aspires to explore the sociological meaning of the choices that occur during the last (the tertiary) phase of a student's subjection to the educational system, i.e. the choice of the discipline and specialisation.

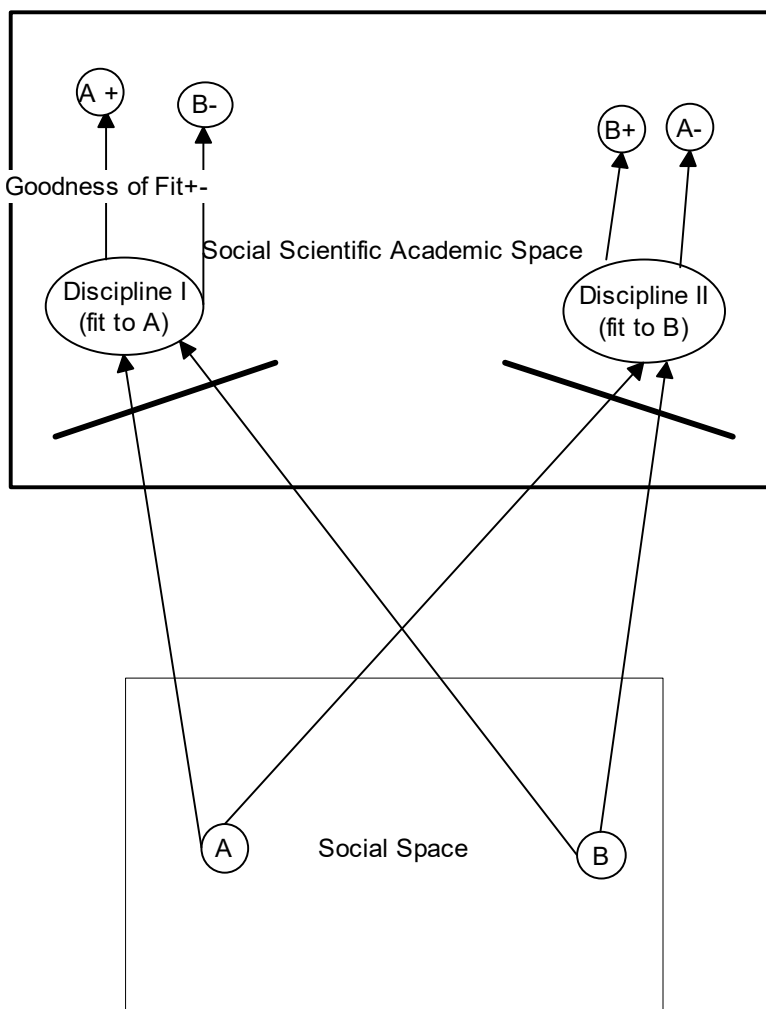
From Study Choice to Study Selection - the Link of Structure and Position-taking

We must pause for a minute and spell out the theoretical implications of the relationship of habitus and field, and also of different forms of habitus between each other. It is helpful for this purpose to employ a simplified model (see Figure 8) that captures the basic propositions of a Bourdieusian perspective. Thus we have two agents, A and B, endowed with different habitus and amounts and/or forms of capital (whatever they might be) within social space, successively entering, through continuous choices in the same direction (such as the choice to take a research Masters in political economy rather than in political sciences, or the choice to take up occupation of a tutorship assisting a professor rather than doing an internship in a company, and finally the choice to make an application to do a PhD in

³³ The final secondary school exams in Germany to gain unrestricted access, in principle, to all university disciplines. It may be viewed as the analogous exam to the British A-levels. I will henceforth refer to these in its German form as simply the 'Abitur'.

Economics), the specific field of academic Economics and thereby paying what Bourdieu (2006: 50f.) calls the ‘entrance fee’ (signified by the bold line in front of disciplines I and II in Figure 8, which could be filled with any concrete disciplines of course). This fee is nominally, but not practically, the same for everyone making a choice towards field membership.³⁴ It depends on the (mis-)fit between the specific and intellectual dispositions of the agents and the relevant disciplinary requirements and traditions.

Figure 8 Model of differential Selection or Fit in different academic Disciplines according to Field Theory³⁵



³⁴ Very much like competitors in any economic market are *de jure*, but not *de facto* equal.

³⁵ Following Bourdieu and Passeron (1990[1970]: 71-106)

As such, the process of choice is akin to the practice of the mature scientist-professional: “Each scientific act, like every practice, is the product of the encounter between two histories, a history embodied, incorporated in the form of dispositions, and a history objectified in the very structure of the field and in technical objects (instruments), writings, etc.” (Bourdieu 2006: 35). It is obvious that, whether there is an elective affinity or not between the two histories, the process of choice itself *transforms* the habitus in that new, more fitting dispositions to the new field are, *peu à peu*, developed and grounded in it, more or less depending on the number and commitment of the choices and the length of exposure to inculcation within the new universe. But to simply record these transformations, and differences between fields, and to declare a person’s own reflections on them as a source of reflexivity with regard to social structures *per se*³⁶ in my view dodges a whole host of difficult *empirical* questions that instead should be focussed upon first³⁷. Questions, for example, such as the position the students take, or plan to take, within their new field, and how far there exists a *homology*, despite and beyond phenomenal differences, to the position in the field of origin, or in how far the student invests in the field at all.³⁸

Within this very abstract model, agent A chooses discipline I over discipline II because her capital composition, his habitus in the contemporary social field and

³⁶ In Bourdieu’s model agents constantly reflect upon the social world and their place within it, but very often within the perspective of their habitus, and it is yet another question whether this reflexivity actually includes one’s own perspective, and thus habitus. Mostly, this kind of reflexivity is only fostered in times of deep and enduring mismatch of habitus and field, both of which have to be shown *empirically* rather than simply asserted. See Bourdieu (Bourdieu 2010[2008]: 322-34) for a proper analysis of reflexivity of social structures.

³⁷ Once again, one can see here, in my view, the disposition to bend Bourdieusian concepts towards an interpretation of interview data that seems heavily favoured value-wise by the authors - namely agency and structural liberation of ‘working class’ respondents - rather than to stick to the implicit principles of enquiry that Bourdieusian concepts call for. It seems to me that these scholars fall into one of the traps that await the critical scholar when, as Nancy Scheper-Hughes says, in “[...] writing against cultures and institutions of fear and domination” (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 533) they emphasise agency as against structures, which has its rather unfortunate logical flipside: “[...] [I]n granting power, agency, choice, and efficacy to the oppressed subject, one must begin to hold the oppressed morally accountable for their collusions, collaborations, rationalizations, ‘false consciousness’ [...]. With agency begin responsibility and accountability.” (ibid.).

his view of the academic field incline him to do that (while it is exactly vice versa for agent B). This is obviously an objectivist statement, and needs to be supplemented by the 'other side of the coin', the particular impressions and assessments this habitus produces that lead to the decision to study a discipline like Economics and no other under these particular circumstances. More probabilistically, one might say that agents 'like' A - in terms of their origin and capital endowment - are likely to choose like her. In any case, if it is true that study choice is an encounter of 'objectified history in bodies' and 'objectified history in institutions (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 57f.), then the discipline 'chooses' the student (for varying reasons) as much as the student 'chooses' the discipline, somewhat similar to Marx's remark land that inherits its owner (ibid). To represent this *relational*³⁹, indeed two-sided quality of this process, means rejecting notions of both pure agentic power to choose and a slavish bearing of structures. Here it seems reasonable to use the term *study selection* rather than choice. No doubt this term is more ambiguous in definition and usage, but, following the logic of the model, it reflects better the *twofold* practical realities in that it draws our attention to both the student's selection of their subjects, and the disciplinary selection of successful students..

The Implications of the epistemological Framework

What are the consequences and implications of the relationship of different habitus with the academic field? The first is the opening up of a 'degree of accordance' that is always between the two poles of optimal and minimal accordance, the former one representing the famous 'fish-in-water'-case and the latter the 'fish out of water'. This means that, all other things being equal, the probability of entering the field declines steadily if one moves from one pole to the other. That implies that a certain habitus with a certain amount of capital (of whatever provenance)

³⁹ As far as I can see the meaning of 'relational' in this perspective is rather different from its use in recent theoretical developments such as that of 'relational Sociology' - which appear, in their *rejection* of structural influences on direct interpersonal relationships, as a remake of interactionist approaches. See (See Depelteau 2018).

represents a sort of minimum *de facto* necessary to enter the field. Agents equipped below this amount of capital will tend to be excluded, either by themselves and/or by the representatives of the field (in other words, their habitus will tend to discourage them from entertaining the possibility of a career in scientific Economics, likely supported by external discouragements such as mediocre or bad grades as well as subtle, yet unambiguous ‘practical’ signs expressed by Economics staff and representatives). What that minimum is, is of course an empirical question. It is the habitual equivalent to the institutionalised ‘entry fee’ that needs to be ‘paid’ to enter the field.

It follows from this that a certain percentage of the students within a discipline, depending on the minimum capital required to enter that discipline, will be excluded from entering it, both objectively (detectable via statistics) and subjectively (via the experience of the student of his studies). They will orient themselves towards different fields, and consequently their statements about their studies will, the more so the longer they study, mean and express sociologically divergent aspirations or memberships of *different fields*. Their relationship towards Economics therefore can be anticipated to be different from those who have the (more or less) fitting habitus to pay the ‘entrance fee’.

One might consider an analogy with the field of politics, understood in a Bourdieusian way. A ‘democratisation’ of higher education without the accompanying democratisation of means to appropriate the various dispositions required in the disciplines will, in this logic, lead to a rather passive (i.e. ‘ill-fitting’) majority of students. This majority tends to follow the prevailing disciplinary ideals of excellence without really having internalised them. This is not unlike the relationship of the classes as described by Bourdieu in *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 397-465; also Bourdieu 1993[1984]: 149-57), except perhaps with a more comprehensive integration of the lower classes through the ‘conservative school’ (Bourdieu 1974). This integration, slowly but surely, transforms the empirical indicators of exclusion, from simple abdication to

something like ‘don’t know’ answers in surveys (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 399-405). This of course at the same time indicates a move towards new or more subtle forms of exclusion. Like with the selection of parties, different groups select disciplines nominally for the same reason, behind which are different trajectories and strategies.

Therefore, one may make a first conceptual distinction between those able and willing to ‘play the game’ of academic Economics and those not able and willing. From this, concrete empirical questions arise: what does the ‘entry fee’ look like in German academic Economics? What does it consist of? In what ways does it correspond with the amounts and forms of capital of those who are able, and willing, to pay it? What amounts and forms of capital are these, i.e. from what conditions of existence do they derive, and what are its structural-historical antecedents? How are these conditions of existence transformed into an ‘Economics’ perspective of the world? What may be pertinent empirical indicators for distinguishing those able/willing to pay the entry fee from those who aren’t? One can see that a Bourdieusian epistemology sensitises us to issues of fit which would be given rather short measure by epistemologies portrayed in the last chapters.

Then, of course, there are the conceptual divisions to be made *between those who are able and willing* to pay the fee for entrance for the field, but do so in different ways and styles. These are obviously A and B in our simplified model. Here, too, there are differences in fit to the subject at hand, but since the general price of entry has been paid, these differences will express themselves differently than was the case when considering the discipline as a whole. The most obvious, ideal-typical expressions within an academic field, in a Bourdieusian framework, are obviously those of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Both are, as is the selection of the discipline itself “[...] guided by taken-for-granted assumptions interactive with practices, as to what constitutes real and important problems, valid methods, and authentic knowledge.” (Bourdieu 1991: 3f.). In other words, this selection, too, is guided by

habitus, even though it may be phenomenologically very different from the selection of the whole discipline in the first place. The selection of orthodoxy represents a choice for established, recognised views and methods of the specific field at hand. Hence “[...] the profits awaiting those who realise the official ideal of scientific excellence through limited innovations within authorised limits [...].” (Bourdieu 1975: 30). On the other hand, heterodox strategies aim at the overthrow of the established symbolic order and are therefore risky since, for the heterodox, it “[...] will not bring them the profits accruing to the holders of the monopoly of scientific legitimacy unless they can achieve a complete redefinition of the principles legitimating domination [...]” (Bourdieu 1975: 30; also Bourdieu 2006: 35f.)⁴⁰. These two groups struggle for dominance in a scientific field and thus constantly force each other to innovate their products in order to hold or to improve their positions.

But in doing so, they form a collective, social censorship: “[...] the conservatives and their ‘radical’ opponents are objective accomplices who agree on the essential point: from the one-sided points of view which they necessarily adopt on the scientific field, by opting, unconsciously at least, for one or the other of the opposing camps, they are unable to see that control or censorship are not effected by any specific institution but the *objective relationship between opposing accomplices* who, through, their very antagonism, demarcate the field of legitimate argument, excluding as absurd, eclectic or simply unthinkable any attempt to take up an unforeseen position [...]” (Bourdieu 1975: 39f., emphasis in the text). This is of course, at the same time, a specific definition of doxa in the scientific field. Immediately, these antagonisms come to mind when thinking about Economics - for example neoclassical vs. Keynesian Economics, or supply- vs. demand-side social policies, but also theoretical-led Economics vs. Econometrics, and so on. An

⁴⁰ This is obviously a reconfiguration of Weber’s theoretical distinction of priest and prophet in his Sociology of religion, which, from Bourdieu’s perspective, is another field that is highly charged symbolically. See (Weber 1968: 439-51).

empirical question we can draw out of this is what the doxa could be that students of Economics that have paid the 'entrance fee' agree upon.

The question is now how the selected Economics students develop their stance towards one of these two ideal-typical positions. What can be derived from the basic model above is that for discipline I students with a specific capital amount and composition that comes close to that of agent A will fit better with the discipline's cognitive preconditions than with that of agent B. This of course, in this logic, means that, all else being equal, agent A will tend to experience a smoother adaptation to the new field than agent B, and students with his or her specific capital composition should be more numerous, statistically speaking, measured by their share of the whole population, than students closer to B's capital composition. That also implies that the farther a student is away from the optimal capital composition, the higher the degree of selection will tend to be, and consequently the better adapted the student will have to be in relation to those who 'inherit' the discipline (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990[1970]: 72-89; Bourdieu and Passeron 1979[1964]). But how can this be seen in the 'subjective' experience of the students themselves? And what methods need to be applied to bring these experiences to the light of the day?

If there indeed exists a primacy of structures over individual will, and if thus the meaning of a practice is to be derived from the history and current field position of the agent that performs it, then it follows that comparison between practices, and consequently their grouping into *ideal types*, must be organised along structural lines rather than substantialist ones. That means that we cannot simply compare direct expressions of 'extrinsic' or 'intrinsic' or 'reflexive' motivations along or even within disciplines any more, but must affiliate them with specific states of relations of historically grown habitus and historically grown fields. Methodically this implies that we need to carefully distinguish, especially when it comes to the recapitulation of an educational trajectory via in-depth interviews, reference to *different* fields, to be assessed and interpreted differently. The ideal types can

then be constructed along structurally homologous cases (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 233f.).

So far, we have conceptualised study selection as the meeting of two histories, one personal-embodied and one institutionalised in a scientific discipline or a field. Both histories have specific objective characteristics, specific idiosyncrasies vis-à-vis their respective ‘fellow travellers’ (other students and scientists here, rival disciplines there) that need to be singled out and emphasised. The objective degree of matching between the two should give us the particular groups ‘fitting’ to a particular discipline. This distinguishes them objectively from other groups that fit less well, and opens up the possibility of diverging meanings (or reference systems) of statements in surveys on ‘study choice’ (such as on the matter of ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ ‘choices’), leaving the empirical rapport of both groups as an expression of adaptations to a disciplinary environment that have different roots and meanings. Contrary to the epistemologies discussed in the preceding chapters, this approach is therefore non-substantialist - the meaning of a ‘choice’ is not accorded by some ‘intrinsic’ meaning of a statement or word (‘intrinsic means intrinsic’), but by attempting to relate it to a specific position in a specific space and a specific habitus. The same logic applies to the differentiation of groups that fit well with the discipline of Economics, where formerly ‘secondary’ characteristics of habitus might play a role. Hence, one may construct analogies of position in the academic fields (such as A in discipline I and B in discipline II), or analogies of original social position expressed in different academic fields (such as A in discipline I and A in discipline II) based on the relationship between the so-constructed social field and academic field(s).

But it is here where epistemological guidance ends and data collection for a proper theory of study selection of contemporary German Economics students commences. Considering the principles just discussed, we therefore must ask the *empirical*

questions: What are the fields with which these study selections are situated? Who are ‘fitting’ students in Economics, and what distinguishes them from ‘ill-fitting’ ones? What is these ‘fitting’ student’s position within the social field? What is their specific form of capital? What is the historically grown position of German Economics within the wider academic, or social scientific academic field? The point of the following sub-chapters is to provide an objective *empirical, historical and sociological context* with which the ‘subjective’ views, experiences and attitudes that are eventually discussed can be knotted together to forge a proper theory of study selection. Two aspects are looked at for now: first, the recent transformations of the educational field and the potential changes that follow from them for the interaction among, and behaviour of, a student population. Second, the specific field of academic Economics, and its historical embeddedness in the broader German academic field.

In short, Bourdieusian epistemology has led us to consider contextual aspects of the problem of educational choice which tend to be neglected by the subjectivist epistemologies discussed in the preceding chapters. The main reason, once again, for this is that for a Bourdieusian epistemology the meaning of selections emerges from the relationship of a habitus to its specific environment, and not by simple (individually or collectively) free determination, like with decisions ‘in private’ or after ‘rational’ debate in parliaments.

Epistemological Objections and their Ripostes

Apart from the more or less implicit critiques made by empirical Sociologists on Bourdieusian epistemology I here wish to shortly discuss a few (more abstract) objections against this way of doing Sociology. In this I will mainly concentrate - in view of the occasion of this thesis - on those contributions made by the Sociology of Science. I will also try to show the alternative empirical solutions to which this leads. This critique essentially⁴¹ consists of pointing towards the alleged

⁴¹ I will forego all the jibes at and unfair critiques of Bourdieu’s work and person and concentrate here on what I think is the core issue at stake.

epistemological *reductionism* inherent in Bourdieusian methodology, indeed the very kind of reduction that has been advocated in the preceding pages. This is where critics of the most diverse theoretical patronage converge in their critique of Bourdieusianism. That is the case for Michael Burawoy, for instance, who laments the allegedly hermeneutical closure of Bourdieusian works: “It is not that some social orders lead to mystification and others to transparency, but all social orders reproduce themselves through the inculcation of habitus and necessary misrecognition. We are all fish in water unable to comprehend the environment in which we swim [...]” (Burawoy 2012: 192). This essentially entails a questioning as to whether misrecognition really is as widespread as is posed by Bourdieu, whether this is not to be too ‘pessimistic’ about the possibilities for consciousness, especially that of dominated groups and agents. Against this, Burawoy wishes to recuperate some individual room for maneuver, and he does so by conceptually pushing the incarnated social structures out of the body and the individual while proposing a rather strict re-distinctioning between social structures and ‘the individuals’ (ibid.: 198). In other words, this amounts to a rejection of the concept of the habitus because it, for Burawoy, allegedly holds that “[...] we are programmed to act out the social structure.” (ibid.). In other words, it is a kind of ahistorical determinism allegedly not unlike that of Parsons (see Burawoy and von Holdt 2012: 11f.) with which Bourdieusian analysis is charged here. Burawoy then assembles the interpretation of some of his ethnographic work on industrial sites in the USA and socialist Hungary to buttress his hypothesis (e.g. Burawoy 1979; Burawoy and Lukacs 1992). The historical relationships of domination in the west are relatively stable, whereas in actually existing socialism they are fraught with resistance movements. These eventually contributed to the downfall of the communist regimes in eastern Europe which lets Burawoy conclude that capitalist relations of production ‘produced consent’ whereas state socialism ‘produced dissent’. (Burawoy 2012: 203f.).

The work of Andrew Sayer (1999, 2005), which is otherwise of a more theoretical (that is, critical realist) provenance, however comes to similar conclusions with regards to Bourdieusian epistemology. For him it subjects the subject to an unfair reduction, one which makes us “[...] no more than products of their position or self-

interest.” (Sayer 2005: 6). This reduction affects the resistance people muster against structures of domination, as well as their feelings. The habitus, for Sayer, leaves little place for freedom or resistance: “This is a model of a perfectly malleable human, a mode which makes it impossible to understand how anyone could react against and resist at least some parts of their habitat.” (ibid.: 31). This is the reason why Sayer wishes to emphasise the ethical or moral dimension of the habitus, for which he utilises Adam Smith’s moral philosophy. But these ‘modifications’ of Bourdieusian theory remain, as far as I know, in the abstract, theoretical realm, in the name of a sort of defense mode against some vaguely perceived ‘sociological imperialism’ (ibid.: 33).

Closer to the topic of this thesis are critiques posed by Sociologists, or Philosopher-Sociologists, of science, such as Bruno Latour (2005). Rather than from a position of moral indignation and outrage he hails from a relativist epistemological standpoint. In fact, this relativism is rather extreme and entails a transgression of many known distinctions of hitherto social science⁴², including its Bourdieusian variant, such as object vs. subject, human vs. non-human, or sociologist vs. non-sociologist. This is done in the name of a critique of epistemological and empirical reduction. The ordinary ‘sociology of the social’ a la Bourdieu, it is said, tends to unduly ‘impose meanings’, to suggest ‘false independence’ of the analyst, to ‘determine action’ of the analysed. To remedy this alleged fault, sociology is to let go of basically all the traditional distinctions that gave it structure and meaning - in other words, to level the playing ground of social science: “[...] ANT has tried to render the social world as *flat* as possible in order to ensure that the establishment of any new link is clearly visible.” (ibid.: 16). Rather than thinking in categories of ‘the social’ a la Bourdieu, sociologists are to follow ‘associations’ and ‘links’ which lead to networks of various human-non-human actors or actants - hence the name Actor-Network Theory (ANT). This line of argument is also followed by sociologists of science like Michel Callon (1998) and originally worked out by Latour and Woolgar (1986[1979]).

⁴² See exemplarily Merton (1968[1949]: 585ff.).

Similarly, the work of Karin Knorr-Cetina (1981; 1999) attempts, although from a phenomenological starting point, to expand the understanding of scientific activity beyond what she calls the 'objectivism-realism' of Mertonian sociology of science (Knorr-Cetina 1991[1981]: 17-23). This entails embracing a relativism with regard to the distinction of truth and falsehood and the methodological choice to the hitherto ignored 'context of discovery', to idiosyncratic traditions of schools or laboratories. This leads her to the adoption of an economic theory of scientific practice, and hence to her discussion of Bourdieu. Despite what she terms his 'quasi-economical' approach, Knorr-Cetina criticises the lack of consequentiality in this approach because it still reduces scientific activity to a scientific community (Knorr-Cetina 1981: 70-73), while all of her ethnographic research shows the contrary, namely the existence of 'variable transscientific fields', that is, the thorough intermingling of scientific people, methods, actions, with non-scientific ones (Knorr-Cetina 1981: 81-93).

I now wish to briefly discuss what *empirical consequences* follow from this criticism of reductionism for the various authors and schools discussed. For it is only through the practical usefulness of certain epistemological formulas that a theory and method so composed can actually tell us something about the object of which we want to know something more. The point I wish to make is that the reduction criticised in Bourdieu's writing tends to conceal reductions made by the critics themselves. What follows is that epistemological and theoretical reduction is a *necessary* part of any sociological theory - the point is rather whether this reduction is *controlled or not*, and whether it helps us to explain the object we wish to explain.

Burawoy's hypothesis is that of an 'open' domination within socialist regimes. Exploitation is somehow 'transparent' due to the party state's unkept promises and the difference between its ideology and the dismal reality. This, for Burawoy, explains the protest and inherent instability of socialist regimes vis-à-vis that of the capitalist west. However, this argument is based on definitions of exploitation, protest and resistance that are *unambiguous* and *clear* to see for everyone who studies them. In other words, Burawoy's structuralist argument (the 'relations of production' are 'independent' of the individual) is complemented by an empiricist

and substantialist use of his ethnographic material. Against this, it should be pointed out that in Bourdieusian epistemology structure and the individual are more tightly interwoven, which makes the definition and assessment of exploitation, protest and resistance more difficult. There can be hidden exploitation and integrated protest, and whether this protest is integrated or not can only be decided when the specific *relationship* of mutual composition of structure and individuals is theorised.⁴³ Not to do that seems to me to succumb to some kind of negative teleology which essentialises the downfall of real socialism and actually mystifies the persistence of real capitalism, and the role of the ‘independent’ individual in it.

As for the theoretical and empirical consequences of Sayer’s critique: it is not possible to assess the latter because there simply are no substantial empirical applications of his modification of Bourdieusian epistemology, at least not to my knowledge. The best one is able to find seem to be theoretical conjectures that seem rather vague, such as the fact that societal equality needs to be institutionally backed up, that privileged social groups sometimes refuse to grant recognition, or that domination is never complete (Sayer 2005: 58ff.). There seem no practical suggestions as to how to fruitfully widen Bourdieu’s concepts that helps to explain a specific reality better than Bourdieu’s original concepts did. The body of literature I have found that comes closest to this is indeed the Sociology of Education that evolved around Diane Reay. These authors frequently refer to Sayer as a theoretical inspiration. Their sociology - including their problematic use of ‘reflexivity’ - has already been critically examined at length earlier in this thesis (see chapter 3).

Finally, there are the radical constructivists such as Latour and Knorr-Cetina. What are the theoretical and empirical consequences of their refusal to reduce? If one ceases to construct epistemological and theoretical divisions out of a concern not to

⁴³ See Darnton (2009[1984]) for an empirical example of integrated revolt and Bourdieu (1984[1979]: 143-47) and again Darnton (1968) for more revolutionary forms of resistance. From these empirical examples it becomes very clear that in Bourdieusian epistemology change and reproduction of social structures are complexly interwoven with individual reproduction, and therefore can only be understood and explained in each case rather than posed theoretically for eternity, as Burawoy seems to do.

‘distort’ or ‘stifle’, that means that one is exposed ad hoc to the constructions that one faces in one’s field work. But that then only offers the two options of either rejecting these constructions on one’s own *purely personal or moral* terms or to accept them without critique. But this means to “[...] merely report the scientists view on the matter.” as Yearley and Collins (1992: 316) aptly put it. And that, obviously, leads right back to the empiricism or positivism against which this epistemology was aimed in the first place, the “[...] rule-bound description, adopted from scientists and technologists, that we once learned to ignore.” (ibid.: 322). The same argument may be made about Knorr-Cetina’s ‘transscientific field’ which ‘overcomes’ the reduction of attention paid in the sociology of scientific activity (to which Bourdieusian Sociology of Science holds on after all) to the role of the scientific community. The point made by her, that the products of individual researchers are *incommensurable* with one another, essentially pulverises scientific actions and actors. But this then leaves only two theoretical choices: either one tries to re-group these actions ex post under some category, or one must leave them as they are, as idiosyncratic actions that *each* warrant their own theory and method. As Gad Freudenthal (1984: 291f.) has argued, this latter decision leads to an empirical method which “[...] almost irresistibly gravitates towards the most extreme brands of positivism.” (ibid.: 291). It ignores the *essential* consensus presupposed by Knorr-Cetina’s own concept of ‘tinkering’ with data (Knorr-Cetina 1981: 33-48), methods, instruments and the like. Once again, the results of this ‘anti-reductionist’ epistemology seem rather traditional and positivist.

Similar consequences can be observed once the popular epistemological principle of non-distinction of ‘objects with agency’ (Latour 2005: 63-86) is examined. Via the following of ‘associations’ between humans and non-humans, ‘social life’ is breathed into the latter. But it comes at a price because it means that one can not follow other humans in their relationships to each other, their struggles or alliances and the like. Rather, it means to indulge, in the end, in what Simon Schaffer (1991) calls ‘hylozoism’, the practice of defining things or animals as ‘wilful actors’. Hence, in the end one comes once again full circle towards an essentially positivist

(or ‘disabling’, as Schaffer calls it, *ibid.*) practice, from the brilliant genius of Mertonian science to the witty acting things or animals of Latourian ANT.⁴⁴

Closer to the topic of this thesis, the consequences of this extreme constructivism can be seen in some of its prominent empirical applications. Yuval Yonay and Daniel Breslau, for example, adopt constructivist principles in their study on the ‘epistemological culture’ of Economics (2006). Insisting at first that they wish to overcome the ‘hiatus’ between the supposedly autonomous knowledge and its surrounding reality, they invoke radical constructivist principles that point towards following struggles and ‘associations’: “Applied to economics, this view suggests that economic theory has likewise evolved through a series of trials of strength. The truth of economic statements is thus the product of economists’ success in enlisting the support of other economists, data, whole economies, mathematics, and other agents, rather than adherence to an established and rule-based method [...]” (*ibid.*: 349). Despite this initial commitment to the disenchanting and economic vision of a Latour or Knorr-Cetina, the authors nevertheless *also* draw attention to more Mertonian aspects of science, namely their “[...] set of shared beliefs [...]” (*ibid.*: 350) or “[...] cultural conventions and meanings [...]” (*ibid.*: 351), and with good reason. This is because their ethnographic material regarding academic economists (which seems to be more a collection of in-depth interviews) and their assessments of the field constantly seems to point them towards these conventions, such as ‘precision’ or ‘simplicity’. Hence, in the end of the paper, after having described the ‘intuition’ procedures of academic economists at face value and at length, they sound more like Mertonians rather than radical constructivists: “The criteria [of excellence in economics] are not explicit, and economists act according to them intuitively, but the intuition is based on their familiarity with the disciplinary norms; the assumptions about people’s behaviour should appeal to colleagues [...]” (*ibid.*: 370). Because they have denied themselves any proper theoretical construction up-front, they are forced to take over the representations the economists portray to them. That leaves them no choice but to allude vaguely

⁴⁴ Certain forms of Feminism, like that of Donna Haraway (2016), seem to follow the same practice.

to the ‘contingent’ character of these norms in time and space⁴⁵, in an attempt to justify their initial epistemological choice, by labelling this clearly value-propelled practice as ‘marketing models’. What *kind* of marketing it is, and *why* these economists do it in this way and not otherwise, we do not really learn.

Another prominent sociologist of economic thinking, namely Donald MacKenzie, also utilises the constructionist approach in his assessment of the ‘performativity’ of economic thinking (MacKenzie 2008). Following Callon (1998) he asks the question how ‘effective’ economic finance theory was and is in the actual economy. He wishes to overcome the internalist reductionism of the hitherto sociology of science to date: “If the history and sociology of technology of the last 25 years have had a single dominant theme, it is that the view of technological change as following an autonomous logic is wrong, and the stark choice between conformity and refusal that it poses is an impoverished one.” (MacKenzie 2008: 26). His work consists in a very detailed tracing of a ‘historical case study’, the emergence and diffusion of the modern theory of finance, complemented by in-depth interviews with relevant protagonists. While the description of the development of and struggles around modern finance theory is excellent, it is, once again, marred by the lack of a proper theoretical construction or hypothesis about how and why things evolved *in this way and not otherwise*. Why, for example, do Franco Modigliani and Merton Miller develop an abstract ‘unrealistic’ and ‘pure’ rationalistic model of firms (ibid.: 38-45)? Why do many practitioners of finance initially reject it while a few adopt it (ibid.: 74-80)? MacKenzie has no real answer for these questions, except for general commonplaces that, at best, shift the problem. Of course, it is true, as he says at the beginning of his book, that “[u]ltimately, the development and the design of technologies are political matters.” (ibid.: 26). But how do politics and convictions interact? In the case of the adoption of modern finance theory by the practitioners, the answer is, once again, rather simple for MacKenzie: “The US financial markets are, if nothing else, places of entrepreneurship, and so it is not surprising that some

⁴⁵ Others also recognise the tendency to play down the role of values in radical constructivist accounts: “Only a mind predisposed to conspiratorial thinking [...] will believe that the [success of economic thinking in the economy] is held together entirely by the mesmerizing words and numbing mathematics [...] of a few game theorists. ([ANT-scholars] are wont to discuss ‘beliefs’).” (Mirowski and Nik-Khan 2007: 213)

practitioners began to see ways of making money out of finance theory.” (ibid.: 82). But this explanation attempt is quite similar to the one given by Werner Sombart (Sombart 1915) for the historical emergence of capitalism in the west (see a critique of this in Weber 1991: 126-29), in that it uses ‘universal tendencies’ to explain particular processes.

One may therefore conclude that even if this digest⁴⁶ of critiques of epistemological distinctions and reductions have their justification (namely in pointing to deficiencies and reifications of traditional Sociology) they not always lead to a better or more fruitful explanation of the objects at hand. Quite ironically, the decisions leading from the epistemological breaks, via different routes, lead back to forms of perception and interpretation that are rather traditional in nature, namely positivism, substantialism and essentialism. These patterns may also alternate and represent nothing else than *reductions* themselves. This, then, means that some kind of epistemological distinctions are necessary in order construct a fruitful and explanatorily potent theory. Indeed they seem to be inevitable - the question merely is whether one makes them *consciously*, in a controlled manner, or whether they are made by others (like one’s interview partners) or one’s own political and/or social dispositions. In the following sections and chapters, I will therefore stick to some basic epistemological principles as they were laid out at the beginning of this chapter - such as the relational and structural aspect of human behaviour (which implicitly accepts the preference given to humans over non-humans) or the acceptance of relatively autonomous and historically⁴⁷ grown fields, which preserves a specific internal interpretation of social behaviour while at the same time permitting its modelling as a specific economic practice. Of course, in the end I do not know whether sticking to these principles will yield proper results. Like

⁴⁶ One might also include other critiques like that of Bernhard Lahire who, in rather Weberian fashion, points towards the lack of detail given to habitus formation in Bourdieu’s writing (Lahire 2003). In particular he wonders about the ‘core dispositions’ that give rise to distinguished practices (ibid.: 333). If this is a problem of focus, one may defend Bourdieu on the grounds that he merely provides first sketches. If this is a problem of epistemology, then one may conclude that this re-focussing can lead not to a sophisticated Bourdieusian epistemology, but a non-Bourdiesian one closer to Weberian social psychology.

⁴⁷ “Bourdieu had the historian’s passion for the concrete, the specific, the singular; he had curiosity and a gift for observing things from a distance- a capability that good anthropologists share with good historians:” (Hobsbawm 2016: 39f.)

other epistemologies, it is what Yves Gingras (2016) calls a ‘bet on the future’. It pays off only in contributing to explain and to understand the object it wishes to grasp. And so we must turn to the study of the concrete object at hand, study selection, and do so via conceptualising it as a meeting of two histories: one in the student and the other one in the discipline. Both need to be portrayed for the German field now.

4.1 The Great Transformation - Population Changes in the Educational and Academic Field

Students are not studying and working in a void: they are part of a larger group of people that form a student population which is tightly linked to the academic field. Hence, in order to get an idea about *German Economics students’* selections, we must extract their specific characteristics vis-à-vis students of other subjects. This includes not only the numerical changes at different levels of the academic hierarchy, but also investigations into specific socio-demographic characteristics of Economics students, such as class and gender.

One obvious change within the educational field during the last half a century is its quite consistent expansion. This expansion has affected especially parts of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the system. In short, there are more students, more staff, more professors (see Table 1), but also many more types of universities and especially disciplines to study. In conjunction, there has been a massive differentiation within various disciplines, as can be seen in the multiplication of sub-field- or even sub-sub-field-associations or working groups within them. One can safely say that, in absolute terms, there have never been as many people from all social origins engaged, or employed, in the educational system.⁴⁸ The question is

⁴⁸ It still remains a question of sociological importance just how *equally spread* this increase of enrolment rates has been across classes. There is some evidence that lower classes have participated less in the rise, although one cannot say with more precision due to statistical

how to make sense of that change, to grasp it sociologically, and to find parallels and constancies in comparison with earlier times (Ringer 1979).

The number of students of practically all Social Sciences, for example, has increased over the last 30 or so years, albeit at quite different rates. In Sociology the increase is roughly two-fold, whereas in Political Economy it is rather moderate with roughly one and a half as many students in 2013 as in 1983. Other economic sciences such as Business Administration have more than tripled their student population. In Law, on the other hand, the rise is very moderate at just about 25%.

categories that tend to mix up structural successors of the working classes with those of the petite bourgeoisie due to the rise of the service economy (see the section on 'the problem of class' in chapter 2). See also Willis' early findings (1986: 163) for the British case.

Table 1 Numerical changes of selected German Social Science disciplines on various stages of academic qualification 1983-2013⁴⁹

Discipline/Year	Students	Graduated PhD's	Assistants	Professors
Sociology				
1983	10.863	91	1.012	356
2013	19.150	199	2.063	371
Political Science				
1983	10.847	113	1.200**	350**
2013	30.290	307	2.256	370
Business Admin				
1983	66.319	190	1.644	888
2013	222.594	629	15.642	2.747
Political Economy				
1983	17.086	125	847	160***
2013	22.572	267	2.014	543
Law				
1983	84.958	470	2.795***	745***
2013	107.199	1.430	7.628	1.448

The very same growth process can be observed in terms of PhD positions as well as scientific Assistants and professors. We observe in each case at least a doubling of all figures, while with the assistants, in some cases (Law, Business Administration) it is much more than that. The number of professorships, however, offers a more differentiated picture again as disciplines such as Sociology and Political Science have barely grown numerically at all while Law and especially Business Administration and Political Economy have seen rather steep increases of their

⁴⁹ Source: Federal Statistical Office, data series 4.1, 4.2 and 11*

* The category of 'Assistants' includes Lecturers, Teaching and Research Assistants as well as Tutors, both full and part-time. The category of 'Professors' includes both permanent and temporarily appointed professors of all career stages.

** these numbers are estimated due to the amalgamated statistics of Political Science with Sociology until the early 1990's.

*** the year 1984 chosen, to correct for aberrations

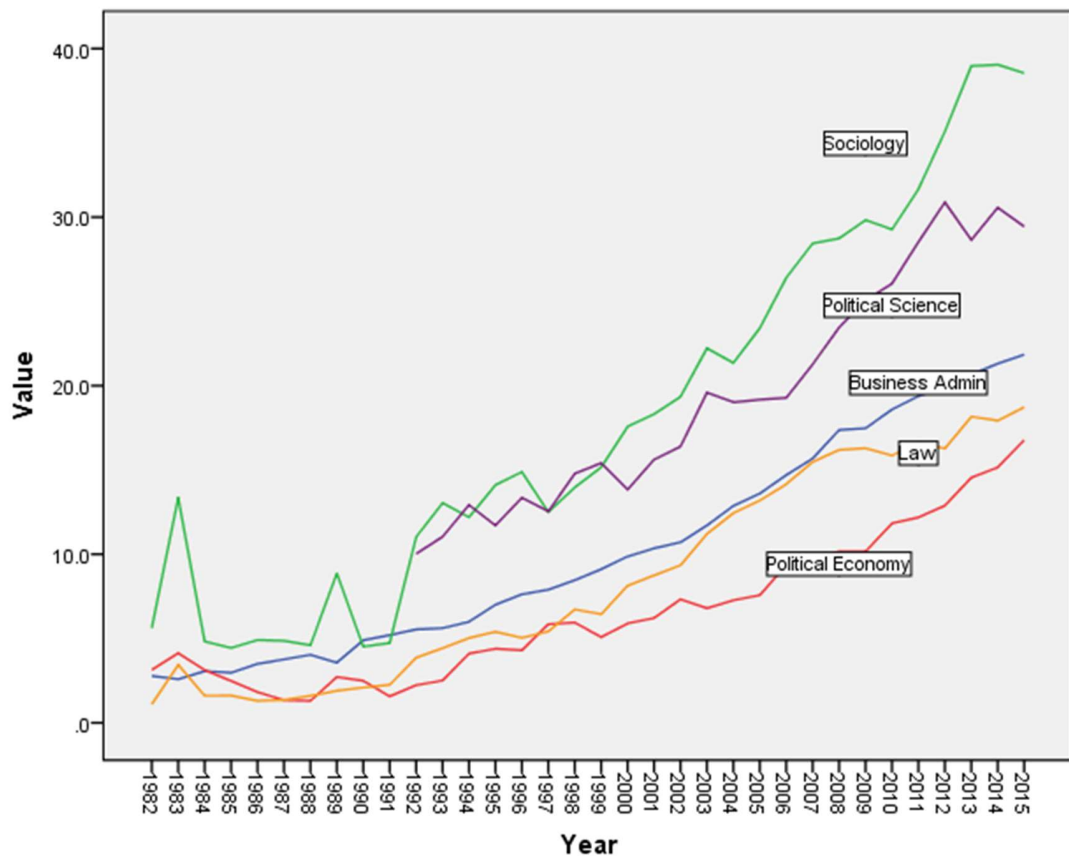
numbers. The more interesting thing is to have a look *at what pace* these positions increase relative to each other, both in terms of disciplines and between levels within them. From that, what one can clearly see is a sort of double-movement: while the possibilities at the bottom ranks of a discipline (that is, PhDs and Assistant positions) have actually *increased* during the last decades for those who start studying a discipline, they have tendentially *decreased* when it comes to the top positions, measured in the ratio of professors to assistants.⁵⁰ Therefore, while in earlier times the temporal structure of chances of those studying a discipline to advance to a high level (that is, the degree of selection and exclusion taking place at different career stages) overall was rather flat (a high degree of selection early in the system, follow by a rather low one, see Ringer 1979: 56f.), the system seems to have become much more uneven, ‘bulky’ (that is, a low degree of selection at early stages, followed by very high degree of selectivity later on). It is as if the system has moved, if one wants to use a metaphor, from the structure of a hip flask to that of a carafe. There are, obviously, rather steep differences between disciplines in which this bottle-neck from assistantship to professorship is rather sharp (as in Sociology) and rather wide (Economics as a whole). The same might well be true for professional areas other than academia, of course. For Economics, and Political Economy in particular, we can see that there seems to be comparatively manifold opportunities within the German academic field for students and early career researchers.

So far, the analysis, despite its use of empirical-numerical indicators, remains rather abstract. When we calculate the chances of students taking on a specific position at a later point in their trajectory, we assume these persons to be interchangeable, uniform. This is obviously a fiction. We must therefore take into account different dimensions of inequality and start with gender, the easiest

⁵⁰ This is a makeshift measure since it makes a lot of assumptions that are not safeguarded: such as the fact that only assistants of a specific discipline can and will apply for professor jobs within their own field - something not very realistic for disciplines like Sociology and Political Science. Or the fact that there exists a stable, and uniform time and age of appointment and time on a professorial chair across the disciplines. Nevertheless, one might take it as a rough indicator of how chances within and between disciplines are distributed.

difference to obtain empirically. One can see that there do exist massive differences in terms of gender participation in the Social Sciences under scrutiny here. In disciplines like Sociology or Political Sciences the last decades have led to a very thorough feminisation of the discipline up to professorship levels (the more so, the younger the cohorts). The student population there is predominantly female. Sociology is, in the disciplines observed here, by far the most feminised one, with its assistants being about 50% female and the professorships hovering around 40%. On the other hand, there are disciplines like Business Administration, Law or Political Science or Political Economy that are still very much male-dominated, at least statistically speaking. The unevenness there tends to become more pressing (and more uneven) the more one moves up the professional ladder, so that in 2015 in Political Economy only 17% of professors were female, a change from a mere 3% from 1982 (Figure 9), whereas in Sociology it was 39% (from 5.6 % in 1982).

Figure 9 Development of Proportion of Professorships held by Women of selected Social Sciences in Germany during the last 30 or so Years in Percent⁵¹



Hence, in these disciplines, the process of feminisation has taken place, compared to others, very much with the brakes on, and tends to be confined to the lower echelons of the professional structure. In Sociology, by contrast, this process succeeded much more thoroughly, particularly in the last 10 to 15 years. We might also have, within Economics, a closer look at gender distribution within specialisations of research. We can do so by counting the share of female members of the sections of the German Economic Association (Verein für Socialpolitik) where they are available (see Table 2).

⁵¹ Source: Federal Statistical Office, Staff Statistics

We can see that, above all, historical and, secondarily, sections with a political denomination tend to have below average participation rate. On the other hand, educational development and organisational Economics are substantially above this average. Nevertheless we can also see that the span between the section of highest vs. lowest female participation is relatively rather low, i.e. around 20%. Of course, the degree of selection is not really comparable between the two areas - on the one hand we have graduates, on the other, elected professors of a specialised institution. Generally, one can infer from this that, in terms of gender, men, given everything else being equal, have much better chances of succeeding in obtaining a job in academic Economics than women, and all the more so the higher the rank of the position concerned. Economics, unlike Sociology, still is predominantly a man's world.

Table 2 Female Shares of selected committees of the German Economic Association (GEA)⁵²,

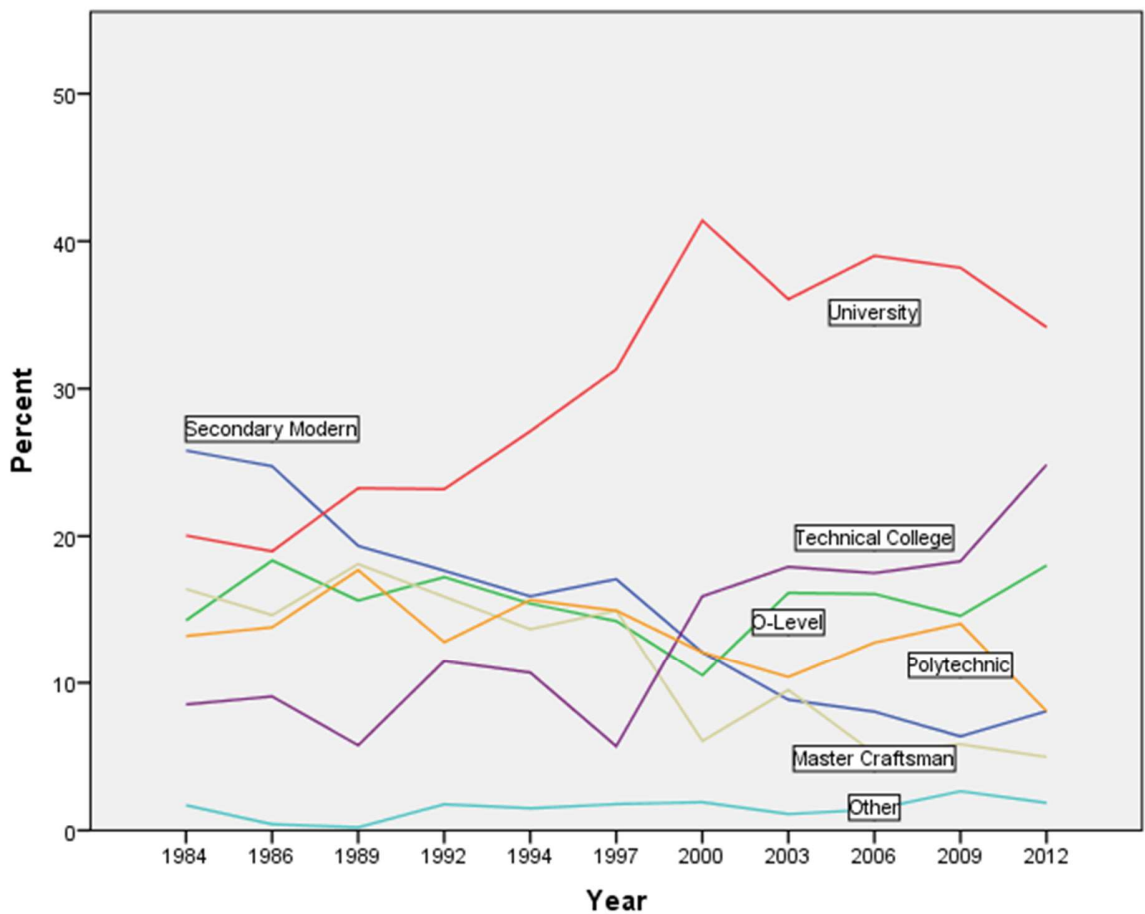
Type of Committee German Economic Association (Selection)	Female Share in % (share in absolute numbers)
Foreign Trade Theory and Politics	9.3 (8/86)
Educational Economics	26.2 (17/65)
Development Economics	20.5 (16/78)
Evolutionary Economics	9.4(8/85)
Monetary Theory and Politics	8.5(6/70)
History of Economics	7.4 (5/68)
Macroeconomics	10.0(7/70)
Organisational Economics	21.4 (12/56)
Regional Theory and Politics	11.0 (8/73)
Environmental and Resource Economics	15.3(11/72)
Corporate Theory and Politics	11.3 (7/62)
Economic History	4.8 (3/62)
Economic Systems/Institutional Economics	5.7 (4/70)
Economics and Ethics	15.8(9/57)
[...]	
OVERALL Shares	12.4 (121/974)

⁵² Source: GEA websites as of June 13, 2018*, <https://www.socialpolitik.de/>, last accessed August 13, 2018.

* The shares were calculated using member lists from those committees that provided them. Single individuals are often members of more than one committee.

Another very important dimension of social inequality that might structure the chances of students to attain high positions is obviously that of class, in both its economic and cultural dimensions. Unfortunately, the available data here is far less comprehensive. To say it with Möller: “The higher the stage of qualification, the more sparse are differentiated analyses [and data] about the profile of origin of the groups of persons available.” (Möller 2015: 48, my translation). As we have seen in chapter two, the social origin of students as it is usually measured (i.e. as the professional status of parents) seems very much equal across disciplinary groups, which also holds true across time. In the decade beginning 2010 one observes in many Social Sciences subjects that the distribution of students according to parental occupation shows a similar pattern: 40-45% employees, 15-20% workers, 15% civil servants and another 20% self-employed persons. These shares are also quite stable over time. This is different with the education of parents. Here we see, over the past 30 or so years, a rather massive increase (by around 15-20%) of the share of students with at least one university-graduated parent, and a corresponding decrease or stagnation of all other categories, in particular that of secondary modern school (see Figure 10).

Figure 10 Development of Parents' highest educational Qualification of Economics and Political Economy Students in Percent⁵³,



* - The number of cases for the last year (2012, n=161) seems a bit too low to exclude statistical variations. For the same reason Economics and Political Economy as single disciplines were merged in this calculation.

Compared to other subjects like Sociology and Political Science⁵⁴, the Economics⁵⁵ student population has a slightly lower share of university-educated parents as of 2009 (38% as against 45%) but a higher share of polytechnics (18% as against 16%) and secondary modern school graduates (6,4% vs. 3,7%). Sociology and Political

⁵³ Source: Konstanz Student Survey (KSS); waves 1-12

⁵⁴ I have combined the two for the sake of obtaining sufficient numbers of cases.

⁵⁵ Merged from Economics and Political Economy for the very same reason.

Science are quite similar in this to Law. Business Administration on the other hand is closer to Economics - it has the highest proportion of lower class origin students of any subject under consideration here with regards to the total student population, with a mere 32% of parents having obtained a university degree by 2009. This impression of slight difference is compounded if we look from the overall student population towards more selected groups within the same subject. Alexander Lenger (2009) finds, in his survey of German PhD students, a slightly lower share of civil servants and a higher one of employees (*ibid.*: 114). Otherwise, however, the shares are very much equal across disciplinary groups.⁵⁶ This is consistent with what we have found with the KSS data. On the other hand, there are also differences in educational origin, with the Economic Sciences once more appearing to have less of this certified cultural capital than all other disciplinary groups. For example, the share of students' parents that graduated with a PhD is only 11.7% in the Economic Sciences, but 13.4% in the Social Sciences, 15.6% in the Humanities, and 25.7% in Law. Economics PhD students also have a relatively low share of parents holding the Abitur - 5.5% as opposed to 9.1% in the Social Sciences and 8.6% in Law. On the other hand, it has higher shares of parents with O-levels - 18.6% as opposed to 14.8% in the Social Sciences and only 7% in Law (*ibid.*: 117).

The PhD students of Lenger's sample have a higher share of university- or polytechnics-educated parents than the overall student population in the KSS (roughly two thirds as opposed to just over 50%). This share also seems to increase over time if we compare these numbers with earlier studies like that of Enders and Bornmann (2001). Moreover, it also increases as one ascends the professional ladder, such as from PhD students to Assistants and Lecturers (Enders and Mugabushaka 2004: 11f.).

Finally, the social origin of the professors (for which there are almost no systematic data available) seems to be distributed in a similar manner. In a study composed by Möller (2015), who conducted a full survey of all professors of the largest German

⁵⁶ Lenger, as many others, groups disciplines into groups as they are grouped by federal state statistics, so that Economics/Political Economy is put into one category with Economic Engineering and all Humanities are put together.

federal state of North-Rhine-Westphalia, one finds, once again, the Economic sciences in an intermediary position. In terms of the social origin of its professoriate (measured by a combination of professional status and educational qualification of parents) it is positioned alongside the Social Sciences and considerably below the rather 'elitist' Law or Medicine professoriate (ibid.: 226-29), which includes an above-average share of the lowest category of social origin. In terms of temporal development, the bits and pieces of data available for the past decades seem to point towards a general social opening of the disciplines (which should not be confused with social justice per se, as so often happens). This is an opening which is moderate with regard to lower professional rungs and which tends to be the more retarded the closer one gets to the elite positions, of administrative or scientific provenance, of the German academic system (Graf 2015).

Let us conclude. There has been an evident and rather significant further expansion of the academic and educational system in Germany in the last decades. This expansion is uneven with regards to level of study, professional stage and discipline. From the available data it seems as if it is still privileged groups and classes that end up on the winning end of this process, although there has been a catch-up, especially in terms of gender and (less so) of social class. That, however, is again a process that has developed very differently in the different disciplines, as we have seen. What does that mean now in the light of the chosen epistemology? First of all, since the number of holders of definite educational certificates relative to the available top posts (professorships) tends to rise, so does the *degree and intensity* of competition among the students for these posts, whether they are in the civil service, the 'free' economy or in science. Secondly, it is reasonable to assume the stability or increase of presence of upper and middle class students vis-à-vis lower class students in this competition, given the ever more necessary role (higher education) plays for social reproduction despite its increasing devaluation (what Heiner Geißler 1992: 219-21, calls the 'paradox of educational expansion'). But this goes along with an inflow of high aspirations as well (Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 212f.). These aspirations tend to be reflected in better or at least stable objective chances of *entering* the field as a PhD or assistant, which will tend to foster the

commitment to that very field, and hence the difficulty of letting go of it in the (objectively likely) event of not reaching a top position. But if the field as a whole is growing numerically, and if the number of people from privileged classes is growing at least proportionally with it, then the chances are likely that sociological divisions among *and* within disciplines (such as in specialisations)⁵⁷ will not occur along simple class lines anymore (working-class vs. middle class vs. dominant class). This was the case in Bourdieu's early educational writings⁵⁸, but should now occur along more complex mixtures and combinations of various aspects or details of the habitus active in a given field.⁵⁹

Here we can assume a multitude of interconnected perceptions and selections that lead from the initial 'choice' of subject to the selection of specialisation and eventually to one's professional domain, in which the specific set of dispositions as well as assessments of a current field are engaged. These selections themselves may have an impact on the perceptions and selections of other agents/habitus (for example by sympathy or antipathy felt for fellow students and/or staff, by

⁵⁷ This by no means implies the obsolescence of the structural, positional class model (whose degree of phenomenal expression is increased), as it has been posited by various authors of 'the death of class' argument (e.g. Clark and Lipset 1991; Pakulski and Waters 1996; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The problem with all these approaches seems to be their attachment to static and realist indicators of class differences, such as the dissociation of class and voting for certain parties (Clark and Lipset 1991: 403), the 'individualisation' of marriages (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 9ff.) or the decrease of economic inequalities (Pakulski and Waters 1996: 1-7), which indeed seems to betray a rather peculiar fixation of analytical view towards definite expressions of social inequalities in a definite time. Against this peculiar proclamation of the 'end of structures', which also implies an 'end of history' a Bourdieusian perspective puts habitus-bearing agents into their specifically historical fields in which they struggle for recognition, for capital, and are thus forced incessantly to *innovate* and to redefine the proper expressions, or symbols, of their class origin by courtesy of the dispositional bent of their specific habitus: "The very notion of field implies that we transcend the conventional opposition between structure and history, conservation and transformation, for the relations of power which form the structure provide the underpinnings of both resistance to domination and resistance to subversion [...]" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 89f.).

⁵⁸ Though of course even there other aspects of habitus, such as geographical origin and gender, already play a role, depending also on the field one is interested in, such as the field of the *grandes écoles* (see for example Bourdieu and Passeron 1979[1964]: 5;10f.).

⁵⁹ How is it possible that there might be an increased density of similar habitus in particular fields on the one hand, and differentiation happening according to secondary principles happening on the other hand? Both are part of the same process that attempts theoretically to describe the dynamic, practical response of habitus to changing external conditions - it is a theoretical exposition of the shift of the axis of differentiation that occurs when the original primary axis of differentiation becomes insufficient to produce distinctions. Hence the group habitus resorts to characteristics that were always there latently, but which are now forced to be (more) manifest - in a practical way which still has to be shown and deciphered by the Sociologist!

reactions from those who were dominant hitherto, and so on), and they might foster the transformation of disciplinary populations along new lines (Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 188-229). In other words, they influence and change the 'degree of fit' of specific groups with specific disciplines, more or less. The most readily visible part of this process might be that along gender lines, and there might be others not grasped by the often rather crude statistical categories. But these deliberations cannot replace the empirical question *what kind* of privileged class one deals with in Economics vis-à-vis other sciences - what habitus, what forms of capital precisely, are at play, and why?

What do we know so far now about these objective-personified characteristics of (apprentice) Economists vis-à-vis students and professors of other Social Sciences in Germany? We know that they are much more likely to be male, and that they come from middle-class families that have a relative lack of cultural capital. It thus seems reasonable to assume at this point that a capital acquired in social space that bears these characteristics at its base has good chances to be reconverted into scientific capital in Economic education in the academic/higher education field. But into what is it reconverted? What, in other words, counts as capital in that specific field? What is recognised as legitimate economic knowledge by the guardians of that discipline? And who are, and were, these guardians anyways? In what kind of academic field were, and are, they situated, and what was/is their position in it?

Compared to some of its Social Science sister disciplines, Economics/Political Economy exhibits a very moderate (yet recently somewhat increasing) growth of female intake, especially at the influential top positions. In this it is close to disciplines like Law, and very different from Sociology. On the other hand, Economics seems relatively open to the mobility of lower social classes. Here it is rather close to Sociology and rather far away from Law. In terms of absolute numbers it seems to have undergone a relatively moderate increase of competition if compared to the 'more competitive' Sociology or Political Science. The rather male, rather middle-class habitus lives in the pre-constructed house that the institutional home of Economics is, and they will 'ameliorate' this house as they see fit. However, they do so not by answering some abstract ideal of habitus, but

precisely after being educated in the institutional traditions and rules of excellence of the very house they aspire to change or to preserve. And so we must turn to this discipline of Economics and outline its history and its current major lines of argument and method in order to make possible the formulation of specific expressions of abstract habitus in a concrete field.

4.2 A layout of a structural History of German Economics and Economists

The point of this section is to develop an idea, however vague and simplifying, of the historical and sociological background of the field which contemporary Economics students enter. It is to move towards a sketch of the genesis of the structure of this particular field. For this I will not only draw on literature about German social, economic and intellectual history, but also include biographical data - both in the form of statistical and individual references taken from influential German Economists as they appear in the literature on the history of the discipline. From the relationship of these variables to each other I will try to infer a sketch of a history of German Economics⁶⁰, concentrating on the following questions: What is the position of Economics within academia and in relation to external forces? What are the characteristic social origin of Economists? What are the major currents of method and theory at each historical era? What is the current ideal of scientific excellence in this field? This is perhaps somewhat reminiscent of what historians would call prosopography (Stone 1971).

I will proceed chronologically, starting with the period of the creation of the idea of the Social Market Economy. This comprises the decades of the 1920s onward. It encompasses the rise first of Ordo-Liberalism and second of Neo-Liberalism within German academic Economics. I conclude with a few remarks on the historically specific characteristics of German Economics and Economists.

⁶⁰ History understood as the recognition and presentation of the social unconscious, in the Durkheimian sense.

As for the history before that time-span under consideration I refer the interested reader to the insightful historical work of Keith Tribe (1995), Hans Maier (2009[1966]), Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (1986), Birger Priddat (1997) and Fritz Ringer (1979, 1992).

1920-1970: A Discipline in Disarray, and the Construction of the Social Market Economy

With the end of the first world war the old aristocratic-monarchic system of domination collapsed in Germany, making room for an alliance of the liberal bourgeoisie and the moderate working class (or rather their representatives). A multitude of interconnected causes ended this republican experiment in 1933, amongst others the harsh Versailles peace treaty that provoked the resurgence of German predispositions towards both nationalism and authoritarianism. This new wave of nationalism is, at first, mostly carried by the more or less disempowered elites, both aristocratic and militarised bourgeois. In the academic sphere a similar process of regression and crisis occurs due to the threat to dominant social positions posed by the progress of economic-technical development and the concurrent expansion of higher education (Ringer 1990[1969]: 61-80; Ringer 1979). With the advent of the world economic crisis in 1929, mass unemployment shifted the dynamic of this nationalism away from the old elites towards a purified version in Hitler's National Socialism. This led to a considerable series of breaks with German traditions in science, bureaucracy and elsewhere, inducing a new beginning of dual institutional production in the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic in 1949. The western state, until the 1970s and beyond, is characterised by the concept of the social market Economy whereas the eastern state was a state-socialist command economy. That meant in practice - in the Federal republic and then later the reunified Germany - the enactment of a rather corporatist organisation of industrial relations as well as the creation of a welfare state that has been tied to Bismarckian roots (Esping-Andersen 1989), where market

differences tend to be transferred to considerable degree into status differences of social welfare between groups. In this period of time also occurred various waves of higher education expansion that are matched and managed by the continuous enlargement of the universities and polytechnics (Fachhochschulen), with various re-vampings and re-foundations of both kinds.

Within German academic Economics there are also significant upheavals within the same time span. With the end of the monarchy and the death of Schmoller (in 1917), the historical school - a holistic and culturalist view of the economy which was nevertheless aimed to erect laws of economic development by way of inductive (and subjectivist) reasoning - quickly deteriorated from its once dominant position at the summit of the discipline. This occurred, in part, because it was not able to explain and to make sense of the now radically different economic realities that called for more precise (that is, quantitative) measuring of economic key trends in times of hyperinflation and mechanisation (Köster 2011: 61-88). The discipline reacted in various ways so that, for example, it was in the 1920s that the first institutes for economic research in Germany were founded (such as the Institute for the Study of the World Economy in Kiel). These were much closer to contemporary 'practical' demands, and entrepreneurial interests, than the rather 'remote' moral Economics of the historical school, and consequently acquired substantial funds from third-party sponsors during the 1920s and 30s. Another reaction to the crisis, and at the same time perhaps an expression of it, was the flurry of competing theories and approaches that mushroomed during these decades that tried to make sense of the economy. According to the literature on the subject, many of these approaches were short-lived, and furthermore deeply dependent on the Zeitgeist. Hubris, oversensitivity towards critique and a pathological language marked by neologisms and ornamentalisms sedimented themselves into the theoretical constructions of the economists (ibid. : 201-206), which reflected the wider deterioration of intellectual communication (Ringer 1990[1969]: 55-57). One example for this process within Economics apparently can be Othmar Spann's 'romantic universalism' which ostentatiously rejected all specialisations and all

individualisms in favour of a return to an estate-based society⁶¹. German Economics in this regard would give up its focus on economic growth and assess all activities by their contribution towards the conservation of the 'whole' society of estates, activities which could be compared qualitatively but not metrically (Köster 2011: 180-191). Other Economists, like Werner Sombart, produced similar amalgamations of wishes (or value judgements) with scientific theories and analyses and so contributed not to a small degree, like Mandarin representatives from other disciplines, to a failure to rally to the symbolic defence of the Weimar Republic, thus serving to facilitate the rise of Nazism. It is in this social and intellectual environment that the specifically German idea of the 'Social Market Economy' was born.

Like classical Liberalism, this German version believed essentially in the beneficial consequences of the free market. Unlike classical (that is, Manchester) Liberalism, however, it presupposed a strong juridical-administrative framework to make the free market work. This liberalism by order, or Ordo-liberalism, was worked out against the actually existing socialist and national socialist economies of the 1920s to 1940s. The Ordo-liberals drew a sort of teleological line back from this period to the very beginnings of anti-market interference during the 19th century, thus giving the essential policy tasks for the state in the provision of the market mechanism and its non-interference, which included a social welfare state that mirrored rather than meddled with market outcomes (via tax and credit policies rather than price controls or subsidies for example, see Foucault 2010[2004]: 139f.). This critique of the 'homogenising' and culture-destroying historical tendencies of capitalism, which were nevertheless not seen as intrinsically constitutive of it, made up for a kind of vigilance on the part of the state with regard to the allegedly slippery route towards a totalitarian regime. In this, the Ordo-liberals are very close in their arguments to Austrian Economists like Hayek or Mises.

⁶¹ This means that the concept of universalism refers to the objects of a science rather than its moral or humanistic scope.

This theoretical development represented, of course, a major departure from the earlier historical school that dominated German Economics until the 1920s and in which most of the representatives of Ordo-Liberalism (and other economic schools of the time) were educated after all. There is a very clear embrace of liberal market principles and the aversion against non-liberal interferences. On the other hand, there is still the essentially holistic outlook of Economics, combining law, history and Sociology (including insights by Max Weber). There is also still the aversion against a clear division of value judgements (understood as goals one has) and theoretical constructions. The difference, however, is that now the value is not any longer the moral superiority of a monarchical Germany (as was the case with many proponents of the historical school, such as Gustav Schmoller), but the moral superiority of a free market society that is asserted and that tends to be mixed with the theoretical models and assessment of reality. There is also, lastly, still the assertion of Economics as an essentially institutionalist, historically-specific discipline which implies the rejection of Anglo-American posing of universal, transhistoric economic laws (Häuser 1994: 57-61). It is therefore no wonder when Häuser (ibid. : 67, my translation) asks rhetorically: “Where else would the ground be laid better for an integrative solution of problems of the politics or order than on the ground prepared by the historical school, with its merging of Political Economy, Law, Sociology and Political Science.”

This is not to say that there were no other schools of thought developed during this time span. There was also a significant proportion of Economists receiving and translating Keynesian or Neo-Keynesian ideas into the German context. Aside from this there were also remnants of the old historical school surviving for a considerable time, for instance with Friedrich Lütge or Erich Kosiol. In terms of the student population Economics remained a rather small discipline during the 1920s and 30s with around 2.000 to 3.000 students, except for the huge fluctuations connected to the inflation of 1923. According to Köster (2011: 69f.), the professorial chairs were less well equipped compared to those of the natural sciences, an underfunding that continued after 1945 and which led to an increased dependence on external funders (Hesse 2010: 134-140). The student population

seems to have changed first in terms of social participation and inclusion. Whereas the elite share of higher civil servants, officers and free professions (see above) is relatively stable at around 14%, there is a massive increase of employees' sons - up to 19% from around 3% - and secondarily worker's sons - from 0.2% to 4.5% - in 1932/33 compared to 20 years earlier (Titze et al. 1987: 262-264). Even given the universal development towards expansion of higher education schooling during the Weimar Republic (Ringer 1990[1969]: 74), this increase of the respective lower class categories is still relatively high, compared to protestant theology (from 2.3% to around 14% for employees), Law (from 2.3% to around 13%) or Medicine (from 2.4% to 10%). On the other hand, Catholic Theology admitted a far greater number of workers (a rise from 1,5% to 13% in 1932/33) (ibid. : 244f.; 248f.; 250f.; 246f.). Once again therefore, one may infer that Economics, in terms of social esteem, had an intermediate standing.⁶² The Nazi-era with its preference for and pressure towards practical applications and aversion to theoretical considerations certainly helped to pull Business Administration, for the first time, closer towards Economics (Hesse 2010: 71-73). The discipline had first developed in separate commercial polytechnics from the end of the 19th century onwards (Tribe 1995: 95-139) that were rather despised by the representatives of the historical school. The post-war era after 1945 sees a massive increase of student numbers with a slow and sluggish increase of professorships and assistantships - so that, for example, in the academic year 1953/54 there are over 16.000 students in Political Economy (Volkswirtschaftslehre) matriculated at universities, but only 57 full professors, while the numbers are around 12.000 students to 136 in Law, and 2.200 to 75 in Protestant Theology (Busch 1956: 112).

Compared to other university disciplines, post-war Economics still has a relative under-representation of students whose parents were higher civil servants or from

⁶²Köster(2011: 69f.) reports on the popularity of National Economics among 'active military officers', citing a regional study on leftist northern German Economists after the first world war. This is not really substantiated by the statistics - the share of officers on the student body seems to be decreasing from 1912 to 1933 (Titze et al. 1987: 262-264). But then National Economics is put together with forestry sciences and the old 'cameralia', that is, cameral Economics., so that really reliable and detailed statements are hard to make on this basis.

the free professions while including a much higher share from the entrepreneurial elite (Ringer 1979: 105-112). This is also somewhat reflected in the social origin of its top professors at the time (the 1950's), all born around 1900. Economists⁶³ such as Fritz Neumark⁶⁴ or Erwin von Beckerath⁶⁵ came from merchant backgrounds. However, the Ordo-Liberals in particular seem to have originated from the educational bourgeoisie or higher military officer corps, in any case, from very established backgrounds. Thus, while Wilhelm Röpke's father (like that of Friedrich Hayek⁶⁶) was a Physician and civil servant⁶⁷, Alexander Rüstow's father was a lieutenant-general of the Prussian army⁶⁸. Rudolf Eucken, the father of Walter Eucken, was a Philosopher and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1908⁶⁹. Alfred Müller-Armack's⁷⁰ and Heinrich von Stackelberg's⁷¹ fathers were both factory managers, whereas the father of Franz Böhm⁷² was a top civil servant. This distinguished social origin - basically from the second or even first-tier establishment of Wilhelminian pre-1918 Germany - stands in some contrast to the rather more humble origin of the German Keynesians (or at least for those whose social origin could be found out). The fathers of Erich Schneider⁷³ and Erich Preiser⁷⁴ were both school teachers, Wilhelm Kromphardt's⁷⁵ father was a pastor, whereas Hans Peter's father managed a mill⁷⁶. Hence, in terms of social origin, the

⁶³ I have obtained this information from the digitalised *Deutsche Biographie* (BavarianAcademyOfSciences 2010ff.), a multi-volume biographical reference work commissioned by the royal academy of the sciences during Wilhelminian times that encompasses many famous politicians, intellectuals and figures of public interest that lived or died before 1900. <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/>, last accessed October 13, 2017.

⁶⁴ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz71570.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 29, 2017.

⁶⁵ http://cpr.uni-rostock.de/resolve/id/cpr_person_00003346, last accessed October 29, 2017.

⁶⁶ <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/51095>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁶⁷ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz106346.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁶⁸ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz108885.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁶⁹ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz19591.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 28, 2017.

⁷⁰ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz66861.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁷¹ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz107387.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁷² <http://frankfurter-personenlexikon.de/node/1817>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁷³ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz107386.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁷⁴ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz97197.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁷⁵ http://cpr.uni-rostock.de/resolve/id/cpr_person_00003304, last accessed October 27, 2017.

⁷⁶ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/gnd118740199.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed, October 28, 2017.

Anti-Keynesians (Ordo-Liberals) seem closer to the original British Keynesians (like Keynes himself, but also Pigou, or Robinson) than the German Keynesians, at least during the decades under focus here.

Lastly, in the 1950s and 60s there were significant changes to the outlook of the discipline that seemed to have altered the inheritance that the Ordo-Liberals left to it. There was, on the one hand, the further expansion of student numbers as well as professorships, from 57 professors in 1953 to 78 in 1960 and finally 245 in 1975. (Hesse 2010: 181-191). There is, furthermore, a successive change in curricular affiliations, away from Humanities and Social Sciences towards the Natural Sciences and Business Administration, amidst and despite rather violent protests from 'traditionalists' such as Friedrich Lütge (see Raiser, Sauermann, and Schneider 1964 for a summary of these debates). This happens rather belatedly in comparison to Anglo-American Economics. It developed via the de facto extension of the economic field due to the foundation of, and massive support for, external economic research institutes: a change which is all the more important in the face of a scarcity of funding from within the scientific community in relation to other subjects (Hesse 2010: 132-154). These institutes, like the Ifo in Munich or the DIW in Berlin, were supported by the German state directly and by American institutions like the Ford or Rockefeller Foundation with a view to promoting empirical work (Berghahn 2004). This gives us a first valuable indication of the standing of Political Economy *within* and *without* the scientific community.

1970-2010: The belated monetarist Revolution and Development into a fanned out neoclassical Discipline

By the 1970s, the western German state had regained, under the leadership of a much more confident bourgeois elite, its economic and industrial standing within Europe and the world. Through the finally integrative appeasement of the remaining former aristocratic elite via economic and civil means (Wehler 2008: 165-68), the new line of social struggle ran, as in other western societies of the time,

between capital and labour and their respective representatives and institutions. The relationships between these groups remain relatively balanced until roughly the late 1970s. The economic reconstruction after the world war and the concomitant start of the (predominantly economic) European integration in the 1950s, together with a still reasonably strong degree of labour organisation brought about a relatively equal distribution of wealth, unprecedented in Germany as elsewhere (Piketty 2014). There were strong tendencies of bureaucratisation and technical innovation that accompany these transformations, necessitating a further specialisation in education which reflected the changes in the division of labour. The state of relative social balance in which these processes tended to take place (understood in the opposites named above) increasingly eroded from the 1980s onwards. Trade unions lose a substantial part of their members in a context characterised by the constitution of a European single market, economic globalisation and German re-unification, all of which put considerable pressure on most employees and their wages (Dörre, Jürgens, and Matuschek 2014). This is aggravated, and perhaps also reflected, by increasingly labour-hostile welfare policies which start around the late 70s under chancellor Helmut Schmidt's administration and culminate in the rather massive welfare cut-backs orchestrated by Gerhard's Schröder's red-green coalition in 2003ff., later rounded out, compounded and supplemented by governments under conservative leadership.⁷⁷ In this era of extension of market-principles to almost all areas of life falls the further, unabated expansion of education and higher education, visible in the further sharp increases of student population, but also staff members (see above).

The development of both student and staff numbers has already been shown in the last section. A fresh and more differentiated look at the discipline's funding sources, however, may surprise: Even though the discipline evidently draws a lot of funding from *external* sources (that is, sources not mediated by scientific judgement) such as ministries, but also banks, foundations, think tanks and the

⁷⁷ See <http://www.portal-sozialpolitik.de/sozialpolitische-chronik> (last accessed March 27, 2018) for a comprehensive overview of the legal changes in all areas of welfare in Germany over the last 50 years.

like, it seems relatively badly represented *within* the broader scientific field. If one takes the relative representation of Economists in the academies of science, which are prestigious, traditional inner-scientific organisations and which work through co-option of members of various disciplines, most often in specific disciplinary divisions or ‘classes’, one can see that Economists are quite underrepresented. In the relevant class of the Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences for example there are 15 Sociologists but only 14 Economists (BBAW 2016), even though the latter have more than four times as many professorial chairs (over 2.000 as against barely over 500, see FederalStatisticalOffice 2016: 103, Table 9)⁷⁸. Hence, there is some evidence that points towards a conservation of the position of Economics’ intermediary position within the academic field. On the other hand there seems to be a rise in esteem in other, non-academic fields such as the political or economic one (see Nützenadel 2005; Fourcade, Ollion, and Algan 2015; also Bourdieu 1988[1984]: 80). Therefore one might, in Bourdieusian terms, characterise German economics as possessing little academic, but plenty of extra-academic credibility, hence tending to be more subject to the sways of heteronomous forces belonging to the wider field of power.⁷⁹ Parallel to the numerical changes and the developments of the rather intense consulting relationships of Economists to outside institutions and forces something else took place in academic economics: a thorough change of approach towards economic questions academically, a change quite often referred to as the ‘monetarist revolution’ (Spahn 2005; Janssen 2006).

This revolution, which followed its American precedents that took place, under the leadership of the new Chicago School of Milton Friedman and George Stigler some ten to fifteen years earlier, seems to have had far-reaching effects both within and outside of academia, and thus perhaps is worth a closer look. It took place within a specifically German economic context dominated by the (then conflicting) paradigms of Keynesianism on the one hand (represented by scholars like Erich Schneider, Erich Preiser or Andreas Paulsen) and the influential ordoliberal School

⁷⁸ This table includes both Political Economists as well as Economists.

⁷⁹ I am indebted to Andrew Smith for this specific implication.

(represented by Walther Eucken, Alfred Müller-Armack, Alexander Rüstow or Wilhelm Röpke and their disciples, respectively)⁸⁰. The former, inspired by Keynes himself but also his Anglo-American interpreters (like Hicks or Samuelson), were already turning towards a quantitative, rather formalised empirical idea of Economics (see Schneider 1947), of course within a strongly interventionist perspective of steering the economy via economic investment and stimulation. The ordoliberal, however, tended to be sceptical of quantification and formalisation, and favoured an interventionist state which creates a market that comes as close as possible to the perfect market (see Eucken 1949).

The monetarist revolutionaries were almost all young newcomers aged 25-40 (Janssen 2006: 99-101) at the time. They effectively seem to have created a *new* position within the academic field by combining the liberal normative perspective of the ordoliberal with the use of (more and more complex) formalised tools and models from the Keynesians. This seems to have been aided by the concomitant expansion of the university system. It provided these revolutionaries with early chairs (such as in the newly founded universities of Siegen, Wuppertal and Essen) and a rising stream of income from the sale of their textbooks for the ever-increasing number of Economics and Business Administration Students. If one assesses the formative works of some of the leading protagonists of this change⁸¹, one recurrent theme is the felt need for *application* and *practical relevance* of Economic research. It seems very important for them, not least as a way to distinguish themselves from their predecessors. Artur Woll for example distances himself from what he calls the “[...] l’art pour l’art as research method [...]” (Woll 1969: 5, all the quotes from German books for the remainder of this section are my translations). He takes such an approach as characteristic of preceding Economics textbooks while introducing his ‘instrumental’ view of science “The truth of a theory is measured on reality.” (ibid. : 13). Rather than literary ‘speculations’, Woll

⁸⁰ This is of course an oversimplification since there were other currents of thought, such as remnants of the old historical school, as well there at the time. I do, however, merely sketch the arguably most important positions.

⁸¹ I base this selection mainly on Hauke Janssen’s (2006) work on the monetarist revolution in German Economics.

prefers a “[...] systematic confrontation of theory with facts.” (ibid.: VI). Within this of course also comes out a very high attribution to a specific form of empirical evidence, namely a strictly formalised, quantified type of it. Consequently, someone like Dieter Cassel (1968) takes up Popperian philosophy of science to apply it to Economics. Strictly distinguishing the - psychological and therefore ‘irrational’- ‘context of discovery’ from the ‘context of justification’, he attempts to form a new epistemology for Economics which may help to make “[...] the Economic science into a tool for the preservation and organisation of human life [...].” (ibid.: 65), which implies a strict ‘empirical’ orientation of Economics towards the construction of nomological-causal, general, coherent and testable laws and theories (ibid.: 84ff.). In the works of Timmermann (1965) on the Economics of development, Kösters (1974) on money demand, or Neumann (1963) on the relationship of company profit to economic growth we always find the same strict reference to ‘actually existing behaviour’ which is measured by precisely-constructed quantitative, formalised models. Only the PhD of Hans-Jörg Thieme (1968) on the socialist agrarian constitution of Eastern Germany and Otmar Issing’s (1961) work on the link between business cycles and monetary policies show more ‘political’ or theoretical reasoning (that might be due to the temporary influence of academic supervisors - like Paul Hensel, who was an Ordoliberal and a pupil of Walter Eucken in the case of Thieme).

The monetarist revolution, had, in its German variant, more of a general-theoretical embeddedness than its very empirical-minded American counterpart (see Janssen 2006: 103-05). It was in effect a shift of the economic academic debate towards a more evidence-based, natural-scientific type of discourse. It helped to bring about the changes in the curriculum and the textbooks that we nowadays have in front of us so vividly, beginning with the first of many versions of Woll’s (1969) ‘General Political Economy’ [allgemeine Volkswirtschaftslehre]. This work came with an appropriate exercise book (Woll, Thieme, and Cassel 1974[1970]) in the style of short quizzes and multiple-choice tests. Of course this kind of pedagogy has become the absolute contemporary standard in the discipline, even in many heterodox textbooks. There is an evident rootedness of these

textbooks in the theoretical and even literary tradition of German and international Economics of the time (extensive references towards both Classical, Keynesian, Ordoliberal and other schools are abundant and numerous in the early works of these revolutionaries). Moreover, there is an awareness of the limitations of mathematical formulations - Artur Woll for example warns in his PhD dissertation (Woll 1958: 4) of the *temptation* to replace literary with formalised statements, to confuse these statements with reality⁸². Finally, there is also the awareness of the dangers of *simplification* in textbooks - Woll et.al. note in their preface that “Certainly the chosen path is not without problems. Exercise books - especially with solutions - could foster a ‘consumer attitude’ of the students that expect ready and exam-proof recipes.” (Woll, Thieme, and Cassel 1974[1970]: V). Despite all that, one may argue that these revolutionaries, and the generations of Economists that followed them, may have considerably helped to produce precisely the de-theorisation of research, the confusion of model and reality and the banalisation of learning that they evidently somewhat feared. But they also fostered the rise of a new way of being an intellectual Economist imported from the USA, a sort of expert-consultant who, through his evident and proven ‘objectivity’ in his more or less narrow field of expertise, is entitled to give ‘neutral’ advice as to what to do in various matters of policy or strategy. An exemplar here might be the case of Otmar Issing, who went on to become the chief Economist of the European Central Bank and worked also as an analyst for Goldman Sachs). This way economic knowledge has an impact in other fields with other logics of competition, different forms of capital and different agents with differing interests. Heinz-Peter Spahn, for example, notes how the German Central Bank welcomed the new monetarist view due to its interests vis-à-vis other banks, its autonomy from politics, and its interest in shedding foreign currency obligations (Spahn 2005: 32-34).

What about the social origins of these monetarist revolutionaries? From those glimpses available through the customary information on father’s occupation and

⁸² This is somewhat similar to the warnings of Frank Knight, leading figure of the early Chicago School and a teacher of Milton Friedman, makes in regards to the use of models (Knight 2008{1935})

curriculum vitae of the candidates provided with doctorate dissertations until roughly the 1970s, one sees that quite a few of the central figures of this revolution named here were of rather petit bourgeois origin, or what I will go on to call 'Parvenus'. Artur Woll's father for example was a miner (Woll 1958)⁸³, Dieter Cassel's a master tailor (Cassel 1968), whereas the father of Otmar Issing was an innkeeper (Issing 1961). Even sceptics of the monetarist paradigm like Wim Kösters (who are nevertheless firmly rooted in the new, formalised, empirically-centered way of arguing) seem of rather petit-bourgeois origin ((his father being a carpenter master, see Kösters 1974), even though someone like Vincenz Timmermann (1965) has a merchandiser as a father, a category certainly too vague to make any reasonable judgement on social origin. Thus, it may be said that at least some of the central German revolutionaries had a social origin *analogous* of those of their American predecessors (Friedman and Friedman 1998: 19-24), whose works they so effectively used to shift the axes of debate in their own field, and influence those beyond.

To conclude: The field of German Economics, a relative late-comer in relation to the Natural Sciences and Philosophy but predecessor of the other Social Sciences, exhibits a rather interesting history. For most of it, it seemed to hold a rather intermediary position (relative to other disciplines), both in terms of academic prestige and the social origin of students and staff. This seems to fit with the information gathered about contemporary students and staff. Also, Economics seems, compared to other disciplines, rather close to external concerns and topics - from the administrative needs of the aristocratic rulers, to the justification of the German empire state, to the philosophical and eventually technical backing of the social market economy - Economists, here (as elsewhere), were and are closely intertwined with these societies and their governing needs. Aside from the

⁸³ I have obtained this information from the relevant PhD theses that were, at the time, supplied with a short CV of the author at the end.

transformation of the reigning paradigms over the decades - from Historical Economics to Ordo- to Neoliberalism - this might be a central, and sociologically pertinent, constant of Economics and Economists in Germany. Perhaps Pierre Bourdieu sums up this institutionalised (dis)position well:

“Unlike sociology, a pariah science that is always under suspicion for its supposed political leanings, and from which the powerful expect nothing but a minor, generally somewhat ancillary knowledge of techniques of manipulation or legitimation, and which, as a result, is less exposed than other disciplines to demands likely to threaten its independence, economics is always more of a state science and is, as a result, haunted by state thinking: being constantly preoccupied with the normative concerns of an applied science, it is dependent on responding politically to political demands, while at the same time defending itself against any charge of political involvement by the ostentatiously lofty character of its formal, and preferably mathematical, constructions.” (Bourdieu 2005: 10)

This of course also brings into play the most recent changes to the discipline, i.e. the massive extension and development of its technical-mathematical apparatus and the concomitant spread of a causally-oriented, instrumentalist and economic epistemology⁸⁴. The task will be to link this profound taste for mathematical model-building and liberal values with the rather intermediary social origin of Economists - a state which seems to exhibit, as we have seen, a considerable constancy over the years. Another result of this enquiry into the position of Economics within the German academic space is, if only in outlines, its seemingly subordinate position within this space but its dominant position with regards to demand and funding coming from outside of this field.

⁸⁴ One can, in addition, add the outspoken international-mindedness of German Economics, which could be shown in the share of professors with PhD's from American universities - for Anglo-American culture surely is hegemonic in Economics as elsewhere - which is most likely higher than the still, in this respect, very 'national' discipline of German Sociology (Mau and Huschka 2010: 758). On the other hand one must question whether this is really an 'international-mindedness' or rather a specific case of what Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras (2013) call phagocytosis, a kind of acculturation to a dominant culture at the cost of disregarding one's home culture.

Habitus and Field specified

We can now collate the information we have gathered and attempt to exploit them within a Bourdieusian epistemology: On the one hand we have a body of economists and economics students that is more male and middle class, but endowed with comparatively less cultural capital - the latter assessed in comparison to their equivalents in other Social Science disciplines. On the other hand, the historical position of German Economics as potentially *academically* subordinate but *extra-academically* in high demand, especially recently. One could interpret this as initial evidence of a *bi-polar* academic field with *scientific* capital at the one pole and *temporal* capital at the other. That would imply that German Economics is relatively closer to the temporal pole. Philosophical liberalism and mathematical model-building, in the broadest terms, in any way constitute what might be labelled the specific 'doxa' in German academic Economic discourse. All of these in a Bourdieusian framework must be thought in unison, as a concrete empirical totality.

After having shed some light onto the 'objective' relationships of Economics and Economists with each other, with other disciplines and the wider society, we must now see how this relationship of field and habitus is experienced 'subjectively', how the interaction of habitus and field(s) lead to the adoption and advocacy of economic and neoliberal thought. It appears as if there is a specific group that has an unusual 'degree of fit' with German academic Economics. On the other hand, groups that do not fit this *profile of social origin* will tend to be excluded and/or exclude themselves. That affects women, students from lower and very high classes, and also students from a background with a very high degree of certified education (at least relative to other disciplines).

In view of the limitations described in the introduction, it is not possible here to enquire into the processes of exclusion of female, lower and grand bourgeois class and highly educated students, or the in situ selection of those whose social

profile/habitus somehow fits the discipline⁸⁵. This work, on the other hand, concentrates primarily on exploring the processes of self-selection and self-exclusion, through the experiences relived and recorded in in-depth interviews. The experiences and attitudes towards the subject (field) expectable from both those who fit and those who don't have been outlined out earlier in this chapter. In a discipline like Sociology, for example, a daughter of a teacher holding a PhD objectively seems to fit much better than in Economics. So much for the 'objective' side of things, both embodied and institutionalised. What is missing to formulate an initial theory and model of study selection of Economics is of course how these relationships and resource endowments *translate* into the lived experience of 'fitting' Economics students, how the inherited forms of capital in the given German social and educational fields give rise to a cognitive process in which Economics eventually emerges as a 'natural' or even inevitable 'choice'. But how is this experienced? How are the selections expressed, in what terms? What arguments, what building blocks, what contrasts are used and constructed to confer the student's relation to their selections? And to what exact system of dispositions are they linked? We must now look for the next puzzle pieces to add to this framework.

In the end it comes down to a question of *meaning*. And so, in the upcoming chapters, I will endeavour to provide an exploratory comparison of motivations and their sociological meaning within the perspective and model adopted here. First, I will compare and explore those who objectively and 'subjectively' fit well with the discipline with those who don't (chapter 5). Then, I will compare those who fit well with the discipline of Economics with one another, with the help of the construction of three heuristic and structural ideal-types (chapters 6 to 8).

⁸⁵ The PhD project of Alice Pearson, currently undertaken at Cambridge University, might do just that via an Ethnography of Economics education in the British field.

PART II - 'Subjective' Perspectives

Methodology

In this chapter I will try to describe the kind of methodology which follows from the approach that I have outlined, and how I tried to put this into practice in this case. I have to say once more that the way in which the progress of this work is structured does not mirror the initial procedures of practical research. The original interviews and ethnographic work were conducted in a considerably more 'inductivist', impure and makeshift fashion than embedded here, after careful reflection, in this ordering presentation - which of course means to cast doubt on the sometimes very strict demands leading epistemologists make with regard to the purity of research (see for example Bryman 2004: 266-68; Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2008: 18-20, the latter even denouncing the mixing of both perspectives as a 'capital sin').

Indeed I originally believed that knowledge of Bourdieusian epistemology and 'general theory' could replace Bourdieusian knowledge of the concrete, specific social field under study (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 30f.). That is also why I conducted the interviews *before* my more systematic enquiries of the 'objective' characteristics or history of German students or German Economics presented in the last chapter. My initial pilot study, as well as the original stages of the main field study in Germany, were conducted under divisions not so dissimilar from those criticised in chapters 2 and 3. For example, I formulated tentative ideal-types of the 'mainstreamers', the 'institutional complementaries' and the 'heterodox challengers' after my pilot study - and while already recording socio-demographic variables such as gender, class origin and the like, I hadn't had linked these ideal-types yet to the structural characteristics in a way that Bourdieusian epistemology demands, that is, into a *concrete theoretical model*. It is perhaps fair to say that I hope that my work represents a progress from substantialist understandings - as they can be found in the works of the sociologies I criticised

earlier - towards more structuralist understandings of study selection, towards some form of *theoretical induction*.

Selections - empirical Basis and Strategies of Enquiry

The 'qualitative' data acquisition methods applied in this project predominantly consist of semi-structured interviews and (to a much lesser degree) participant observation. In a first phase, I attempted to refresh my acquired knowledge of academic Economics by (re-)studying various basic textbooks as well as attending a few lectures and tutorials. From March to May 2015 I carried out an initial, exploratory pilot study, interviewing seven Economics staff members and seven successful and engaged (in the sense that they all were involved in economic, extracurricular associations) Economics students at various stages, most of whom taught and/or studied at the same pre1992 British university. The point was not so much to enquire into study selection itself as to develop a strategy of and feeling for conversing about study selection. Very early it became very clear that the initial goal of studying the position-taking of mature Economics *academics* was not feasible with the given resources, so I resorted to a focus on the study of the initial processes of *becoming* such a scientist (or not).

I started out with a rather broad, very 'inductive', approach towards my subject of Economics students: I wanted to figure out what they thought about the world and their subject. I already had an idea of students more 'interested' than others, and so concentrated my ethnographic and interview efforts on two student organisations within an Economics department at a larger, rather prestigious, British University. But quickly I recognised the differences between the organisations and the students with regard to their studies and to life more particular. One group of students was very much focussed on 'secular' matters related to putting their degree to good, and direct, economic use. Accordingly, their behaviour towards their curriculum (or questions about it) was rather fleeting and of an instrumental nature- so that, for example, they strayed into very general and rather vague remarks when asked about what they disliked about the subject.

The other group of students was much more seriously engaged in discussing the curriculum, and much less in business-related issues - and, indeed, there were certain animosities between the two groups. Obviously, this kind of dichotomy can indeed be described in the types examined in chapters 2 and 3 - the 'career' vs. 'science'-minded students, or the 'conformist' vs. the 'critical' or 'reflexive' students.

But, keeping the principles of field theory in mind, it appeared (and appealed) to me that both groups were heading for *different fields*, with different understandings of excellence, different forms of capital and history efficient (the economic field for the one group, the intellectual or academic field for the other) - and hence adjectives such as 'critical' or 'reflexive' might need to be referred to different worlds, mean different things in these worlds. Since I was more interested in the more academic of both groups, I eventually opted to concentrate on 'intellectual' students (I am sure there are also 'intellectuals' among business-minded students). My initial analysis of the world-views and attitudes of them was still very much rooted in an epistemology described and criticised in chapters 2 and 3 - so that, for example, I grouped these students according to their general attitudes towards the curriculum which, in lieu of a proper theory, had to be taken at face value, that is, those students 'engaged' vs. those 'alienated', or the 'mainstreamers' vs. the 'challengers' - hence categories not so dissimilar, in their substantialism, from the ones criticised earlier. I didn't yet have the knowledge about the institutional and positional background that is described in chapter 4 - in fact I didn't want to know at that point, because I was heading for a rather abstract, de-historicised and general reading and interpretation of my interviews, as mentioned above.

At that time, I knew that I wanted to concentrate on what made 'intellectual' students selecting Economics as their discipline as opposed to 'average' students, and what differences existed between them. This made it necessary to find a practical indicator of distinguishing these 'intellectual' students (the word still has an ethnocentric ring about it) from 'less intellectual' students. Thus, for the main

study with German Economics students in Germany, I had to come up with an objective indicator which needed to fulfil the criterion of ‘fit’ described in chapter 4, that is, expressing both the recognition by the subject of Economics (being recognised as ‘intellectually outstanding’) and its representatives *and* the interest of the students (who ‘choose’ this activity over other paths available, such as internships or more lucrative student jobs). This made it sure, or at least likely, that I acquired ‘fitting’ students of Economics, which implies fit to an implicitly constructed academic field, however that may look like. Excellent marks alone seemed not enough in times of fast-growing educational populations, partly also due to potential grade inflation. So by taking tutors, holders of research assistantships, scholarship holders and PhDs as my *indicators of recognition* (and thus fit) I think I have chosen a more rigorous selection tool⁸⁶ which generally tends to signify both very good marks, exceptional professional recognition of the students vis-à-vis their peers as well as a reasonable amount of student motivation and interest⁸⁷ (Regelmann 2004).

For the main study, then, I decided to recruit recognised and non-recognised students, thus somewhat shifting my initial interest in and definition of ‘interested students’ which are the operationalised forms of ‘fitting’ vs. ‘not fitting’ students.

So, in result, my pilot study led to a certain narrowing down of focus and persons under the assumption that students, sooner or later in their studies, to a higher or lower degree, orient and concentrate themselves towards *different* fields. This effectively means to *neglect and to disregard* large parts of Economics and Business Administration students and graduates that may work at banks, large corporations, governments, and the like, and who of course may have a considerable influence

⁸⁶ Estimates see the share of teaching and research assistants among the whole German student population at around 19%, which seems a generous estimate which is almost four times higher than other accounts. (Schneickert 2013: 108f.) Still, even with this number one has the top quintile of the student population in terms of recognition.

⁸⁷ It implies an implicit intellectual motivation, and thus self-selection, insofar as it is often rather poorly paid relative to more lucrative jobs or internships in other fields.

within these fields. On the contrary, I was interested in the more ‘intellectual-minded’ students who might be future professors, chief Political Economists or Economics teachers in the not-too-distant future.

I now wanted to contrast these future intellectuals with ‘average’ Economics students - i.e. all those students who are *not* recognised in above-defined way - to investigate into differences both in their ‘objective’ characteristics of habitus as well as ‘subjective’ differences in attitudes and views towards their subject and the wider world. The original plan was to create a sample that consisted equal numbers between both groups. But how to do that, and where?

Should one recruit participants at universities, polytechnics, or both? And at which institutions specifically? The first question was easily answered: because I wanted to concentrate on the ‘*elite*’ of a discipline, and because polytechnics are not yet seen as the institutions where such elites are trained, I chose to recruit exclusively at universities. The second question was trickier: unlike the British or the French academic system, German academic institutions are relatively equal in standing and prestige, while traditionally strong disciplinary differences cut across this hitherto subordinate principle of hierarchy (Ringer 1979), even though this seems to be changing somewhat of late (Münch 2014; Dörre and Neis 2010). For this reason I decided to base my recruiting and observation efforts at one specific Economics faculty or institute which I shall henceforth call my case-study institute (CSI). The CSI is quite a characteristic German academic Economics institution in terms of its student and staff population⁸⁸, and also in terms of its reputation in teaching and research.⁸⁹

This of course brought up the the issue of recruitment: my time of field research at the CSI went from September 2015 to August 2016, in other words I spent almost a whole academic year there. In the first month or so I practiced what Paul Willis

⁸⁸ Except for the fact that it has more eastern German than western German intake.

⁸⁹ I notice that this selection, like with that of the universities over polytechnics, might as well have gone for the most prestigious, most recognised institute to emphasise and investigate the ideal-typically ‘academic’ character of its students. I acknowledge this shortcoming, but still maintain that a lot can be learned from the (relatively speaking) ‘average’ recognised Economists too.

describes as ‘just being around’ (2014[1978]: 256). Initially I talked to, and interviewed, various members of staff (including professors) about their study choice and their views on their students and on what constituted excellence in students. At the beginning of the academic year I went to a freshers’ orientation week where I volunteered as a photographer for the student council. I attended various undergraduate lectures and graduate courses, and I paid visits to the Economics student council and an Economics student organisation which, unlike others, deals specifically with political and scientific issues. I tried to make the acquaintance of as many Economics students of this kind as possible. In all but the undergraduate courses I eventually revealed my identity and purpose of visit. I attempted to recruit quite a few of them for an interview, sometimes without knowing whether they were recognised or not in the above-mentioned sense. Soon, I systematised my approach and contacted specifically the tutors of the Political Economy chairs at the CSI. There was some (but no total) overlap of these tutors with the students engaged in the student association and club. I recruited the core of my sample with this technique and the snowballing that it made possible (interviewed students asking other tutors/excellent students on my behalf). I attempted to supplement the existing sample with recognised Economics students studying elsewhere (mainly via phone calls), but this was much less successful, and I obtained only one additional interviewee from this procedure.

Recruiting non-recognised, ‘average’ students proved harder, despite their much higher number. I eventually distributed surveys in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate lectures⁹⁰ which entailed the offer to write me an email if one was interested in an interview, but only obtained six interviews in this way. In addition, on a couple of occasions, I also distributed contact cards outside lecture theatres after an undergraduate course, but this method was not successful at all. The very fact that one speaks of ‘study choice’ in front of (mostly) younger and less recognised students, and the fact I stated explicitly that I wanted to know

⁹⁰ At this stage I planned to compare the results of the survey - which was geared along the lines criticised in the first part of chapter 2 - with the standard literature, but quickly realised the fruitlessness of this endeavour, and so abandoned any supplementary survey.

something about how these young students chose their subject, seemed to trigger, beside the usual indifference, a feeling of pressure, of an expectation that one really *should* have a proper reason to study this or that subject (even though I tried to soften this expression as much as possible when presenting myself). This, at least, would explain the rather gruff rejection on the part of a student I asked for an interview outside a lecture theatre ('my student choice is not spectacular at all!'). On the other hand, just this 'intellectualist' or 'scholastic' technique worked very well with the recognised and engaged students. In any case, one must acknowledge that the resulting interview sample of 57 students is pre-selected to a high degree. It is surely skewed towards the 'recognised' and thus 'fitting' pole of the students. This suggests the application of other techniques of investigation, such as participant observation, perhaps even covert, to capture the attitudes and views of the 'average' students.

After the pilot study, I designed the interviews around four main topics which basically stayed the same during the main field study period. As for the general strategy of conducting them, I adopted the "understanding" approach laid out by Bourdieu in *The Weight of the World* (1999[1993]: 607-26), however with a conversational, one might say challenging, twist (Ullrich 1999) - because these were 'intellectual' students, presumably with a higher degree of self-confidence and sense of professional identity than 'average' Economics students, this allowed and perhaps even obliged me to probe more directly into their choices, even to challenge them at times, in order to elicit answers that were practical and relational in nature, and thus valuable from the standpoint of the given epistemology.

Given the causal and rather economic outlook and teaching of the discipline, but also the prevailing cognitive division of 'normative' vs. 'positive' aspects and dimensions of phenomena ('de gustibus non est disputandum', see Stigler and Becker 1977), I, in time, learned that I could be rather 'free' when it came to talking about 'personal' aspects of study 'choice', and I could therefore push the students

rather gently towards practical, and relational, thinking in these areas. However, I also had, at times, to be careful to profess a sympathy for their selections and perceptions. This was less possible in the ‘substantive’ parts of the interview where I was more challenged, and in a sense, held to account, by the discipline-specific regulations of communication. I tried to build on my own university training in Economics and thus attempted to give them reassurance of them being understood and being interested in (such as by verbal and non-verbal signals of agreement). Thereby I attempted to minimise the distance between the interviewee’s and my own presented perspective. Still, feelings of awkwardness sometimes could not be avoided.⁹¹ This, as the sociological reader might imagine, was not always easy given the rather market-friendly statements of some of my interviewees. The generally rather small difference between myself and many of my interviewees in terms of original social position and trajectory, I think, also helped in creating a ‘natural’ flow of the conversation. I tried to avoid entering into too extensive or heated arguments about Economics or economic policy, but nevertheless occasionally, and visibly, put myself into the role of the ‘good-natured and indulgent critic’ in order to elicit responses which allowed me to infer facts that can be fruitfully used in a Bourdieusian perspective. This, I felt, seemed rather successful with the ‘recognised’ students as well as with ‘unrecognised’ students that I was able to interview. Depending on the phase of study the student was in and her or his degree of recognition, I tried to adapt the ‘disciplinary thrust’ of the discourse accordingly, assuming this to be presumed by my interlocutor. After the interview, I handed out a small socio-demographic questionnaire to obtain information not gathered in the interview. In short, I wanted to elicit an effort of construction by pushing these students beyond what they most likely regarded as a ‘rational’

⁹¹ In these moments the interview felt more like an interrogation than a discourse, particularly when the interviewees gave only succinct answers without elaborating more widely, thus not giving me the chance to link onto wider aspects which tend to steer the situation into more colloquial waters. In a Bourdieusian perspective the meeting of two interlocutors, two habitus with two histories, is delicate insofar as the mutual and sincere appreciation of what the other does and says depends on one’s habitus. Therefore knowing *scientifically*, through careful modelling and construction, what to expect from the interviewee, can perhaps contribute to control and to reflect about the gut reactions one’s own habitus produces when specific things are uttered. This is most plainly visible when it comes to disturbing, annoying statements, but should just as well be applied to pleasing ones. Perhaps the degree of awkwardness during an interview is a good makeshift-indicator of the distance of two habitus.

explanation of their 'choice' (and which indeed often fell rather squarely into the categories of 'intrinsic' or 'extrinsic' study choice). I structured my interviews for the main study into four topics which I wanted to cover but which I attempted to be flexible with in terms of succession, antedating a topic if the flow of communication suggested it. For example, when a student began by expressing his current attitudes towards Economics rather than narrating the history of his selections, I let this happen and tried to steer the interview towards this history when the 'right moment' seemed to appear in the conversation. In other words, I effectively attributed less epistemological necessity to the chronological character of the narratives than to the smoothness and 'pleasantness' of the discussion for both the interviewee and myself. I therefore tried to achieve what Christel Hopf (1978) calls the avoidance of 'guided interview bureaucracy', i.e. the mechanical processing of points without sensibilities to the needs of neither the interview nor the interviewee. In this way I hoped to permeate through to the assumed practical, habitual mode of construction which operates, following Bourdieu, at the base of study selections, even if, at that time, I had no clear theoretical idea about what these selections *meant*.

The four parts of the guideline were structured as follows:

1. *The 'Choice' of Subject* - including the reasons why Economics was taken up, and description of the 'personal' events and motivations leading to this decision in the eyes of the interviewee. Within this context it was also asked - if and when the specific interview situation was opportune⁹² - about specific socio-demographic aspects of social origin, such as the parents', grandparents' (and, if applicable, even siblings') profession, the A-level or Higher' specialisations and grades, as well as favourite subjects in school. If

⁹² This in itself is a tricky issue and needs quite a bit of instinctive feeling. I felt that I was successful in defining and utilising this opportune moment with a lot of my participants, though not all of them. Issues of intimidation diminished this 'sensitivity of moment' in the case of the most recognised (and often successful) participants, issues of seeming discomfort in the case of the least recognised student.

there were multiple subjects selected, or a subject/apprenticeship selected before turning to Economics, the student was asked to explain the motivations for these as well. In any case, I attempted to provoke a *relational and practical assessment* of the perceived worth of *different* disciplines by prompting participants to give me *ad hoc* reasons why they did not study another discipline (if this was not done already by the interviewee, which was rather rarely the case). Here I often made use of the immediately preceding statements - such as "I studied Economics because I wanted to know something about the society"- to engage in a sort of discursive challenge by asking subsequent questions like: "Ok, but if you want to know something about society, why not Sociology, or History, or Political Science?" This, I think, was possible only because of the relatively privileged, relatively 'intellectual' character of the interview sample overall, as well as the relative equality between interviewer and interviewee in most cases. Where this was not the case, this strategy, it seems to me, was prone to lead to a formalisation (one might say petrification) of the interview process, the retreat on the part of the interviewee towards socially acceptable answers. Where this happened it had the effect of reducing this technique to the production of accepted common sense, and hence undermined the original goal of the interview (see Hopf 1978; Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991[1968]: 169-78; and Bourdieu 1993[1984]: 149-57). I will give an example of this break-down in communication below. The relationship of the two roles taken during the interview but also the specific relationship of the habitus that fill them out seem to heavily influence the 'climate' of an interview.

2. *Attitudes towards the discipline* - this section mainly covered the interviewee's attitudes towards her or his discipline (Economics or whatever studied), and, if applicable, the evolution of these attitudes over the course of studies. Here I attempted to prompt more detailed answers as to what exactly they (dis-)liked, and why. I encouraged them to describe this attitude even in fuzzy terms if they were not sure or 'vocal' about it, in the

hope to gently encourage them in a less representative and more relational, practical mode of thinking which a Bourdieusian perspective always assumes. I furthermore asked for preferred and/or taken academic specialisations (if applicable), scientific heroes or favourite books/authors, as well as whether they are engaged in any extra-curricular activities such as student associations or clubs.

3. *Plans for the future* - mostly asked towards the end of the interview, this section was supposed to generate a sense of the impression the interviewees had of themselves in the future, what they saw as realistic and what not. Again, I tried to prompt a little (where applicable and necessary) by asking them about alternatives they did not mention and what they thought about those. In that way, I hoped to generate another area of 'practical logic'.
4. *General attitudes and opinions on Current Topics* - in this 'additional' section I attempted to confront the interviewees with concrete current phenomena that can, but don't have to, be linked with economic reasoning. I asked how they would generally situate themselves politically if they had to, and what kind of economic policy they would advise. I furthermore prompted them to tell me about what they thought about more specific issues, such as that of a minimum wage and the idea of a basic minimum guaranteed income, as well as the financial crisis and, lastly, about their opinion on the refugee crisis which was, in Germany as elsewhere, in full swing at the time of the field research. I mostly asked these questions after the sections directly devoted to the questions of 'choice' or (from my perspective) selection process. These discussions were devised to generate clear attitudinal statements beyond the narrow educational or academic field, and to compare them with statements regarding academic Economics.

The form of semi-structured, focussed interviews (Merton and Kendall 1946) appeared to be a sufficient format to guarantee a certain comparability of answers as well as to ensure the flexibility necessary to the rather explorative character of

this study. The interviews were conducted at varying times and places. Most of the recognised students were interviewed in their offices, others in cafes or in parks. I attempted to be as accommodating as possible in these matters.

Finally, a word about the process of analysis. I first attempted to establish, rather inductively, what the 'typical' attitudes of my recognised German Economics students vis-à-vis the 'average' students were - were actually did they differ, and how could one see this? The results of this enquiry are put down in the following chapter. Then, I attempted to effectively *link* this contextual information I collected during or after conducting the interviews - about the position and History of German Economics and the position of German Economics students as well as 'my' 'recognised' Economics students - to perform a kind of theoretical induction. I looked at my interviewees and their attitudes *in their entirety* and attempted to match them with specific habitus that seemed to me fitting in explaining the expressed views which adequately fit both with their social origin as well as with the contextual data I had collated. For that I drew on my knowledge of various class habitus in very different historical fields, from 18th century France to 19th century Germany to 20th century America. The decisive thing was to relate the contextualised attitudes of the groups of students with that of various historical groups on the basis of abstract, rather *ahistorical*, ideal-typical, structurally caused habitus characteristics (such as cultural good-will, ambivalence, loss of privilege) which are only given concrete form in a concrete historical situation and field. In other words, I formulated my hypothesis by drawing *structural* analogies between different fields and universes. This is precisely the difference to the ideal-types discussed before (intrinsic vs. extrinsic choice, but also my own earlier ideal-types of engaged vs. non-engaged students, mainstreamers vs. challengers). With those ideal-types the structural moment of abstraction tends not to occur, so that they remain on a 'phenomenal' level, so to speak. However, once the structural analogy is constructed, the attitudes of so-grouped students are naturally 'seen', described and interpreted in a specific (and I hope new) light. I will thus *construct* them as

Inheritors, Fallen Nobles, and Parvenus. I do not deny that I privilege class origin in this, which is partly due to my rather specialised reading in that form of stratification. The further confrontation with *relevant* statistics and in-depth data must show in how far this view must be qualified or discarded. This would then lead to the formulation of a more comprehensive, coherent Bourdieusian theory of study selection, and thus to a more deductive model that could be verified on concrete statistics and examples.

I will discuss empirical deviations from the ideal-types at the end of each of the chapters 6 to 8. I will specify the conditions of empirical rejection of these ideal-types, and a sketch of a Bourdieusian theory of study choice, in my concluding discussion in chapter 9.

The Interview Sample

Below, I provide a summary account of my interview sample in detail. We must here mention a peculiarity of the German grading system which does not operate by letters but numbers, with 1.0 being a perfect average score and 4.0 the last admissible score to pass a course, both in secondary and tertiary education (5.0 and 6.0 being failures). More often than not, unfortunately, it was not possible to acquire more comprehensive data on the educational trajectory of the students involved.

Table 3 Characteristics of Social Origin of interviewed Bachelor Students.⁹³

Pseudonym (Interview- Nr.)/ (Age)/ Year of Study	Profession Father (Studies Y/N)	Profession Mother (Studies Y/N)	Professions Grandparents (synoptic, studies Y/N)	Educational Trajectory (Abitur)// Recognised - R
John(6) (23 yrs)	Apprenticeship Printing, Online- support-Clerk Communal Bank (Y)	Apprenticeship, now Leading Position in public Administration (N)	Entertainment Owner/ Worker in Public Service/ Tin Smith	1.4 R
Peter(9) (24 yrs)	Economics PhD, Project Head for German Ministry (Y)	Biology Studies, now Biology Teacher at Sec School (Y)	-	1.0 R
Dennis (18) (27 yrs)	Engineer, Army Officer, Driving Instructor, Now unemployed (Y)	Appr. Office Clerk, now Office Clerk in private Company (N)	Co-operative Farmer/Machine master, Smith, Truck Driver	2.0 R
Tobias (26) (20 yrs)	German Studies Abroad, Senior Executive at Medium Size Company (Y)	Law Studies, Judge at Social Court (Y)	Metal Worker, Foreman in Factory/ Metal Worker/Bus Driver, Newspaper Distributor/Accountant	1.8

⁹³ Disciplinary recognition as defined above is signified *with an R* in the fourth column. Parents and Grandparents that have attended either a university or the German equivalent of a polytechnic (Fachhochschulen), are allocated a 'Y' in these columns, while all others are allocated an 'N'.

Table 4 Table 3 continued

Synonym (Interview-Nr.)/ (Age)/ Year of Study	Profession Father (Studies Y/N)	Profession Mother (Studies Y/N)	Professions Grandparents (synoptic, studies Y/N)	Educational Trajectory (Abitur)// Recognised - R
Claudia (31) (22 yrs)	Appr. Accountant, Head of Division of Medium Size Company (N)	Appr. Doctor's Assistant, Raising Children, now minor catering Manager at Medium-Sized Company (N)	Restaurant Owners/Carpenter	2.1
Stefanie(3 2)	Physician with own Practice (Y)	Appr. Bookseller, Works in Large Book Franchise (N)	Optician, Shopkeeper/ Chemist, Politician	2.2
Jack(33) (20 yrs)	Specialised Assembly Line Worker (Y)	Specialised Assembly Line Worker (Y)	-	2.2
Thomas(34) (23 yrs)	Small Entrepreneur/Various Jobs (N)	Secretary for Head Physician (N)	Construction Worker/ Housewives	1.5
Heidi(35) (24 yrs)	Apprenticeship Roofer, now Head of Division Industrial Medium Sized Company (N)	Pedagogy Studies, then Nursery School Teacher, Houselady, now administrative clerk, tenured (Y)	Craftsman, Janitor, Painter/Weaver, Kindergartner	2.0
Martin(36) (20 yrs)	Apprenticeship Locksmith, now Educator (N)	Appr.'s Chemical Lab Assistant/Admin Assistant in Public Service, Clerk at Register Office (N)	Seaman, Steelworker/Middle School Teacher/Smith- Entrepreneur/Housewi fe, Weaver	1.4
Juergen(38) (23 yrs)	Engineer, Car Accident Surveyor at State Company (Y)	General Physician with own Practice in Village (Y)	Industrialist, Large Entrepreneur, Master- tailor/Construction Engineer (Y)/ Kindergartner, Educator	1.3

Robert(41)	Catholic Theology Studies, Hospital Chaplain (Y)	Catholic Theology Studies, now Religion Teacher at various Schools (Y)	Operating Manager Print Shop/Home Worker for Print Shop/ Consultant for Industry/Housewife	1.8
Angela(56) (23 yrs)	Sport Studies, Sport and Biology Teacher at Middle School (Y)	Pedagogy Studies, now Sport/Biology Teacher at High School (Y)	Architecture-related/Teachers Middle School Music, German/	1.9
Max(61) (20 yrs)	Law Studies, now own Lawyer Practice (Y)	German/Art Pedagogy Studies, now Elementary School Teacher (Y)	Political Economist PhD(Y)/ -	1.5

Table 5 Table 3 continued

Synonym (Interview-Nr.)/ (Age)/ Year of Study	Profession Father (Studies Y/N)	Profession Mother (Studies Y/N)	Professions Grandparents (synoptic, studies Y/N)	Educational Trajectory Abitur/BA/MA -Marks Recognised - R
Anne(64) (31 yrs)	Machine Engineering Studies, then small Entrepreneur building services (Y)	Machine Engineering Studies, then small Entrepreneur Building Services, Secretary Accountancy, now Pensioner (Y)	Construction Engineer(Y)/ Saleswoman	2.0
Johann(65) (21 yrs)	Building Engineer Studies, Head of Team at Jobcentre (Y)	Economics Studies, now Accountant in Charity (Y)	Probably Worked in communal bank/ Agriculture Studies, Head of Agricultural Co-op(Y)/ Farmer	2.1

Table 7 Table 6 continued

Synonym (Interview- Nr.)/ (Age)/ Year of Study	Profession Father (Studies Y/N)	Profession Mother (Studies Y/N)	Professions Grandparents (synoptic, studies Y/N)	Educational Trajectory Abitur/BA/MA - Marks Recognised - R
Emma (14) (N/A) MA	Book Trade Apprenticeship(N), Now Salesperson	Multilingual Admin Assistance Apprenticeship(N), now in Management Export Division Medium-Size Company		N/A R
Leon (15) (37yrs) PHD	Executive in Quality Management at medium-sized automobile supplier firm(N)	Hairdresser Apprenticeship(N), Housewife	Mayor in small Easter German Town, Clerk	2.7 Diploma: 2.0 R
Sophia (16) (N/A) MA	Studied Medicine(Y), then Physician	Apprenticeship as lab Assistant, then Studied Medicine(Y), now working as Physician	Pastor, Engineer PhD(Y), Elementary School Teacher	1.4 N/A R
Lukas (17) (27 yrs) MA	Physician(Y), Psycho- Analyst, Author	Dentist(Y) with own practice	Miner, Shorthand typist, Apothecaries(Y) and dispossessed landowners	1.6 N/A R
Felix (19) (30 yrs) PHD	Studied Engineering(Y), small entrepreneur, not working at the moment	Printing Apprenticeship Small, Entrepreneur(N)	Teacher, Postal Worker, Medium Entrepreneurs (Services)	2.5 N/A R
Max (20) (25 yrs) MA	Medium Civil Servant (N/A)	Librarian Apprenticeship,	Small Entrepreneurs, Farmers	3,2 BA - 2.5

		Head of Public Institution(N/A)		
Hannah(23)) (N/A) MA	Studied Economics(Y), self-employed Tax Advisor and Auditor	Studied Physics(Y), Works in Software Company	Painter, Employee, Self-Employed Entrepreneur	N/A R
Jakob(24) (32yrs) PHD	PhD Engineering (Y), Executive Large Industrial Company	PhD Engineering (Y), Executive Public Institution	Janitor, Farmer, Engineer (Y) and Constructor at big company, dental technician	N/A Diploma: 1.3 R
Moritz(25) (25 yrs) MA	Medium Executive in Chemical Company (N)	Studied Librarianship (Y), now Secretary for private Company	Plasterer, Housewife, N/A	1.8 R
Anton(27) (34 yrs) PHD	Studied Pedagogy(Y)	Studied Pedagogy (Y), now Math/Physics Teacher in Main/Compr. School	dispossessed farmer, N/A	N/A R

Table 8 Table 6 continued

Synonym (Interview-Nr.)/ (Age)/ Year of Study	Profession Father (Studies Y/N)	Profession Mother (Studies Y/N)	Professions Grandparents (synoptic, studies Y/N)	Educational Trajectory Abitur/BA/MA - Marks Recognised - R
Theo (30) (21 yrs) MA	Studied Pedagogy (Y), High School Teacher French, Math	Physician (Y), working in international foundation	Elementary school teacher(Y), housewife, Apothecary (Y)	1.3
Paula(37) (N/A) MA	Studied Engineering (Y), self-employed on construction sites	Studied Journalism/Political Science (Y), worked	Cook, Leathermaker, Farmers	1.6 N/A

		as cleaner, now clerk		R
Anna (39) (N/A) MA	Small Entrepreneur (N)	Ergotherapy- Apprenticeship (N), housewife	Miller, Housewife, Civil Servant, Tailor	N/A BA- 1.7 N/A R
Theo (40) (N/A yrs) MA	Engineer (Y), technical Exec medium-sized Company	Studied Pedagogy/Art (Y), now Housewife, Artist	Engineer, Large Farmer	1.9 BA - 1.4 MA - 1.7 R
Niklas (44) (27 yrs) MA	Engineer (Y), now medium civil servant	Elementary School Teacher (N)	Farmers, Store Clerk	1.5 BA -1.8 R
David (45) (N/A) MA	Studied Pedagogy (Y), Teacher German, History at Comprehensive School	Studied Pedagogy (Y), Teacher Sport, Economics at Comprehensive School	Merchandiser- Employee at Large Company, Housewife, Head of School	1.2 BA - 2.3 R
Philipp (46) (26 yrs) PHD	Economic Engineer (Y), Head of Department of Insurance company	Apprenticeship Nursing (N), Childcarer	Paramedic, Housewife	1.5 BA - 1.7 MA - 1.0 R
Lina (47) (25 yrs) PHD	Tinsmith apprenticeship, PhD Informatics (Y), Army Officer, Accountant at large Company	Studied Languages (Y), taught Economics at various schools/community colleges, now at foundation	Soldier, Store Clerk/Secretary, Policeman, Sales Clerk/Secretary	1.4 Diploma - 1.1 R
Leo (48) (29 yrs) PHD	Apprenticeship Electrical Engineering (N), Instructor medium- sized company	Apprenticeship industrial management assistant (N), housewife	Self-employed carpenter, self- employed shoe- maker	1.5 BA - 1.8 MA - 1.7 R

Table 9 Table 6 continued

Synonym (Interview- Nr.)/ (Age)/ Year of Study	Profession Father (Studies Y/N)	Profession Mother (Studies Y/N)	Professions Grandparents (synoptic, studies Y/N)	Educational Trajectory Abitur/BA/MA - Marks Recognised - R
Tom (50) (N/A) PHD	Apprenticeship Electrician, Foreman (N), Informatics- System Admin	Apprenticeship as Civil Servant Clerk (N), Medium Civil Servant	Factory Worker, Rail Worker	2.1 BA - 1.3 MA - 1.8 R
Mats (51) (25 yrs) PHD	Infomatics Studies (Y), Teacher for Informatics in community college, Network Admin	Studied Math (Y), now Teacher in Comprehensive School	Nurse, Bricklayer Foreman, Farmers	1.7 BA - 1.9 MA - 1.8 R
Karl (52) (N/A) PHD	Machine-Engineer (Y), Executive of Industrial Company	Apprenticeship Draftswoman (N), now head secretary in civil service	Mechanical Foreman/Baker, Housewife, Miner, Civil Servant	1.3 R
Eric (53) (N/A) PHD	Studied Pedagogy (Y), Higher Civil Service	Head Secretary (N)	Brick-Layer, Housewife, Sales Representative	2.5 Diploma: 1.7 R
Linus (54) (N/A) MA	Journalist (N)	Apprenticeship Childcare assistant (N), now employee at small company	Tailor, Accountant, Farmers	3.0 BA - 1.6 R
Jonathan (55) (N/A) PHD	Machine Engineer (Y), Small Entrepreneur Engineering	Apprenticeship and Studies in Chemistry (Y), Small Entrepreneur Engineering	Farmers, Sales Clerk, (Y)	1.8 Diploma: 1.4 R
Jan (57) (N/A) PHD	Engineer (Y), Small Entrepreneur	Engineer (Y), working in Industry	Warehouse Worker, Office Worker, Construction	1.8 BA - N/A

			Engineer, Textile Engineer(Y)	R
Leonard (58) (24 yrs) PHD	Artist(N)	Studied History and Roman Philology (Y), now Secretary	Office Worker, Electrician, Nurse	1.9 BA - 1.9 MA - 1.8 R
Johanna (59) (N/A) MA	Physician(Y)	Apprenticeship Physiotherapy (N)	Factory Owner, Chemist, dispossessed, Nurse, Engineer(Y), Main School Teacher	1.5 BA - (N/A) R
Samuel (60) (23 yrs) MA	Admin Studies (Y), then Policeman/Civil Servant	Studied Psychology (Y), now admin clerk	Admin clerk, Teacher Village School	1.5 BA - (N/A) R

Table 10 Table 6 continued

Synonym (Interview-Nr.)/ (Age)/ Year of Study	Profession Father (Studies Y/N)	Profession Mother (Studies Y/N)	Professions Grandparents (synoptic, studies Y/N)	Educational Trajectory Abitur/BA/MA - Marks Recognised - R
Yannick (62) (28 yrs) MA	Engineer(Y), Sales Representative Large Company	Engineer(Y), self-employed translator	Economic Engineer (Y), High-ranking Chemist-Scientist (Y)	2.0 BA - 1.8 R
Simon (63) (24yrs) MA	Stonemason Apprenticeship, Construction Engineer (Y), civil servant	Studied Pedagogy (Y), Teacher Special Needs School	Physician(Y), Nurse, Engineer(Y)	N/A R
Vincent (69) (28 yrs)	Electrician(N), technical clerk company	Industrial Management	Construction Worker, Factory	2.8 BA - N/A

PHD		Assistant (N), Civil Servant	Worker, Small Entrepreneur	R
Lennard (70) (28 yrs) MA	Apprenticeship Machine Operator (N), Now Truck Driver	Apprenticeship Sales Clerk (N), Hotel Manageress	Waitress, Truck Driver, Sales Clerk	1.8 BA - N/A R
Klara (72) (27 yrs) MA	Studied Physics (Y), PhD, worked at University	Studied Translation (Y), Teacher Special School	Housewife, Locksmith	1.0 BA - 2.2 R
Till (73) (26 yrs) MA	Construction Worker (N)	Machine Engineer (Y), Head of Construction Site, then Secretary	Tailor Shop Clerk, Master Tailor	N/A BA - N/A MA - 2.3 R
Aaron (74) (26 yrs) PHD	Studied Law (Y), Judge at administrative court	Apprenticeship Legal Assistant(N)	Self-Employed Carpenter, Housewife, Lacquerer, Sales Clerk	1.2 BA - N/A R

Chapter 5 - Recognised and Non-recognised Students, or: what makes an 'Elite' Economics Student?

During my twenty-year career as a student, the course that excited me most was the two-semester sequence on the principles of economics I took during my freshman year in college. It is no exaggeration to say that it changed my life. I had grown up in a family that often discussed politics over the dinner table. The pros and cons of various solutions to society's problems generated fervent debate. But, in school, I had been drawn to the sciences. Whereas politics seemed vague, rambling, and subjective, science was analytic, systematic, and objective. While political debate continued without end, science made progress.

My freshman course on the principles of economics opened my eyes to a new way of thinking. Economics combines the virtues of science. It is, truly, a social science. Its subject matter is society - how people choose to lead their lives and how they interact with one another. But it approaches its subject with the dispassion of a science. By bringing the methods of science to the questions of politics, economics tries to make progress on the fundamental challenges that all societies face.

Gregory Mankiw - Principles of Economics

In this chapter I will focus on the following questions: What does it mean to pay an 'entry fee' in German Economics, to have an 'intrinsic' interest in the discipline? With what attitudes, biographical decisions and general views is this connected? Are there regularities that can be found between those who fit and those who don't? Here I wish to flesh out what things, experiences and 'visions' recognised students refer to when they professed an interest in academic Economics. Indeed I am interested in the biographical and lifeworld surroundings of those 'intrinsic' interests of specifically selected students. It will be the task of subsequent chapters to make sociological sense of these surroundings and to associate them with specific

kinds of habitus and structures. Put briefly: what separates fitting (or ‘elite’, ‘recognised’) from non-fitting (‘average’, ‘non-recognised’) students is an early exposure to economic thinking and issues that is constructed as such: a clear self-positioning for and against specific forms of reasoning that is both normative and positive at the same time, and an ingrained disposition, an incarnation of these position-takings.

The question here is how the data was analysed as soon as it was obtained. This process can be distinguished into two phases: first I examined the transcriptions of the interviews for ‘typical’, that is, recurring attitudes of Economics students towards their subject or other subjects as well as political attitudes. I also grouped together experiences that appeared to me to be similar in nature (this might be called the ‘inductive’ phase of the data analysis). In a second step I attempted to connect these attitudes with the information I obtained about the ‘objective’ History of the discipline and the ‘objective’ characteristics of its current (successful-recognised) students. I attempted to localise dispositions between these objective characteristics and the subjective attitudes displayed in the interviews and my complementary ethnographic study. This eventually led me to the construction of various habitus with which I will seek to explain the shown attitudes and experiences in such a way that objective structures and ‘subjective’ attitudes are reconciled. I call this second phase the theoretical inductive phase. It is here that I use my sociological knowledge to construct possible links with other phenomena in order to explain the attitudes and selections observed here.

Recognised and Non-recognised Students - Insiders and Outsiders?

Following the distinction of ‘recognised’ vs. ‘non-recognised’ students in the last section (which is empirically operationalised such that all students that hold tutorships, research assistantships, scientifically awarded PhD scholarships, or who do PhD’s in Economics or Political Economy are defined as ‘recognised’ while all others are grouped into the ‘non-recognised’ camp), it might be asked how much these concepts are able to make sense of.

We have a majority of ‘recognised’ - that is, presumably fitting students - in our model, such as (such as Peter, Mats, Jan, Simon, Moritz or Hannah) and a minority of ‘non-recognised’ students - those who don’t fit - (such as Angela, Johanna, Jeannette, Klara, Timo or Anne). We are able to see from the (very long) table above that most recognised students have a least one parent who holds a degree from a university. Teachers, engineers and free professions are the most prominent origins. There are also quite a few of these students whose parents have studied Social Science or Natural Science subjects. We can also see that technical professions, such as electricians or IT administrators, are very common among those students whose parents have not studied (neither at university nor at a polytechnic but who are recognised nevertheless. The recognised students are also predominately male, and those who are female all come from rather privileged origins.⁹⁵ This points towards the pertinence of a specific kind of cultural capital that might be called ‘technical’, as opposed to more the ‘literary’ capital of language teachers or social workers. The ideal-typical recognised student is thus a male with a father who has an engineering university education and a teacher mother, who has specialised in at least one natural science subject in his Abitur, and has enjoyed early success in his Economics study, especially if he studied other subjects in parallel. He also holds a good, but not excellent A-level score.

But this is just the objective and, so to speak, ‘congealed’ side of things. How can one see in the interviews that a student is recognised or not? What distinguishes them *in action*, when they think, learn, ponder, speak? What is the ‘subjective’ experience in all this? The payment of the entrance fee to enter a scientific discipline predisposes the adoption of a specific world view with its own logic and indeed vocabulary. It is well known that every scientific discipline possesses its own idiosyncratic language. Economics is no exception. It is therefore possible to extract, from the given German text book literature of the subject, certain recurring, dominant concepts and indeed words that may serve as a first

⁹⁵ This includes the question of ethnicity: virtually all of my interviewees, except one, are from the white ethnic group. This mirrors the near-total exclusion of non-white ethnicities from academic top-posts in Germany.

approximate indicator of just how much the ‘language of Economics’ has been adopted by the students.⁹⁶ These words may be fused into an index which gives us the ‘subjective’ equivalents of objective recognition or non-recognition. Though this is not a rigorous test we can nevertheless check whether, and in how far, there is an overlap with the objective side of things. Obviously, this is only an *approximation*.

A brief Analysis of Language

For this exploration (it is not a test in the strict, quantitative sense of the term) I built an Index by counting the use of 15 concepts or word roots that I attributed specifically to an Economics discourse as it may be found in various undergraduate or graduate text books. The more these concepts are used, the more the Economics student may be adapted in his or her thinking to the required, ‘orthodox’ discourse of the discipline. I attempted to choose a range of words that sufficiently represented the technical, rather mathematical and causal epistemology of Economics (Blaug 2002[1980]), but which may nevertheless be used in other contexts as well - that is why I concentrated mostly on adjectives. I assumed these words to be the tools and one expression of habitus, structured structures that help to structure the world in a particular way (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 171). I made sure these concepts and words are on average less used in every day speech. I searched for the root word in my transcriptions and counted the times the interviewees used words related to this root word. I discarded all those instances in which the

⁹⁶ To be sure, this method has its clear limitations: the contingent character of the interviews that necessarily follows from their relative openness and flexibility indeed circumscribe the validity of this indicator. Nevertheless, one may increase this validity by choosing words that can be said to be relatively *specific* to the economic discourse as it is presented in undergraduate and graduate text books (Bartling 2014[1985]; Basseler, Heinrich, and Utecht 2012[1978]; Bofinger 2015[2003]; Felderer and Homburg 2005[1984]; Neubäumer and Hewel 2005[1994]; Paschke 2007[2000]; Schumann, Meyer, and Ströbele 2011[1971]; Siebert and Lorz 2007[1969]; Woll 2003[1969]). I have also refrained from using all too obvious root concepts that come to mind easily when one thinks about Economics, such as model or function or real, in order to retain the distinctiveness of words. I will attempt to specify the specific use of these words later in this and other chapters of this work. Another severe limitation is the heavy numerical bias for Master’s and PhD students, who make up more than two thirds of the sample.

interviewee used the word immediately after I used it first in our conversation. I used the following to construct the Index:

- *Normative* [in German *normativ*]: may also be used in normativity, as one pole of the always-pronounced positive-normative divide present in almost all Economics textbooks (for example Lipsey and Chrystal 2007[1966]: 16-32)
- *Rational* [rational]: here used in its literal translation, which is to be distinguished from the less 'economic' reasonable [*vernünftig*]. It may be used in the words such as rationality, or rationality assumptions, or operationalise, or purposive rationality - all concepts close to prevailing economic thinking
- *Effect* [Effekt]: signifying a mechanistic, rather causal relationship between 'variables', it may also be used as effective or in terms like 'in the final analysis' [im Endeffekt]. One finds it in Economics in concepts such as 'external effects'
- *Marginal* [marginal]: a term very specific to Economics, used in concepts such as marginal utility or marginal product, signifying a logic of change of 'parameters'
- *Optimal* [optimal]: used to designate production states of the best possible return, such as in optimal production function; also possibly used as a verb (to optimise) or a noun (optimum), and also in conjunction with other concepts (e.g. Pareto-Optimality)
- *Mechanism* [Mechanismus]: once again expressing the rather fixed, rigid perspective with which Economists tend to think; used in concepts like price mechanism
- *Homogeneous* [homogen]: used to signify the uniform quality of a parameter, such as a product or a market
- *Nominal* [nominal]: a term to distinguish 'appearance' from 'reality', such as in nominal rent or nominal wages

- *Correlate* [korrelieren]: also used as a noun [Korrelation] to indicate a steady, and mathematically provable, relationship between two or more ‘variables’, such as in correlation coefficient
- *Efficient* [effizient]: a major tool to express assessments of economic or other policies for their degree of economic optimality, its efficiency [Effizienz]
- *Aggregate* [aggregieren]: to mathematically summarise individual cases into greater conglomerates, such as in aggregate demand
- *Endogenous-Exogeneous* [endogen-exogen]: used in conjunction with model building and its assumptions, designating what factors are inside or outside of specific models
- *Determine* [determinieren]: further mechanistic term designating causes for a phenomenon, also used as a noun [Determinanten]
- *Maximise* [maximieren]: similar to optimise, it designates the process of changing an economic process towards ‘completely rational’ distribution of income and production factors, as in maximising production or maximising utility; also used as maximum
- *Preference* [Präferenz]: signifying an ‘irreducible’, individual choice over another; also used as a verb [präferieren]

One may count, and thus build the Index, in two ways: either by counting and adding the absolute numbers of a specific word-concept and adding these up, or by counting merely whether a specific word-concept has been used or not, and then adding the affirmed categories up. Since the economic habitus, as every other specific habitus, consists of a whole *system* of predispositions, I decided to construct the Index in the latter way. It obliterates the frequency with which interviewees use certain concepts, but highlights, so to speak, the economic ‘perspicacity’ in the *recognised* sense, the results of which are summarised in table 11.

Table 11 ‘The Index of Recognition’- Ranking of interviewed Economics Students - The Use of specific Words or Concepts common in recognised academic Discourse

Interviewees Nr. of Words mentioned at least once	Pseudonyms of Interviewees
7/15	Peter (9), Mats(51), an(57),Simon (63)
6/15	Moritz(25), Linus(54)
5/15	Hannah(23), Anton(27), Niklas(44), Tom(50), Karl(52), Lennard(70), Aaron(74)
4/15	John(6), Dennis(18), Martin(36), Philipp(46), Eric(53), Ben(68), Vincent(69)
3/15	Jonas(11), Elias(13), Emma(14), Leon(15), Sophia(16), Lukas(17), Jakob(24), Jack(33), Juergen(38), David(45), Lina(47), Samuel(60), Yannick(62)
2/15	Felix(19), Tobias(26), Thomas(34), Jonathan(55), Leonard(58), Max(61), Johann(65), Heinrich(66)
1/15	David(12), Max(20), Claudia(31), Heidi(35), Paula(37),Anna(39), Theo(40), Robert(41), Leo(48), Angela(56), Johanna(59), Jeanette(71), Klara(72)
0/15	Timo(30), Stefanie(32), Anne(64)

This table can be interpreted as a first *empirical* approximation of an academic economic habitus that is or is not fitting with the requirements of the discipline. It serves as a bridge - admittedly brittle, but nevertheless - between initial theorising of study selection a la Bourdieu and empirical validation. In the theoretical perspective chosen here, the number of words mentioned at least once are defined as an expression of an economic habitus, a lynchpin between the structured structure of social origin and trajectory, and structuring structure of practices (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 171).

It can be seen that there is a considerable overlap between the ‘objective’ status as recognised students and the ‘subjective’ use of specifically economic academic vocabulary. All of the students that score at least 4 points on the index (except Martin) are recognised students in the objective sense formerly established. They hold research assistantships or scholarships in various forms and/or are accepted by professors to do a PhD in Economics. They are also almost exclusively male (the sole exception here being Hannah). There are also three Bachelor students in this group (Peter, John and Ben). At the other side of the scale, the situation is the opposite. The shares of recognised and non-recognised students among these outsiders is

much more balanced. So is gender balance. On the other hand, however, there are those students that would count, according to their 'objective' characteristics, as 'recognised' but who are not 'recognised' as defined in the Index above. These are students like Klara, Anna, Paula or Leo, like Jonathan, Leonard, Heinrich, Theo or Johanna. All of them are, or have been, either tutors or assistants or PhD students, yet score low on the Index. Why is this? What distinguishes these recognised from high-scoring recognised students? Only a closer comparative look at the actual views and trajectories of the students might give some tentative answers to these questions.

Early Exposure to Economic Issues

In an earlier section it has already been established that, in terms of social origin, the recognised students come from a background endowed with a medium amount of cultural capital (Engineers, Teachers, Other Social Scientists), and are also predominately male, as opposed to the whole student body in Economics. This can also be seen in the 'subjective' accounts of recognised vs. non-recognised/insider vs. outsider students. The narratives of how these students came to study, and to be interested and successful in, Economics seem to display a range of interconnected features that I will try to elucidate. The recognised students, and even more those students who score highly on the Index, tend to have been in contact with explicitly economic questions early on in their lives and educational trajectories. A prime example of this is Peter (Nr.9), whose father holds a PhD in Economics and whose mother is a secondary school teacher. Even although he did not have Economics 'on the radar' his way into the discipline is straightforward. After high school graduation (with the perfect mark of 1.0) his father organised a gap year position at a college library in an African country for him. He explains the different economic circumstances in that country at the time and the presence there of Economics books as two factors arousing his interesting for economic questions:

I: [...] so, I mean, in countries like this one you are guarded by all these economic things quite well, right? Of course, inflation is discussed everywhere and [raises voice] 'oh, oh, oh!' But most people don't know what inflation is, right?

T: I also don't know what inflation is. Ok, money devaluation, but-

I: Yeah, well, theoretically maybe, right? And obviously, everything gets more expensive, but, but this isn't really it. [...] I mean in [African country] you have a proper inflation, right? Like around 50 percent per year. That means, or even more, ah? [...] Well, I say when we came there and when we left again, a kilogramme of rice cost two, three times as much, in that time span, right? This is already something, when you see how month per month your expenses rise, right? Luckily our, our, our money also increased due to the exchange rate devaluation. So it wasn't that bad. But, this is just what you recognise what you don't have here [in Europe] not so much, right? Ahm, this was such a thing. I think that this brought me to be interested in it more. Right? The second was just simply because I sat idle at the library. There was absolutely nothing to do. [...] the whole library was full with Political Economy books. Then I sat down one day, picked the micro introduction book from the shelf and read it through, right? Then I took a Macro book, and so on. And then I thought it would be quite cool [to study Economics].

Another example would be Philipp (Nr.46), coming from an engineering (father) and nursing (mother) background. He draws a connection between his curiosity about cartoon film and his interest in Economics:

I: Ahm, and also our monetary system, I have always been fascinated by that, how our monetary system works. [...] I have always asked myself when I was five years old, I asked questions to my father how this can work with the monetary system. And why everybody wants to have money and then I firstly learned that the equivalent value only gives money its actual value, ultimately. And there was also an episode of Duck Tales [a cartoon series produced from the late 1980's to

the early 1990's], that's no joke, I was really young back then. There is an episode, I recently watched it again [...] there is a remote village in which there is no money, and then Dagobert Duck introduces bottle caps there. And then the prices rise, and everybody complains that the prices are that high. And then he supplies an airplane which distributes new bottle caps every day. And then I thought as a small boy, of course, now all people are richer because they have more bottle caps now, but suddenly the prices rose even more and then the food in the menu cost ten times as much and then the penny dropped for me that there are deeper relationships than a fixed price relationship, and that I have always found interesting.

Jan (Nr.57), son of two Engineers, also signifies his early interest in Economics by remembering how he checked an introductory Economics text-book, among other things, after he finished his Abitur. Mats (Nr.51), whose parents are teachers of informatics and mathematics respectively, links his selection of Political Economy with his father's interests:

I: I think History simply .. the word itself, these are stories, everybody likes stories, and for me this, it is very exciting to see these large relationships, History above all offers that. History offers the large relationships, Political Economy tries to explain the large relationships, in a different dimension, where this large whole that was, ahm, always interesting to understand, why things are what they are [...]. Ahm, I can't [explain more fully where this interest comes from] .. it was just there.

Certainly also comes from my father, because .. he always has been interested in Politics and History. We have the whole basement filled with History books.

Indeed, these students seem to construct their way into Economics, for themselves and for me as an interviewer, in a form that already resembles an autobiographical illusion (Bourdieu 2008[2004]: 1-3), telling the tale in such a way that their

selection appears necessary, *natural*, as if the specific experiences of particular events could only have been resulted in this way and in no other. But not everyone doing an internship in a college in an African country recognises its inflation rate, however volatile it might be, and not everyone derives from this *alone* an interest in Economics.

The boundaries between rather passive exposure to economic topics, as indicated in the foregoing quotes, and more active ‘interest-taking’ in it are certainly fluid in reality. One might guess that the relationship switches to the latter with progressing age. On the other hand, the whole dichotomy of active and passive exposure to/adoption of, seems rather doubtful from a Bourdieusian perspective. In any case, the earliest biographical references are made by recognised students, and in particular by those recognised students who also score highly on the word Index. Indeed these are also those who seem very young for their respective progression through the stages of Economics education. Most of these students on the Masters level are around 25 years of age, and the PhD students like Jan(57), Mats(51) or Tom(51) are only slightly older and will likely have their doctorates before they turn 30, which can be interpreted as a sociologically pertinent sign of precocity (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979[1964]: 6f.).⁹⁷

More common amongst the whole ‘recognised’ sample are statements that link particular events during the later adolescence of the interviewees with their selection of Economics. For Jakob (24), this was the Iraq war:

I: And there of course you get to economic questions, I mean Economics is simply the management of scarcities and, like most of the problems of our society some scarcities are responsible [for the difficulties to solve them] [...]

⁹⁷ According to a study by Enders and Mugabushaka (Enders and Mugabushaka 2004: 13), the average PhD graduate in the Economic Sciences in Germany is 31.7 years.

Very often, it was the financial, or Euro zone, crisis that was named as a reason for deciding to study Economics. Moritz (25) describes this process:

I: Ahm, yeah, I think, the biggest explanatory part [why he studied Economics] really is the financial crisis, which was exactly in this year, ahm. [...] I mean I did my Abitur in 2009 [...] when this really started in 2008 in September, I wasn't interested in it at all, I mean .. there I knew that it existed but, they always say it, when they always say something about Lehmann Brothers in the media, this bank. When I read that, I always thought 'Lehmann'? That was for me the goaltender of the German National Team [at that time Jens Lehmann- he means the National Team of football], I mean, that wasn't a bank for me [laughs]. And [laughs] this is how I followed the crisis, like this, yeah. And .. not much more interest than that. Ahm, and it actually came only after my Abitur, ahm, and I don't know, I only thought it .. exciting, ahm, I mean the dynamics behind it was. I mean I just started reading articles in the internet, at the time about which trade cycle measurements will help now, speaking of scrappage bonus [Economic policy by the German government to induce demand for industrial goods in the early days of the financial crisis] and so on, and what speaks for it, and against it. And this aroused my interest [...]

Ben (68) seems to describe a very similar process:

I: And, as motivation maybe, I mean I have, yes roughly since the tenth grade I am interested in Economic Policy or generally in general Economics. I think I was influenced by the Financial Crisis a bit, because I have somehow always thought 'Ok, there seems to be something going totally wrong. And how could you approach this topic now?

Samuel (60) exhibits more of a focus (an admiring focus) on some protagonists of the crisis, equating them with dandies:

I: [...] I always had a relationship to [Political Economy], I mean .. I read a lot of newspapers, in my youth. About the crisis in particular. [...] And I have to say I simply found the people interesting. Those who worked in the banks or were the protagonists, in the whole financial crisis.

T: Hm.

I: You have to say, these are.. somehow all cool motherfuckers. I mean, also a bit bad.

T: Who do you mean now? Ben Bernanke and so on?

I: Yeah. This is one of the kind ones, but .. Richard Fuld, from Lehman Brothers. Or .. I don't know, in the last year of course Varoufakis, another mega-cool dude.

T: Aha. Why, because he got on the EU's case so much or what?

I: Yeah, and because he also is mega, .. I mean he is quite a [in English] *pimp*, if you can put it this way.

T: Aha.

I: I mean to walk to some conference with a rolled-up collar shirt is quite a statement, at least.

Martin (36) is led to his interest in Economics via his fascination for emerging businesses such as 'Google, Facebook, ahh, Amazon and so on', 'a little bit the question how success looks like' which he puts 'in the societal, political and juridical context'

What one sees here is the construction of clear and extensive derivation from the selection of Economics to a general (early) interest in economic, political and societal questions. The more one moves from recognised to unrecognised, or from insider to outsider students as defined above, the more casual, accidental, brief, indeed 'mundane' ('extrinsic') does this construction tend to become. Whereas with students like Hannah (23) one finds statements such as 'I study to educate myself and not to have my degree in the end.', Jonas (11), who pondered studying German or Chinese studies before he turned to Economics, in the end emphasises professional security for his selection: 'Like, yeah, and with Business Administration you actually always have a chance to get a job.' Likewise, Jack (33) prefers security over interest, even though he is also in a way interested in Economics:

I: Yeah, I mean, I don't know, I mean, in the beginning I didn't want to study Economics at all, rather Music.

T: Aha.

I: Something like that. But then I thought like [smiles], the way you think as an Economist, like, ah, you don't have a future with this, like. And, in the end it actually was like, I got my A-level results and then chose [speaks louder] *what could interest me*, and where the GPA is right. And there Economics was the best option for me, like. This is how I came to it. Also had in school this Society and Economy, this is how the subject was called. Yeah, I always found that *intresting*, therefore I thought like 'Economics, that might also be interesting.'

A similar account can be found with Felix (19) who first aimed at studying Psychology before turning to Economics, following another interest after participation in a reading circle but also the pressure received from his father to study something 'decent', so that he states in the end: 'That was also a pragmatic thing [...] Then I was able to sugar-coat it for myself. I do a bit of Business Administration [Economics], then my old man will be quiet.' Johanna (59) seems to

have similar thoughts, when she prefers the economic security of Economics over the excitement of studying what she actually wants:

I: Dunno, I think I approached my studies also with the, with the motivation not to spoil what I already find interesting anyways through institutionalisation, but indeed I think that one motivation will in part have been, to somehow find a subject which somehow has the label of 'that is something reasonable', something with which you will find work later on.

Claudia (31) originally planned to study Medicine but 'went back to Economics' which was 'the original plan' after getting to know her then boyfriend whose conceptions of family life led her to rethink the 'thankless' tasks to be performed by apprentice physicians. Finally, there are those students who draw a more or less wholly instrumental picture of their selection. Stefanie (32) is almost brutally open about her way into Economics, and about willingly following the advice of her social environment in this matter:

T: And, ah, can you describe a little how, how you came to Economics? What were your, your thoughts when you came to this, this subject?

I: Hm. Mm, I think it was I mean I never had this moment, like I have a lot of choices and then the decision came 'Yes, it's gotta be Economics'. It was somehow a process which just went further, don't know if you are good in Math, got a little of logical thinking-

T: Yeah.

I: -and . mainly, mainly like somehow logical thinking, then you have from outside somehow like 'yeah, you gotta go into the Economy!' Like, this is good then.

T: Who says this?

I: Ah, I don't know, were like, parents, friends, ahem also like teachers, and acquaintances like, I mean it really came from a lot of sides then.

T: Yeah?

I: Also don't know whether I radiated something or so where everybody thought, yeah, like, 'go into the private Economy!' But in my family this was also a lot, nobody is really a standard business person. [...] And then, somehow it is [imitates voice] 'Ah, this is exciting!' Then it is also a bit of a standard thing, like 'yeah, Economics, then the child has got something in the bag and then-

T: Hm.

I: - you can do something with it. And I . found it just to be the most logical thing simply, this this is simply. You can do so much with it, I mean you can build up so many different directions and top it up with something. Master, whatever, simply when you are doing internships.

And so is Max (20), whose description of how he came to Economics is equally succinct:

I: [...] Yeah, I also have [studied with] a mate that also studied in [X], he was there half a year before me. And then, well, we have been friends for a bloody long time, so said to ourselves, let's to study together. Then we checked what was there. And then I became aware of the degree, I already had Political Economy in mind anyway, and then this was clear for me. I then didn't apply elsewhere [at other universities/for other degrees], but did this directly. [...] Like, 'well, Political Economy, ok, bang, we do that now'. [...] I mean for me this was simply a continuation of school. 'I do three more years of studying Political Economy.' That is why I, yeah, as I said, I didn't make a plan [...].

It is not that these ‘mundane’ deliberations are absent in the accounts of the more ‘recognised’ students. But there they are supplemented by strongly constructed motivations of intellectual interest in economic questions. This is indeed in line with empirical findings of the motivations of students of various disciplines presented in the literature review (see Figures 3 and 4 above), although, of course, it still would have to be properly, sociologically explained. However, the tendencies presented here have their exceptions as well. There is for example Linus (54), who is a recognised student, but has no early exposure to Economics whatsoever, not until his later Bachelor studies. He describes his selections in a very laconic way:

I: Study choice, also was relatively .. in- .. indeterminate, in a certain way. Back then I listened to a lot of music, also did music myself and also was interested in music in school, therefore I started studying music sciences.

T: Hm.

I: In the main subject and I, ah, needed a second main subject, I didn’t know at all what was going on at uni, that meant, ok, second main subject, search, search, what do you take, Philosophy doesn’t have an NC [Numerus Clausus], Abitur 3.0, ok, then I will take Philosophy.

T: Aha.

I: Because I can’t play the piano and can’t read notes that fast, but I was instantly hooked to Philosophy, I agreed with that.

T: Hm.

I: And then in the second semester .. ah switched from Music sciences to Sociology and Political Sciences. So two side subjects. What I have also always been interested in. Societal and political events, and yeah, this I pulled through until the sixth semester in [German University location], then went to CSI-location, and finished it here.

T: Ok.

I: Then there was one year break and then it continued with the, ah .. with the economic sciences.

On the other side, there is also Timo (30), who is not ‘recognised’, who nevertheless states an early interest in the discipline based on intense ethical concerns: ‘You have to work in the Economy to build a more just world.’, although of course this in itself seems not quite the same degree of ‘intrinsic’ interest as portrayed above.

We can conclude here that those who are ‘recognised’, and recognise academic Economics themselves most (judging by the Index constructed at the beginning of this chapter), tend to construct or recall an early exposure to economic ideas, often simultaneously as a cause and reason for their latter selections. They essentially sketch out a development that is seemingly long-lasting, direct, mono-causal and without many (if any) detours. This somehow leads to a later (‘intrinsic’) interest in Economics. Although these students certainly did experience exposure to economic or quasi-economic issues, it seems just as decisive that they select the specific events which they *think* exemplify and indeed *explain* this early proximity (such as an internship, political and social discussion with the family, or even TV series). They confer upon these events a special sign as indicators. In doing so, they are much more confident than the non-recognised or less recognised students. The latter construct a more makeshift, accidental or pragmatic (‘extrinsic’) picture of their choice. But why this confidence? What is the basis of it, what is the method of extracting significant from insignificant factors? It is perfectly possible that it is their current position, as recognised-recognising students, which prompts them to construct this tale for themselves and others. But what habitus does this specific position presume? We must broaden our view and see not only how economic, but also other ways of thinking are appreciated in these narratives.

A peculiar Perception of the World

The vast majority of recognised students of this sample, and also (but to a considerably lesser degree) the unrecognised students, stated that they had some sort of interest in ‘societal’, historical, political events, and gave this as at least one of their reasons for selecting Economics over other subjects. This was very often linked to a preference for Mathematics, as Mats (51) states:

T: [...] What does make [Economics] so interesting for you. Or what made it so interesting for you in those days [during the Gymnasium/German High School]?

I: Well, it is .. ah, it is of course somehow connected to History and Politics. Actually very strongly, and simply this structured, rational analysis, also in connection as I said with Mathematics, because I always liked Mathematics. It was simply this combination out of these small parts that tied my interest in this way. ... Yes, exactly.

It seems also clear that other practical circumstances play important roles in the selection of one subject over another - factors like age (the older the freshmen is, the more conservatively she or he will tend to choose), prior apprenticeships or studies, existence of children while studying, general economic situation, and so on are pertinent factors. I am, however, interested here primarily in the perspective of the world of which these decisions are expressions, and which they in turn either compound (more likely in Bourdieusian terms) or ‘loosen up’ (less likely).

The exploration of this is perhaps best done by focussing on the *relational* aspects of the students’ statements about their selections. In telling what they did *not* want to ‘choose’, and why, they practically reconstructed, at the time of the interview, their particular view of the disciplines at the time of their ‘choices’,

perhaps even their reading of the academic field⁹⁸. As Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127-31) says the habitus defines itself by what it is not, *ex negativo*.

The first thing that comes to mind from this view is the assessment of other Social Sciences and Humanities - including its languages and dominant epistemologies - as 'imprecise', 'unclear', 'too fuzzy', 'not tangible' or 'sluggish' relative to Economics/Political Economy. This is, above all, the case with recognised students. It is much less so with students who are not recognised, where this sharp distinction that Economics enjoys over other Sciences with a similar object vanishes and only 'instrumental' or 'professional' reasons for study remain alongside rather with flimsy, unspecific remarks of some concerning sort of interest. By contrast, the deliberations of the insiders and recognised students indicate just how important and deep this preference for this particular kind of thinking is, and for the rationality that can be found in Economics that goes with it: a true habit of the heart. That may be seen in the case of Tom (50) who, when asked what he sees special about Economics as opposed to other Social Sciences, responds:

I: [...] I mean what I find good on this model theoretical [stuff] that I do is.... You have, you have a model. And you have clear assumptions, right? I have to formulate which assumptions I take. How do I define the utility function. Yes, what are, what are the central elements? Better put, what are the central assumptions that produce my statements, ahm, at the end, right? I mean I do not produce the statements of the model, but I simply put assumptions into it, and out of that comes an answer to a question that I put, right? [...] And the important thing is, you have formulated clear and succinct assumptions at the beginning, right? And these can be criticised [...] You simply have clear points of attack and clear definitions, you can discuss very clearly with it, right? And if you compare this with many social scientific things, there it is often the case that

⁹⁸ I would like to thank Andrew Smith for making me aware of this implication.

you, that you discuss, you can discuss the whole evening and somehow it does not progress, or you still haven't understood the other person, because you haven't put down these assumptions this specifically, right? And it is similar with mathematical models, right? I mean with mathematical models it is simply clear. Right? I can look at it, I know it is right or wrong. At least on the mathematical level, and then I can clearly discuss it. And that I find is often *much* harder and fuzzier with legal or social scientific questions, and I am also not that good on that terrain in my view. Can't do it, there are other people that can do that splendidly, I can't do that. An' I see my strengths rather in this theoretically rooted discussing of questions. [...] That has always been what interested me strongly, I mean mathematical questions, right? And it's simply like, Math is a very clear language, and that is nice for me, and I find it good, ah, to work with it, right? This, perhaps this pushed me more and more towards this Political Economy direction, rather than towards a social scientific direction, and the questions Business Administration is answering.

One can see the frustration with which these other approaches are observed. At the same time Tom is honest enough to admit that other, more literary approaches to social scientific questions are 'much harder' for him because he is 'not that good on that terrain'. Simon (63), who switched from Political Science to Economics after his Bachelor's uses a metaphor from gardening to express his point of view:

I: And, ah, then I saw that the approach is similar in Political Science and in Political Economy, but the Political Economists have, this was my perception at the time, more powerful tools at their disposal. Perhaps because the object is better observable than, ah, than Politics. Or also Sociology. [...] And I have noticed that even though you strongly reduce the view of man in Political Economy, often due to instrumental reasons, because you only can make statements at all like this, you get good results in many situations that reflect reality well enough, so as to put the models to good use. [...] I mean in [the

course of] introduction to Political Economy this is really on a very simple level where you, I'm sure you know that, draw Supply and Demand curves. And out of such a simple diagram that starkly simplifies reality you already can draw truths, or, well 'truths', but you can draw statements that are possibly, ah, good statements, that means in the sense that they give an instruction to act that make sense. You can draw informative stuff out of it despite the extreme simplification. Exactly like this.

T: This is then also efficient? That you can achieve a lot with humble means?

I: Yes, exactly. [...] And it bothered me somewhat in other parts [of my studies] that, I mean it occurred to me a bit as if it was only about making a statement as ambivalent as possible, in order not to be attacked.

T: You mean in Sociology or Philosophy?

I: Yeah, also in Political Science, in, in other areas where it is about explaining why a certain system functions better than another one. And then you know all sorts of factors that could be the reason for it [the phenomenon to be explained], but you actually don't have the means to say 'ok, this is the main reason.' And you don't do it, because it perhaps might not be respectable to do it.

T: Hmh.

I: Exactly. And this convinced me more in Political Economy, that you can actually say there, we chip off the branches of the tree so long until, let's say, we write down what the potential reasons are that we observe. And from these reasons I can eliminate 95 percent, and reduce it to one or two variables, and these explain 90% of that what I see.

One may again see the objectifying, almost reductionist, materialist gaze Simon throws onto his former subject when he infers that statements in Political Science were 'only' made to insulate one's argument. By contrast, his view of Economics is rather idealist, as is the case for many of the interviewees. This fits with what

Bourdieu suggested about the mutual objectifications taking place in a field (in this case the academic one). In it, one adversary holds the objective, objectifying truth of the respective other, the opponent, however in a reductive form, and has an enchanted view of himself.⁹⁹

It can be shown with quite a few recognised students that this distance from other forms of thought, if not directed against exactly the same object, can have *early antecedents* in school and adolescence. This is very often linked with disapproval of specific groups of persons, their demeanour and ways of thinking or working. Ben (68), for example, wrote for the school newspaper and did an internship at a local newspaper during his high school time. He recollects his impressions:

I: But I have somehow, I mean I always found it quite good if one somehow had a fixed topic. For one part I have written a lot in this section on current school events [of the school newspaper] because there was a concrete starting point. Ahm, I was rarely some-, actually not at all somebody who brilliantly [elaborates] one's own thoughts in the sense of 'I simply want to tell somehow something what comes to my mind'. We also had a couple of people [at the newspaper] who then bled on a lot. And, ahm, I also had an internship with [regional newspaper] and, they also wanted that I simply, somehow just like, I mean [names youth section of that newspaper] [...] They have a youth, ah, youth section.

T: Ok.

I: And there some people somehow write what has just happened here, and what their feelings are. And there I thought 'Hey guys, this is not my thing. I do not here have to sell myself, but I would like to write about something relevant.'

T: Hmh.

⁹⁹ "Marx is more likely to possess the truth of Bakunin than Bakunin, and Bakunin is more likely to possess the truth of Marx than Marx. In any case one cannot be Marx and Bakunin at the same time." (Bourdieu 1993[1984]: 59)

I: And, ahm, maybe this political aspect was a little bit of an exception, but there you had starting points which you could just discuss.

T: Hmh. Hmh.

I: I still remember this self-publicising I always found very, very tedious.

Again one sees the ‘alienation’ felt from these specific kinds of behaviour, these ‘ramblings’ or ‘showy-elements’ which seem foreign to the speaker’s habitus and are thus easily objectified, stripped of the enchanted self-denial which they likely have in the eyes of those who perform them. Against this, these students tend to position and model themselves as being ‘straightforward’ and ‘no bullshit’ (my words), by ‘fixing’ topics and being ‘purely scientific’. The very same process, it seems, can be observed with Aaron (74), who pondered selecting a discipline leading to a care profession, but was turned away, or rather turned away himself, after getting to know people that studied this discipline during a gap year in a school for disabled children after obtaining his Abitur:

I: Yeah, ah, I mean [...] these were of course rehabilitation scientists, I mean, yeah, this study must be called rehabilitation sciences or .. teacher for .. disabled people.

T: Yeah.

I: That I have met. And what I indeed didn’t like, was the handling of the [disabled] people there, I have to say it, ahm, the children were, in my view, too little supported and pushed. In that sense. I mean maybe they were supported, but pushed, no. Ahm, that is perhaps also because that is is a relatively, ahm, a work where you see relatively little progress over a long period of time. And therefore you get motivation problems as a teacher and ah, yeah, I think the children would have had significantly more potential.

T: Hm.

I: Yeah, if one approached things, would have approached things differently.

T: Yeah, yeah.

I: Yeah, exactly and ahm, yeah. Then I went to ... or following that I said 'ok, this progress is not enough for me.'

T: Hm.

I: And I want to accept considerably more responsibility than in this professional field, ahm, exactly. And I think, I think I somehow recognised, I have a different world view. Than ahm, than ahm, the teachers which, which were there, and honestly I believed and now, can't say today whether this is really true ... I believed that in many disciplines that I would have wanted to study, as for example theatre, or German studies. Those things. That I would have met people who would be relatively similar.

T: Aha.

I: Yeah, ahm, that are not so achievement-oriented. As I had been. And then I would have thought, that it would have been hard for me. Exactly like this.

T: How do you see that, that these people have a different world view, and that they are not so achievement-oriented. Are they then simply, somehow not, they simply don't tackle things or?

I: Yeah, exactly, you can put it like this. They don't properly tackle things, ahm, or better put, ... it's often in the, in the contact with people, I mean .. on the one hand, I mean .. a, well, how should I put it in the best way. I think, I define myself strongly via, ahm, or gain motivation, via showing merit, merit.

T: Yeah.

I: If I go to bed at night and say, 'You have done something today.'

T: Yes, yes.

I: And in this, in this definition what, what merit means, we were, I believe, very, very different.

Once more, one sees the different conceptions at work in the perspectives, and how quickly these contingent views are transformed into 'progress' or 'merit' as such, as an absolute standard (even though the relativising aspect, as in Ben's quote, is still there as well). It also becomes clear that the operation is, at the

same time, a creation of an identity, of a 'honourable' personality, the calling-into-existence of a life that is, in the eyes of its creator, worth living. This is why self- and external designation is so important for students, as for every other agent. This self-chosen identity might also be seen in a whole plethora of self-designations with regards to high-school subjects, mostly in distancing moves from languages combined with affiliations with the natural sciences (mostly chemistry and physics) and mathematics. Hannah (23) thus confesses that she is 'very, very bad in languages' and doesn't 'have a feeling' for them when talking about her experiences in high school, while she states that Math 'was super' since it was 'nicely logical'. Theo (40) states that 'Languages were not my thing, rather Natural Sciences', whereas Mats (51) confesses that he was 'never particularly into languages'. Within the natural sciences, there are also sometimes distinctions made. Peter (9) explains his preference of chemistry over biology:

I: [...] Bio[logy] I also had [at school], and I found it tedious.

T: Why?

I: Yeah, why? I think if one thinks about it retrospectively I think that Bio was just imprecise. The way it is taught. It is like [imitates voice of teacher] 'Yeah, then something somehow happens there.' or 'The eco-system, that is how it is, and we don't know so exactly, and yeah, everything depends on everything else and ..', yeah, that's not the way it is, right? Whereas with chemistry it was. I, I calculated *right until the last atom* how many particles of, whatever, muriatic acid were in this, right? Or at least, I could do this theoretically. Ahm, and I think I found that quite cool.

These students clearly value, and prefer, a specific kind of exactitude and clarity, which may also be seen in their frequent choice of either Chemistry, Physics or Mathematics as one of their A-level specialisations (often paired with History), more so with the 'recognised' students than either the 'non-recognised' students or the whole Economics student body.

On the other hand, there are also boundaries in the direction of the Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Jonathan (55), even though taking Physics and

Mathematics as his Abitur specialisations in which he 'did well in principle', he decided 'that [it was] probably not enough for studying' because he estimated he 'can't do that.'

However, the recruitment of academic Economists from graduates of various natural Sciences is well known (for instance Heining, Jerger, and Lingens 2008: 316). Philipp (46) first studied Physics since it was 'simply exciting' for him and because he 'heard from all sides that Physics would fit best to me', after taking his Abitur in it as well. However, he eventually refrained from entering an academic career in the subject due to its 'elaboratedness' and sense that there were 'more intelligent' students in the discipline than him. Lina (47) started out in Mathematics, also after doing the subject in her Abitur, but defected to Economics after her Diploma because, for her, pure Mathematics was 'too abstract' since it made her feel as if 'I don't understand anymore where I am here'.

These examples clearly seem to point towards a continuous, and continuously adjusting, self-placement of the students within their respective social microcosms, at school, in university, or elsewhere. But they are not always necessarily conscious. Yannick (62), like others, was interested in 'why [...] countries develop economically, some better and others worse.' This includes phenomena like unemployment and the adaptation problems certain social groups have with sudden economic changes. But when asked why he did not choose Sociology he only replies that '[...] this did not occur to me ... never thought about, that this is also a sociological question, I mean that is, if I let that pass again in front of my inner eye, these are actually economic-political .. questions, therefore I thought Sociology doesn't deal with it at all. [...] I mean it didn't strike me as a possibility at all.'

Then, of course, there are other, allegedly more 'mundane' factors that push students towards the discipline of Economics. Dennis (18) for example 'discovered' his preference for Economics through his apprenticeship where he was 'among the

five to ten best' in the company which gave him the psychological conviction to go on in this area rather than in Engineering which required Physics in which he 'wasn't so good, and also not that interested either.' For him studying Sociology in any case 'never came up'. A reason for John (6) to choose Economics over his other initial subject of Political Science was his sheer success in the former, despite working much harder in the latter. Similarly, the chance to tutor in front of a class was decisive in the eyes of Simon(63). He describes it as 'the best experience of my [Bachelor] studies.', his 'high point'.

What can be noted at this point is the peculiar 'sense' of place that the 'recognised' students tend to exhibit. Closely linked to this is the exclusion of certain disciplines as offering 'nothing for us' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 63f.). This sense, as we have seen, is not guided by purely rational assessments, even though these are the *results* of this process, but by sympathies and antipathies, and by everyday experiences with other groups in which these sympathies are produced and later remembered. These are eventually met with institutional support by the discipline of Economics - in the form of tutorships, good marks, scholarships, and the like - which tend to compound the initial sense. Somehow the exact and abstract method of Economics is perceived as being more pleasing *and* more scientific at the same time. It seems that these two judgments are, in practice, inextricably linked, as we could see very well with the statements of Mats, Tom, Aaron and others. This conjunction between a 'subjective' and 'objective' preference for the discipline is found, much more rarely and with much less clarity, with those students who are 'non-recognised'. Thus, at the base of the strict distinction of the positive and the normative one can perhaps find, in fact, a specific combination of the positive and the normative. But which combination is that? How can the hostility towards non-causal, non-representative, non-mathematical methods and styles of thinking and concomitant persons be explained within our perspective? What does it stand for, what culture is expressed by it? What form of habitus are we dealing with?

The omniferous Use of economic Thinking

Before we tackle these questions, we come back to the question of economic perspicacity. ‘Recognised’ and ‘non-recognised’ students tend not only to be distinguishable by the fact that they use concepts effective in academic Economics, but also that they extend the use of these concepts *beyond* their narrow field origin.

In that sense, one of the surest signs of being a ‘recognised’ student, of the successful internalisation of *lingua economica*, is the elaborate use of economic vocabulary and thinking in ‘personal’ aspects such as political preferences or one’s own study choice, like Jan (57) does:

I: [...] of course I weighed [the alternatives] when I did the decision [to study Economics], for one it interests me.

T: Hm.

I: Ah, what can I do after that? I mean what concretely do you do after that? Of course this is the hardest thing to comprehend when making your choice of study, because somehow there is something written there, also on the [web] pages of the university. But this is nevertheless fuzzy, right? I mean they then write [...] do ‘this and that’ but this wasn’t so tangible. Aaand, third I of course also thought ‘can I live from it or not?’, I mean it was clear to me I wanted to have something from which I, ahm, I don’t want to be rich. That is not important to me in my study choice.

T: Hmh.

I: But I in any case somehow want, well, to safeguard the future, and don’t want to have total anxiety and insecurity that I find a job and then just do something which does not make any fun for me. I mean it was this area of tension. In any case, these were the things I totally thought about in these days. How I exactly came to Political Economy I don’t know, but it was a part of the things that interest me. Then I have, to consider whether Political Economy really is a

possibility for me, ah maybe I should go a step back, I mean I knew that I am interested in the Humanities, well, Social Sciences.

T: Hmh.

I: That is, questions that deal with society, with, with people in society. Therefore also like Political Science, Sociology, Psychology was also in it [clears his throat], were things that also interested me.

T: Hmh.

I: On the other hand I always very much liked Math in school. Aahm, I also was quite good in it, and I liked it to apply Mathematics. I knew that the Natural Sciences interested me, but that I didn't want to do this that intensively for several years, Physics, Bio[logy], Chemistry. I could eliminate that for myself, could also eliminate Informatics. I could eliminate Languages, Literature, things like that. Even if it was interesting, it somehow wasn't really my thing, I mean somehow Social Sciences really was the thing where I knew this is what really interests me. Exactly, there Political Economy was a Social Science. I mean I see it as a Social Science, a Gesellschaftswissenschaft. Then I borrowed a book from the city library, an introductory book, some book, and read it in the tram to see what it really concretely means [to study Economics], what you do there.

Ah, this I found interesting, some things I didn't understand, but the questions I found exciting and I also liked the relatively clear style of reasoning of Political Economy. This I liked. Well, and ahm I was aware that if I for example study Political Economy, I have better professional chances overall as compared to studying Philosophy. Yes, indeed, if you look at it on average, that's simply the way it is.

Notice, in this extract, the technical word that is used to describe Jan's study choice ('eliminate'), and notice also the reference to 'exact' information which betrays his style of thought. This is quite similar to Simon (63) - who states as his reason for studying Economics and Political Science - that he wanted to 'understand incentives'. Finally, notice the reference to pecuniary safety which tends to be

named alongside “fun” or pure interest in the topic by recognised and especially insider students¹⁰⁰. Take, as another example, Philipp’s (46) thoughts about the minimum wage:

I: There I indeed do not have a closed opinion. I mean earlier I was .. this is such a fine line. I mean, I am totally convinced that one needs an incentive system, to bring forward the whole of society, and also, to a certain degree, inequality.

T: Hmh.

I: But I am also an enemy of an inequality that is too extreme. Therefore I find the minimum wage, in itself, .. I mean in regards towards a bit better distribution in terms of the whole economy, I think is positive ... But I haven’t come to terms with just how strong now the consequences of the interference into free market events after all can also be harmful for certain persons or not. Or for certain employees or not.

The assessment of the minimum wage here, even though its normative root is still visible, is interspersed with economic concepts and thinking (incentive system, distribution, interference in the free market). This recommitments the interviewee to the process of education and scientific training, and displays sharply that there is indeed such a thing as *pedagogic work*, “[...] a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a habitus, the product of the internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after [pedagogic action] has ceased and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of the internalized arbitrary.” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990[1970]: 31). The successful drilling in economic thinking may also be seen in the lightning-quick distinction some insiders made between ‘personal’ (i.e. the normative) and the ‘analytic’ (i.e. the positive) questions, even in matters not directly related to

¹⁰⁰ This is in line with statistical evidence presented in chapter 2 where Economics, on average, has more ‘extrinsically’ motivated students than other Social Sciences.

academic Economics. So that Jan (57) wraps up his recollection of his route into Economics in this way:

‘Ahm, yeah, I mean this is like the explanation for, for the Social Science. But in the end it is just a preference, right? One person somehow doesn’t like chocolate, the other one dark chocolate.’

Elsewhere he speaks of ‘purely personal preferences’. This of course reproduces the standard, rigid textbook distinction of facts vs. values, and the acceptance of not enquiring scientifically into the latter. Likewise, Niklas (44) introduces his thoughts on the economic consequences of the refugee-crisis of 2015 as his ‘personal’ ones. What seems to be expressed by this is both humility and scientific aspiration at the same time.

By contrast, this work of internalisation tends not to be acquired, not internalised, by the ‘non-recognised’ students. These interviewees often tended to make a merely implicit distinction between (public) studies and private life, and also tended, due to their lack of investment in the discipline, to have a rather bemused take on the struggles within the discipline in which their insider study colleagues take part, as Max (20) - who studies for a Master’s degree - describes:

I: Yeah, but as I said, if I see a Keynesian model I cannot see out of it the difference, in the mindset¹⁰¹, to a neoclassical model. I, I can’t.

T: Isn’t that [difference consisting in] security and insecurity?

I: We learn, in Macro[economics] we get to know models as, ah, as a utility function. And then it is derived in such and such a way, in that and that way the utility is maximised.

T: Hm.

I: And for me it does not follow that there is this homo oeconomicus mindset behind it, and there it is not. And, ah, I myself also find that, I can’t, I always

¹⁰¹ Translated from the German ‚Denkweise‘, which might alternatively be a mentality or a mode of thinking.

see it a bit, as I said, many people probably see that different from me, but I see it as well, ah, how should I put it? Ahm. I can't, here at the uni, we are all young now, and we all have a bit of idealism yet, and we also want to commit to something.

T: Hmh.

I: But I don't see the benefit to come to grips with what a neoclassical model is or where, so to speak, the limits of the neoclassical model are, and where not. That is also quite a, well, for me this is not in the foreground. Nah!

T: What is in the foreground for you?

I: Ahh, I have so to speak, how should I put it? If I now study Political Economy here, I don't have a great vision. [...] this might sound a bit flat, just thinking around a bit, but I always see it this way. I have my tasks, and I see it as a puzzle, and I have fun in solving this puzzle.

T: Yes.

I: But, ah, whether this state now has stark consequences for society or *not*, or whether one has to fight for a Keynesian model or for a neoclassical model, I think to myself 'well, we can't change that anyways, this, ah, will take its course', and therefore I have to solve the puzzle I'd say.

T: [laughs]: This sounds quite hopeless, one might say.

I: *Yeah*, sounds like it. Yeah, I know, I know. I know, but *yeah*, that is my view. I have, I also think that you don't always need to have the ambition to change something when you study, to change the world, but I see it, *yeah*, as I said, I don't have a great vision, for my studies.

T: You are rather pragmatic.

I: *Yes!* You can call it like this, yeah. Seen from a more positive side. Yes, it's true, I know, I know [slightly chuckles], yeah. That's the way it is.

Indeed, as Bourdieu states, for those not invested in the game the field-specific struggles seem pointless and rather ridiculous (Bourdieu 1988: 778-80). It follows that his stance on a political project like the minimum wage is rather free of formal economic considerations, and has the characteristic of a 'naked' opinion:

T: And what's the matter with the minimum wage? That is after all always a controversial debate among Economists-

I: Ahm, .. my position towards it? Ahm, I think that you don't hurt the Economy much with 8,50 Euro [minimum wage per hour in Germany at time of the interview]. I also don't want to say, somehow 'All people should now get, don't know, at least, 15 Euro or whatever.

T: Hm.

I: But, a minimum wage of 8,50 Euro I think that doesn't hurt, you can do it once in a while with a clear conscience. There are so many people here who, don't know, need to have two, three jobs. There I find it ok, to work in some shipping centres or in some meat plants where only people from Eastern Europe are employed because they don't take so much money. That I find ok when you have 8,50 Euro as a minimum wage. Yes.

T: Most of the Economists are against it, right? [...]

I: Yeah, that may be.

T: You don't care about that.

I: [I] Don't think, don't think economically maybe. Think beyond that, no idea, maybe ..

Likewise Jeannette (71) uses her studies as a confirmation of her strong ethical and moral concerns. But the two remain nevertheless separated from each other, and the former is merely used as a buttress to support the latter, it remains *outside* of the dispositions of the person:

T: Ok. What is so interesting with Political Economy?

I: Hm, you are able to make use of it somehow. If you look at it, as somebody who doesn't work in a company yet, or who didn't have to do anything with a company yet. Political Economy, you can make a use of it, because everybody knows what it means to be unemployed, or everybody can at least imagine what it's like. You can make *much more* use of it, where you say 'Ok, the state buys that.' Because if the state spends money, then you are *interested*. If a company spends money, then, well, then this is rather not so interesting, except you have a relationship to this company.

T: Hmh.

I: It just appears to be more tangible. You also see it more in your environment. Like company politics, well, you have to be in it.

Unlike the view of the 'recognised' students, who tend to compare Political Economy with other ways of objectifying various forms of economic behaviour, this perspective is less contemplative, more straightforwardly geared towards direct application. 'Tangible' here, then, is not inserted in a web of different abstract and competing conceptions of how to view and research human society, but rather as in direct comparison with every day experience - and the concept enriches and reinforces this experience and thus makes it 'more tangible'. The same goes for her opinion of the idea of a guaranteed minimum income, which is immediately, absolutely, vehemently and emotionally rejected on the basis of a common-sense judgement ('nobody will work then anymore'), something which, if at all, the recognised and insider students express only on the side (rather feebly), couched by rationalised deliberations:

I: Complete bollocks. I mean if I would get money for just *being there*, and it is not this minimum need as it is with Hartz IV [German version of jobseekers allowance], but should [be], well, a good income after taxes actually. I mean nothing where you would say you are super-rich but I don't need to go to work there any more.

T: But that's nice.

I: Yes, of course, it's nice, but what does that bring the country? Because if I only go to work to be able to have a more expensive vacation, then there is nothing in it for the economy, then the economy collapses. Doesn't work in my opinion, it has to be produced and if not I don't want to know what the company will have to pay to produce foodstuff. And foodprices of course [will] rise and everything. And then the basic minimum income increase, what everyone has to get. And that is a vicious circle, that won't work, no way, and I also find it totally insane to actually get such an idea.

It becomes clear here how the introduction into the game of academic Economics also includes a specific requirement to work on a refinement, the 'control of instinctual, visceral urges' that, in so many yet different ways, characterises established culture in different fields (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 34-41). But even if these signs of refinement are there, vigilance is still called for. Someone like Jack (33), for example, at first sight seems to be a counterexample for the relationships postulated here. He does not come from an engineering or teacher background, and neither is he 'recognised' in any way in Economics. Nevertheless he scores surprisingly high in the 'Recognition Index' above. Moreover, he uses words like 'model' rather frequently. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the usage of his words is a rather distancing one - for example, he almost always uses indicative adjectives when talking about Economics concepts:

T: [...] were there also areas in your study that you actually didn't like [...] ?

I: Yeah, I mean, in the first [semester] we had accounting, I found that interesting, and in the second semester we had it again, and I realised that it is nothing for me. [...] Other than that everything was fun, also all the Political Economy subjects, it was great fun.

T: Hm.

I: I mean this is all super interesting-

T: Yeah?

I: Exactly.

T: Why, what is so interesting for you there?

I: Yeah I find, I mean, Macro[economics], when we learned that, one understands now much more all these economic political things, like what repercussions a minimum wage has for the labour market. Before it was like [imitates voice] ‘yeah, minimum wage is something positive-‘

T: It is something positive, isn't it?

I: Exactly, yeah, but then, you realise, when you had these Macro[courses] and all that, had a look at these models, and, you understand it simply better and can think your way into it, exactly.

While formally exhibiting many signs of approval and enjoyment, on a closer look Jack's account is one characterised by distancing and bears witness more to his comprehensive wish to *agree* with the interviewer. This might be so because his lower class migrant background (his parents immigrated to Germany from Asia) and habitus propels him to a sort of pre-emptive obedience.¹⁰²

Conclusion

In this chapter I tried to explore the ‘performative’ differences between ‘recognised’ vs. ‘non-recognised’ Economics students. I explored and probed how they construct their educational trajectories up to the point of the interview, what

¹⁰² This, however, might also be reinforced by the rather pronounced social gradient between interviewer and interviewee in this case, which made for a rather awkward interview altogether.

kind of divisions and tools they use to do that and with what specific experiences and events they link their decisions and intellectual formation. Recognised students as defined above can be distinguished empirically not only by their more highly probable use of economic concepts and words - their economic 'perspicacity' - but also by their general narratives. These include a construction of early exposure to economic thinking and issues which creates a view and self-view (and hence a symbolic effect) of inevitability¹⁰³, of fit with the discipline and position one holds and the positions one prospectively might hold. All of this seems to represent an institutionalisation of an identity, that of a 'legitimate Economist'. But it also reveals a less polished, more 'normative' dimension in which the chosen and selected students show the influence of very 'mundane' and rather 'normative' experiences and assessments on their selections. Their mostly early preference for what they perceive as technical, 'clear', and straightforward reasoning contrasts with techniques they experience as fuzzy, imprecise or as 'blathering'. They clearly link these methods of enquiry to specific persons or groups (fellow pupils, students, colleagues at internships or civil service, teachers) for which they feel antipathy, which they have a clear disposition to objectify. In doing so, they clearly position themselves both morally *and* scientifically, in a specific field for which they, unlike the non-recognised and non-recognising, seem to have the appropriate predispositions early on.

It might be said that the taste for topics and ways of enquiry (as well as the associated agents) that are perceived as 'clear', 'unambiguous', 'logical' and 'tangible', as 'no nonsense', with 'rhyme and reason' leads these students early on towards a taste for general economic questions, and against topics and areas that are more 'cultural' or more 'natural scientific'. Experiencing success earlier rather than later with this in his studies (the ideal-typical recognised, and especially insider student, is male), he feels motivated to stay in the discipline. His incomprehension of other approaches, never pronounced in any case, successively

¹⁰³ This leaves open both deterministic and voluntarist interpretations in the spirit of ideologies of talent, the direct pointing towards which is tactfully skipped by the insiders - a clear sign of command of the academic art of subliminal allusion by way of lacunae.

hardens through the semesters and years into a proper world view, an entrenched perspective as regards his own personality as the ‘honest’, ‘scientific’, ‘positive’ (as opposed to ‘normative’) and ‘strict’ (as opposed to ‘lax’, ‘fuzzy’), anti-metaphysical fact-finder. One Economics professor I interviewed seems to reflect all of this very well, when reminiscing about his study days and general experience with subjects other than Economics:

I: Philosophy I simply found terrible.

T: Why?

I: That was so boring. [...] I have made several attempts in my life to read Heidegger. I think that this ‘Time and Being’ such a great, imperial title. I find that great, but . I cannot find access to it at all. This is like a sort of artistic poet’s language that somehow makes sense in itself but where you can’t, nowhere, like [sighs] .. somehow logical or somehow, or somehow mathematical [getting louder] or somehow get access to it. I think. [...] I still think that I wouldn’t want to study Philosophy, because Philosophy is what remained after all interesting disciplines pulled out, like a one-pound shop. [...] Or Bourdieu [sighs], it is to run away.

T: Yeah?

I: I find. It’s just [sighs] boring ramblings about words, you don’t get, you can’t tackle properly, what do they really mean?

T: Hm, hm.

I: I, I can’t take it, somehow.

T: This is too fuzzy somehow?

I: Or Foucault. I have, but. Apparently he wrote something about *power*. But so general that one doesn’t know at all does he mean power over or absolute power, you, you [more enraged] don’t know *at all* what he means. And then he can secrete some smart-sounding sentences [sighs]. I think this is sham-science, partly.

Such a stance is materially and symbolically supported by acts of recognition from the discipline and its representatives, and it encourages these students to see their own selection as justified and scientifically correct. Bit by bit, the economic epistemology transforms the susceptible habitus of the successful-‘recognised’ and academically prone Economics student. The more or less round-the-clock exposure to this specific epistemology in libraries, seminars, supervision meetings, conferences and so on, tends to universalise the grip of it over its bearer. What had been make-shift words and concepts, attached immediately to discernible values and feelings and experiences - such as clear, unambiguous, exact - become rationalised, hidden really in words like efficient, effective, model, and the concepts and theories assembled from them. The specific interests are dissolved and transubstantiated into a new aggregate phase, hidden from its bearers. Reasons (to study Economics) that were attached to causes become rationalised reasons that invite approval or rejection *as such*. They have become objective, objectified, inscribed into persons who in turn re-apply the conceptual armoury, as cognitive tools, to institutions and to the available stock of thinking and knowledge, which produces the time and history of the discipline (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 137-40).

But if there is an ‘ontological complicity’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 128f.) between these ‘recognised’ students and the discipline they study, what does it consist of? In other words, what is the incarnated history of recognised students, and how is it transformed into support for the ‘economic way’ of thinking? And in any case, could there not be different ontological complicities, different histories that lead to these selections? In the following chapters, I will attempt to connect the perceptions back to habitus and thus social origin traits of the students. What are the various meanings of these selections of Economics? I will attempt to distinguish, in an ideal-typical way, three different, incarnated *histories* that can be found in my sample and which lead to a similar choice to invest oneself in Economics. This might help to explain why Economics tends to attract specific students, and tends to retain a specific epistemology and view of man (Kapeller 2008).

Lastly, I wish to underscore the differences to the approaches criticised in the foregoing chapters. What this chapter has suggested empirically, at least if seen in a Bourdieusian light, is that intradisciplinary differences between students are generally more subtle than commonly assumed. The ‘recognised’ student shows his commitment in his economic perspicacity and the ‘contagion’ of his whole world-view with economic vocabulary and thinking. The ‘non-recognised’ student, on the other hand, tends, at best, to deliver a faint copy of this commitment (such as Max, Jack, or Jeanette show). Methodologically, this suggests to distinguish students’ attitudes differently rather than by way of simple and obvious self-determination via a survey. It also alerts us not to ‘buy’ every display of ‘intrinsic’ interest or motivation in the first instance. And why should not the same caution be warranted for assessing ‘reflexivity’?

Chapter 6 - The Inheritors

[...] *the new middle classes are especially open to many cross-pressures, as well as to all those other forces that more or less define the structure and atmosphere of modern society.*

C. Wright Mills - White Collar

In what follows I will distinguish the interview sample of ‘recognised’ students into three ideal-types distinguished by the students’ social class origin and trajectory. Obviously, the sample already is pre-selected- this sample, as is the case with the whole academic population of German academic Economics, is very “male” and so it has to be borne in mind that the resulting class habitus are its distinctive and appropriate expressions, which might be shown quite differently where these are differently gendered (also of course depending on the subfield in which it finds itself). But this was inevitable given the original objectives of the study. What now has to be done is to have a closer look at how various class origins and social trajectories contribute, via the corresponding perceptions and selections of the differing habitus, to the resulting attitudes towards Economics and other academic discipline, as well as towards politics and society as a whole. At this point, I distinguish logically three routes to the attitudes and standpoints that are associated with recognised and insider student: those of the *Inheritors*, the *Fallen Nobles*, and the *Parvenus*. I will try to undergird this distinction empirically by showing the differences in attitudes that may be interpreted in the data if this template is applied. This, as is the case with all ideal-types, will only fit *to a certain degree*, with some students better aligned with these ideal types, with others less, and sometimes even not at all. There will also be cases that practically, empirically, overlap with more than one ideal-type. I will try to discuss these cases and spell out what they mean theoretically. Eventually I will discuss what would have to be done to validate further the distinction taken here on a higher scale,

with an improved methodology. In short, what I am attempting here is a sort of *theoretical induction*, ordering the interview sample, which inevitably means making choices of what is pertinent vs. what is not - choices that can be criticised but which, I content, are nevertheless necessary for any scientific progress.

The Inheritors - A Cadre Category

I put into the category of “Inheritors” all those ‘recognised’ students who have at least one parent that studied and graduated at a university, and who come from a stable petit-bourgeois to bourgeois background, both in a short- and more long-term perspective (that is, including their grandparental generation as well), and who lastly have excellent or good A-level marks. The grandparents are widely dispersed in terms of their professions which range from self-employed craft or farming backgrounds, with the grandmothers often having worked as a clerk or housewife, to more bourgeois professions such as engineers or teachers, up to a few physicians and even one professor at a university. The parental generation, however, was more homogeneously trained and we find, above all, many university-trained teachers (primary or secondary school, often in mathematics or the natural sciences) and engineers among them, but also a few lawyers and natural scientists. In terms of professional position, quite a few of them accordingly work as civil servant teachers at state schools. The engineers especially tend to be self-employed (as small entrepreneurs), or alternatively work at intermediate positions in various middle-sized companies. These are mostly executive positions, although sometimes they even teach in these companies. This kind of social origin, situated somewhere between the upper and middle class, might be called, following the studies of Mills (1956[1951], 1956) and Boltanski (1987), a sort of cadre category. It is, however, less obvious to see that there seems also a specific kind of cultural capital privileged, namely a rather ‘technical’, natural scientific one. This fits well with the data collected on the social origin of German Economists and Economics students in chapter 4. This would imply that it is more their relative *homology* vis-a-vis other social groups and class fractions in the respective professional universes

and social sub-spaces (such as professors and artists for teachers, major executives for employed engineers, or big entrepreneurs and companies for the self-employed) rather than their absolute similarity of condition of existence that is the unifying mark of this group. This might reflect, in a more specified, differentiated way, the selection processes taking place in the French higher education system until the 1980s (Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 57-59), where those selected from lower classes for entrance into the elite sections of the system are those with more educational capital *relative* to the rest of the class. Here it could be the relative advantage of a *specific* form of cultural capital that ‘selects’ the recognised, which would mean that the statistical categories mostly employed (i.e. university vs. no university degree of parents and/or lower, middle, upper class origin) are rather insufficient to answer this kind of question for the contemporary academic field. I here attribute a primary explanatory force to the precise composition of cultural capital, which seems very closely linked to gender.

In sum, considering this rather ambiguous social origin, the group described here might best be described as a sort of cadre, understood as a group *ambivalent* both in structure *and* identity (Boltanski 1987: 1-7). Not quite from haute bourgeois origins, these students are nevertheless from relatively privileged backgrounds.¹⁰⁴ However, they remain dominated within the academic field due to their possession of non-dominant technical cultural capital.

Characteristics and general Attitudes

The name “Inheritors” is, in my view, justified insofar as these students embody, within the sample discussed, to the highest degree, an objective and internalised

¹⁰⁴ With these thoughts also goes a certain critique of statistical sources and their assumption of social homogeneity - and homogeneity along *known, tested* lines - of constituted social groups: if groups form, they must have a class origin in common, otherwise they wouldn’t form. But for Boltanski, groups form along lines that are *dynamic and changing*, with homogeneity itself being one of these dynamic and changing aspects: “Homogeneity is not a necessary and sufficient condition for cohesion.” (Boltanski 1987: 31)

adaptation to recognised academic Economics¹⁰⁵. They are the students who overwhelmingly hold tutorships and research assistantships in the most prestigious specialisations of Economics (that is, economic theory, macro and micro-economics), and it is they who tend to score highest in the “Recognition Index” developed in the last chapter. That is not to say that all students of the interview sample with the aforementioned social background are, or become, Inheritors, but rather that the *chance* of finding students with this background among the recognised students with an insider perspective seems extraordinarily great. One might therefore propose a connection of this particular *cadre* background with recognition within, and of, academic Economics (as described in chapter 4.2). How does this connection appear from the standpoint of these students themselves?

The Inheritors describe the fact that they tend to prefer, from early on, a generalist and what might be called logical-naturalistic outlook. They mostly reject the study of languages, both in high school and in university - ‘I am super bad in English’, as Hannah (23) admits, or Theo (40) who confesses that ‘languages are not my thing, rather the natural sciences.’ or Mats (51) who describes himself as having ‘never really [been] a language type of guy’.

As has already been described in the last chapter, the interest in Economics tends to be constructed particularly early on (constructed both in the interview and in actual reality), in conjunction with a tendency to reject other Social Sciences and Humanities as ‘fuzzy’ or ‘imprecise’ as opposed to the ‘clear’ and ‘tangible’ form of argument within Economics, while Natural Sciences are perceived as ‘too abstract’. There is, furthermore, a quite strong demand for a ‘secure job’ as well as a ‘proper salary’, probably more so in terms of exhibited attitudes than with recognised students from other disciplines (see chapter 2).

¹⁰⁵ Notice that this implies a dynamic, flexible notion of the term - see the foregoing footnote.

In terms of the generalist and natural scientific aspirations, the inheritors have these in common with more petit-bourgeois students. What distinguishes the former from the latter is perhaps an arguably better fit to the requirements of the field, and hence the chances of success. This tends to foster a rather *relaxed, sovereign* attitude towards one's own subject. Peter (9) therefore shows a very playful attitude towards academic Economics, something which he elsewhere calls an enjoyment of being able "to fiddle about". One can see that this, at least here, goes hand in hand with a defence of the prevailing methodology of the discipline:

I:[...] and that means you can either believe that the world is like this, that there are atoms that are like this. Or you can think that [higher voice, in English] *you know*, maybe there are no atoms, but a, a model that pretends as if there are models can describe the world quite nicely, and can be quite useful, right? I mean this is this basic effect. Ahm.

T: That is-

I: While in the, I mean, what economic theory is, is instrument[al], or what economic entities are instrumental, instrumental things, right? They are just good, maybe there is no demand curve, but-

T: You mean in the minds of the people, when they make their decisions?

I: Yes, yes. I mean in general maybe you don't have, have no [in English] *budget line* and *indifference curves* and whatever. Maybe that's not the case, right? But a model that pretends as if these things existed may tell us ever so many, so interesting things, right? And as soon as you put back this point [step], and say 'well, everything is as if' [...] That's how it is, right? I mean if, if people act economically rational then this is good and true. Good, right? And I think the. the the big problem is when people are not taught this distance, right? This distance between what is the model and what is reality, and, when people confuse model and reality, right [...]. I mean I don't know, that is why the biggest advantage that you can draw from it, that you, get from Philosophy, that you learn to take this step back, right? You go away from what is given and have a look at it. And

think about it 'ok, let's pretend as if, and then think further'. [...] You take certain assumptions, and tinker so long until you have something that you like, right? I mean it's like .. like, like chess, right? Chess has no reference to reality. You have a couple of rules, and then you play. And the game is either fun, or not, and you can be good, and you can be bad. Hh? The same with Economics. Ahm.

T: Ok. Economics is like chess. Because-

I: *Aeh. You can do Economics like chess.* It is, I don't have a problem with that.

The sovereign relationship to the subject might be seen in the rather theoretical, abstract disciplinary preferences these students take vis-à-vis all other students. It implies a *creative* possibility that is only acquired by internalisation of the specific, recognised logic of Economics - a capability to act rather than to merely reproduce statements of academic recognition, to manipulate the given instruments of production and perception, at least within the economic logic- which of course means to do so *legitimately*, thus finding the likely approval of German Economics professors, these representatives and embodiments of the discipline's requirements. It also implies a naturalised ambition. One may also see in it a (rather theoreticist) justification for actively ignoring actual social and economic reality under the guise of avoiding the confusion of model and reality. Aaron (74), who is, like Peter, another particularly 'precocious' inheritor - due to his excellent Bachelor results he was able to skip the whole Master degree and is now a PhD student, still in his early 20's, at a very prestigious German Economics department - records his preference for this:

I: But on the other hand, I mean through my Phd [...] I don't have to do much [any more] with field experiments and I don't know what, through that, I mean this is not my direction, I mean I will work more theoretically. [...]

T: Why is this not your direction, like? It is exciting after all, you go into the field and all.

I: Yeah, yeah of course, I mean there are certainly exciting effects, yeah, but, you can find them out, but to be honest this is, in many areas this is again too fuzzy for me I have to say, eh?

T: Hm.

I: I mean, I would like to, when I have to do an experiment [...] have a relatively clear statement, whether this has a causal connection or not, yes.

T: Hm.

I: Only correlations .. don't find that that exciting and also the way to work, I mean, I like to engage in, ahm, like, mental work. I mean the other stuff is mental work, too, but let's say if I draft an experiment, then .. a part of it is, ah, the construction, right?

T: Hm.

I: I would say it is a, it is a third of the work, overall, .. Alas! If at all. Maybe 15%, 15% of the work to develop the idea, and then the methodology. But then you already have 80% for, ahm, I mean this is 80% of your success. At least. Yeah, I mean.

T: That is decisive.

I: Yes, yes, exactly, that is absolutely decisive, effectively. [...] And if I now work theoretically, then I say ok, that what I do all the time, to furnish proof and so on, that basically is the main part and for that I probably use my main time. And then I write the paper and that is again somehow, also again 10%, yeah. I really have devoted the main part of my time for what actually is the decisive thing. [...] And that I find quite nice.

One may see here the recurrence of the clear-fuzzy dichotomy, this time *within* the subject. This time it is experimental research that is dismissed as 'fuzzy' in favour of 'clear', abstract theoretical constructions. One may also clearly see the taste for producing novel, generalising, abstract, directive and hence *distinguished* (and therefore 'adventurous' and gratuitous, see Bourdieu and Passeron 1979[1964]: 14f.) economic knowledge. It is a knowledge that sets viewpoints and aspires to

direct practical efforts. Inheritors deal with *prestigious and large-scale* subjects like the financial crisis, the environment, or human preferences in various situations, how growth emanates, and they do so mostly within the accepted technical, causal, model-making *and rather comprehensively theoretical* style for which (German) academic Economics is known (see again the last section of chapter 4). This difference between the *general* and the particular (or between theory and empirical application) is the particular modus in which this generality is expressed with many Inheritors, namely that of the formalistic, causal reasoning within models. One may see this *interest* with Jan (57) as well, who, at one point, tried to specialise in environmental Economics but was, in part, repelled from it due to a professor who ‘mixes up’ values and scientific practice too much in his view:

I: Hmm. I found there was a blending of normative and positive questions. I don’t find that nice if one deals with normative questions. But if one sells it a bit as a positive question, and has in the back of one’s mind ‘I would like to protect the environment’, if that resonates in there from the very beginning, I find that totally tainted. One should, after all, try to distinguish that clearly. That was one what, what I a bit, where I had the impression, but this was not the only reason. I simply found his research not so exciting, but this indeed is a subjective attitude. Yeah.

T: And for you. Environmental Economics, what does it make so exciting for you, this topic?

I: Ah, I find it very exciting because the environmental problem - I mean that of climate change, the changes of the earth - I think that is probably one of the greatest challenges of mankind. And at the core of it is an economic problem, right, it is about scarce resources, that is Economics. [...] And that I found very exciting. Yeah, and I also found that in my studies. Above all I was surprised when I saw the models, these complicated Macro[economic]models that [his supervisor professor] uses. With *exactly these models* one can answer these questions really well and think about how this can take place in the future. I found that very interesting. [...]

T: So for example, I dunno, how much growth causes how much temperature of global warming or what, or -?

I: Yeah, one may look into models how pollution takes place, and how for example quality of life deteriorates. In this way you can model, you can see that there might be either coordination problems, because today they don't think about tomorrow, that is the main problem. That is such an intergenerational external effect.

T: Yeah yeah, ok.

I: And that one you can then incorporate. You can think, what does sustainability mean, there is a lot of definitions, it isn't clear. But you can take any of them that you can mount in, you can think, ah, if you don't do anything, if the state doesn't do anything, is there sustainability? Maybe you see that this is not the case and you can think what national politics is there. Taxes, CO2-trading systems or somehow regulation, you can compare that. So there you can, it is in any case a model framework in which you may think theoretically about it. On the one hand you can explain why pollution takes place, why it is a global problem, as it has happened until now. One may try to have a look into the future, yeah, with a caveat. And then one may think about possible political measures.

There we have, once again, the ambivalence of clinging to very general ideas and problems (and hence ambitions) on the one side while conspicuously and almost frantically rejecting particular, less mathematically formalised and less conspicuously neutral approaches on the other. This may be seen as a specific *expression* of the interest in the general (both psychologically and sociologically conceived), that may be observed here, is arguably developing out of specific conditions of existence and cultural traits. Here as elsewhere one may see how the recognised economic language has become internalised, has become the language through which this modified habitus expresses itself, at least within a Bourdieusian perspective - notice the frequent and casual use of specific economic notions like

preference or external effect, or the adoption of the positive-normative divide which is used to enunciate the dissatisfaction with a particular approach that is supposedly marred by the presence of a 'subjective attitude'. It is not whether this is true or not that interests me here, but rather the fact that these distinctions are used as justified *cognitive tools* to make sense of the world and of the academic world, and to the highest degree compared with the rest of the sample. In other words, they are not only used as tools, they are *playfully, casually* used. They are also rather often strictly enforced and hence seem to form a substantial pillar, and boundary, of the disciplinary identity that these students adopt. Hence Mats (51), when asked to comment on the benefits of a minimum wage for the economy, remarks that it is 'Difficult, I mean, it is of course, it is not my field of study.' The same goes for Theo (40) who professes that '[...] if I am not so much into the topic [...] I'm always cautious to formulate a strong opinion about it.' The generalist outlook of these inheritors is therefore complemented by a specifically *humble* moment, an attitude of rather conspicuous modesty. It could thus be theorised that earlier experiences with what are perceived as 'fuzzy' or 'nebulous' or 'vague' approaches or persons is transformed within the context of academic Economics and under the guide of a cadre habitus into a *sharp distinction* between scientific versus non-scientific thought, a sort of ethical scientific norm (at least in appearance) that, in its specific way, follows Wittgenstein's maxim: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." (Wittgenstein 1995[1922]: 85). However, this logic, on the other side, also implicates that with this 'leap into science' that is achieved by the application of exact, causal thinking and mathematical modelling gives the student the right to utter positive truth with ever more self-confidence and certainty. Whereof you *can* speak, thereof you must proclaim. And due to the powers of model-building the Inheritors enable themselves to proclaim about a whole lot of things, which then, at least potentially, overcomes the self-inflicted analytical modesty of Economists. Jan (Nr.57) thus has a very well-founded viewpoint against the minimum wage:

I: Minimum wage, I do have a clear position there. Have to think what I say now [...] I am against the minimum wage. Not because I find its goal bad but because I believe, well, believing is not 100% security, that it cannot reach the goal in the best possible way. The goal is to get more people into earning incomes, higher incomes. And I think one can attain these goals by other measures, where you don't have the *danger* that there are somehow dislocations on the labour market. That means that there might be fewer jobs. That is not that clear because the studies are so different, but given that, there is this danger that the minimum wage leads to less jobs. Why don't you do it differently, by redistributing more or having a negative income tax a la Friedman, which has no direct effect on the job market, *and*, the minimum wage doesn't help at all those who do not have a job, those who are the poorest, those who do not have incomes. [...] you can achieve the goal [of helping the poor] differently than harming the companies. Because this can lead to lack of demand for work by the companies [...].

Karl (52) argues for a minimum wage, but within a similar logic:

I: I am a big fan of the minimum wage, yeah. Less out of socio-political considerations, but rather out of a pure, I mean a really economic reflection, because we Economists always say the markets are perfect, and if the markets are perfect then a minimum wage really's a disruptive element, because it indeed distorts the productivity wage, but if one looks deeper into the labour market, then one will find that it is not optimal, and especially in those areas where wages are paid that were beneath the minimum wage, these are characterised precisely through the fact that you don't have proper competition there. But I have a strong concentration of power on the side of employers, especially with security jobs, simple services, care sector, ah, where I see their employees are not free to decide whether they, what employer they choose, yeah. And there a minimum wage protects in various ways, simply, I mean it

prevents utilisation and .. exploitation of these employees, because, but because this market does not run perfectly, then this market imperfection is suspended¹⁰⁶. And now with regards to public finance we don't have the effect anymore that full-time posts are subsidised via ah, via the state, via job seekers' allowance. At least not for singles.

Both students argue rather mechanistically, rigidly, even though with different inflections. Indeed, it might be quite surprising to see that the general socio-political or political leaning of the recognised inheritors of this sample is, at first sight, surprisingly broad in its spectrum, given the impressions one has of a rather 'economically liberal' professoriate as a whole (e.g. Frey, Humbert, and Schneider 2007). Inheritors like Simon (63) confess that they might vote 'perhaps eventually even left', meaning the German left party, whereas Hannah (23) confesses her 'left leanings'. And Ben (68) even brings in the possibility of supporting the nationalisation of key industries. On a second look, however, it can be seen that this superficial view would be distorting the attitudes of students quite a bit. Someone like Samuel (60) for example, while confessing his preference for Social Democracy as 'politically most convincing', leaves little doubt what kind of interpretation of that term he has in mind:

I: [...] Also in terms of economic policies, but also in all these other areas. If you have a look who achieved something good in the last years, that it is the SPD [Social Democratic Party]. I think.

T: Yeah? But man, they have pushed through this agenda 2010 [comprehensive welfare deregulation policy programme executed under Chancellor Schröder from 2003 onwards]. There was a lot of critique for that.

¹⁰⁶ I here prefer a more technical term to the literal translation which would be "cushioned" ["abgefedert"], which seems to me not quite to transport the 'spirit' in which this word is uttered.

I: Yeah, could talk about that longer, ah.

T: [laughs]

I: I am for the agenda 2010, I mean.

T: Yeah?

I: Not in all facets, ok, but .. but what they achieved with that is in any case to decrease structural unemployment with that somehow.

T: Aha.

I: That is huge progress. .. Yeah and they have retained the state's ability to act [...].

Aaron (74) professes a similar stand:

I: Ahm, but for example in earlier times I found the SPD under Gerhard Schröder, I found that very good. Yeah. Ahm, I mean the agenda 2010 was, I think, the best that could happen to Germany, and I found that a very, very great achievement to bring that through, right? [...]

T: Why, because, because, all these things were purged like, the Welfare System and so on.

I: Yes, exactly, I think it simply helped to make Germany competitive again, right? I mean, to become in the following seven years from the sick man of Europe, ah, to, to an absolute top-country, you couldn't foresee that, but, that was reasonable and I think I would see myself in the Seeheim Circle [economically liberal and conservative wing of the SPD], that would be relatively concrete, but because this is not existent at the moment .. yeah, because, because the SPD is led differently at the moment.

T: Hm.

I: I have, ah, I vote very strategically at the moment.

And then of course there are also political preferences that are rather closer to the stereotypical view of academic Economists, as with Philipp (46) who voted liberal last time and who has ‘a bit more of a conservative touch’ or Lina (47) who situates herself ‘not left and not right, probably in the middle’. On the other hand, it is also clear that this balance, with a rising degree of selection and recognition, tends to vanish in favour of parties that promote economic liberalism. This may be seen in this sample as well, where it is the most recognised students (i.e. those in Micro- and Macroeconomics, as well as Economic Policy) and those who are most advanced (PhD and secondarily Master students) that have the most markedly liberal views, not in any political, but rather in a *strictly economic-rational* sense. This is the case with Jan (57):

I: Ahm, difficult. I mean I wouldn’t say that there is a party that I find super. I also wouldn’t somehow position myself on a one-dimensional spectrum left and right.

T: Hmh.

I: And I have, in principle, difficulties to render verdicts and to say ‘Ah, I find it bad what the central bank does or not, precisely because I know there is science and the empirical studies and they say there is no unitary answer. I mean this, I am not one for this. I, yeah, therefore I am not, not that unambiguous, but one must of course choose standpoints, ah, standpoints and then somehow do politics. I really find that difficult [...] I in any case have already voted for specific parties within the classic [political] spectrum that range from, like, left to right. [...]

I:[...]the minimum wage doesn't help at all those who do not have a job, indeed the poorest, those who do not have an income. [...] one may [achieve the goal to fight employment poverty] differently, more effectively, without hurting businesses somehow. Because this can lead to the fact that businesses don't request these people, *and*, at the moment with the refugee situation it is of course really hard to find jobs for the refugees, ah. Yeah, if the employer has to pay 8,50 [€] and then there are others that speak better German, then entrepreneurs have [a reason for not hiring them], except when they are totally altruistic and [I] find it great when the entrepreneur [is altruistic], but I think most simply *want* to save costs and would like to have employees that contribute most to reaching their goals [...]

What does this mean? On the one hand, what it seems to express is a certain *distance* from established politics, certainly in comparison to the inheritors of other Social Sciences such as Sociology, a distance that is arguably there from the very start, at least with this ideal-type, and which tends to be compounded by the conspicuously neutralising mainstream curriculum of the subject with its sharp distinctions between positive vs. normative facts, its strict mathematization and causal reasoning. Of course this distance does, in its complex qualifications and conditions as well as its uniqueness, signify a form of 'personal opinion' (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 414-17) which overlaps here with a special claim to grasp 'impersonal facts' that marks the backbone of the arguments preferred by recognised Economics students, and is thus the source of a socially and economically recognised, thus psychologically rewarding, identity. This no doubt is the case too in other (social) sciences, with other recognised students and their specific 'interests in disinterestedness' (Bourdieu 2006: 51).

And like them, Economists too, at least those who are most 'recognised', tend to develop a critical stance towards political parties, one which they often forcefully push into the public realm (one may note, in the German case, the rather numerous

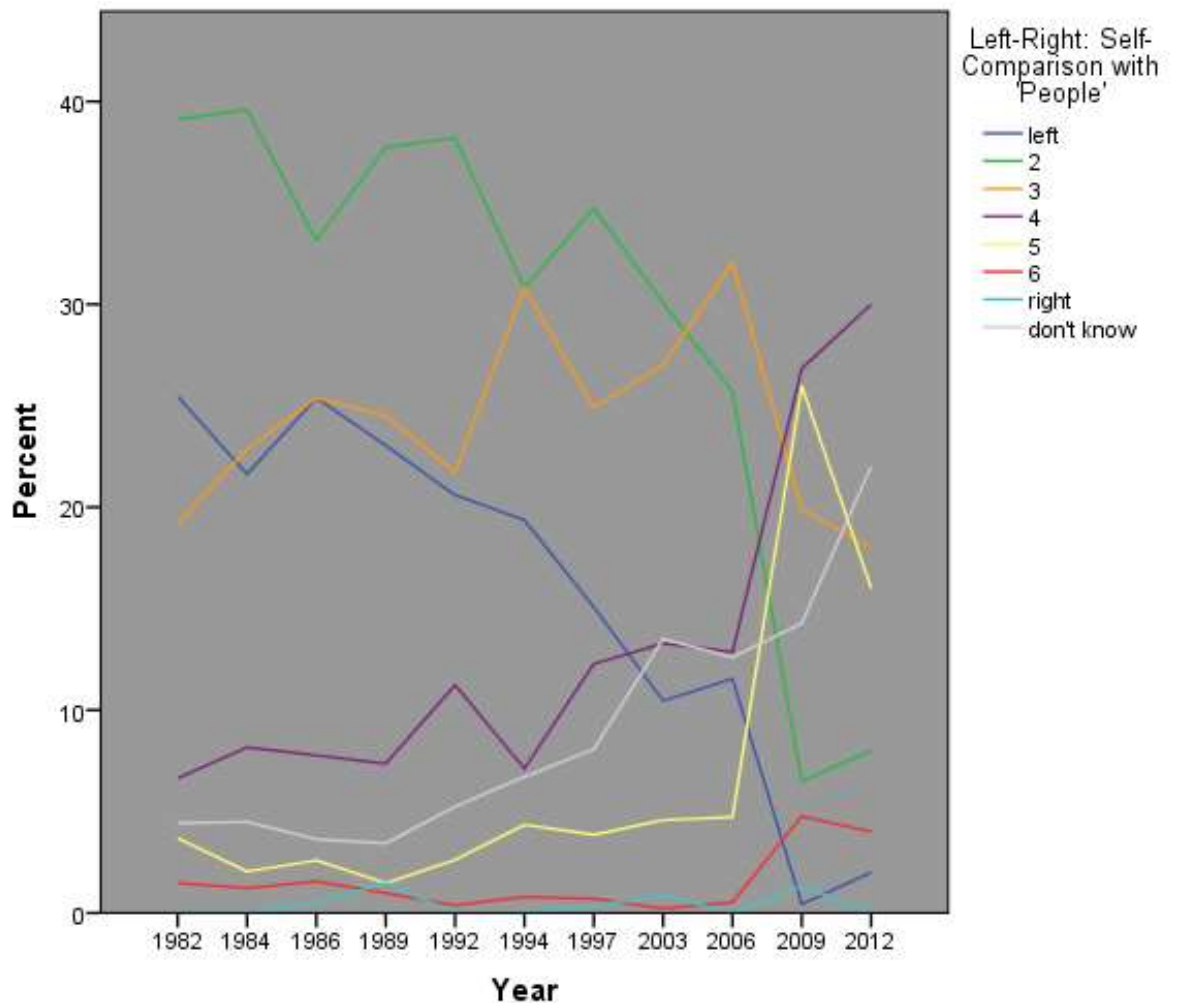
pleas that have appeared from the profession in the last decades, as for example comments on the common currency area, the need for labour market reforms, or the stances taken on the Euro crisis). These claims are possible because their expertise is wanted and, to a certain degree, respected by politicians and a wider public which welcomes expertise and the symbolic weight that comes with the formalised prestige of academic Economics (Fourcade, Ollion, and Algan 2015). On the other hand what these quotations also show is essentially a very high *responsiveness* to political questions of many kinds, a sensibility to take these problems seriously and to *address* them rather *directly*, in a language easy to understand by politicians. This is unlike disciplines like Sociology which tend to more radically and readily challenge political goals and language (which does not mean that it is necessarily more *scientific* just because of that). Despite their lofty models, or precisely *through* them, the inheritors are somehow very close to the political conversation, whatever they might say of themselves. We remember Samuel's fascination with the 'cool motherfuckers' of politics, the Varoufakis and Fulds of this world (see last chapter). This can be interpreted as an expression of their essential ambivalence within this specific field. It consists in a tension between claims to extreme forms of 'neutrality' that co-exist with visible and direct attachments to political questions and political language. One can show one side of this ambivalence with reference to statistics (see Figures 11 and 12)¹⁰⁷, when students are asked to situate themselves politically on a left-right spectrum with respect to what they assume to be the general position of 'the people'. Compared to a discipline like Sociology with its comparatively 'radical', rather leftist, framework, Economics and Political Economy traditionally tend to be conspicuously 'neutral' when it comes to political positionings, with most of their answers converging in the middle categories of this spectrum, which includes don't know answers¹⁰⁸, and only a small minority openly situating themselves either right

¹⁰⁷ These graphs are not true to scale because there is missing data for the year 2000.

¹⁰⁸ These 'don't knows' can *also* mean abstention from having an opinion, and their rise over time would correspond to the ideas developed above about the consequences of a radical expansion of the educational system. This interpretation would make the answer sociologically analogous to voting and opinion polls (Bourdieu 1993[1984]: 158-67)

or left.¹⁰⁹ Clearly, then, politics in Economics has a different connotation than in Sociology.

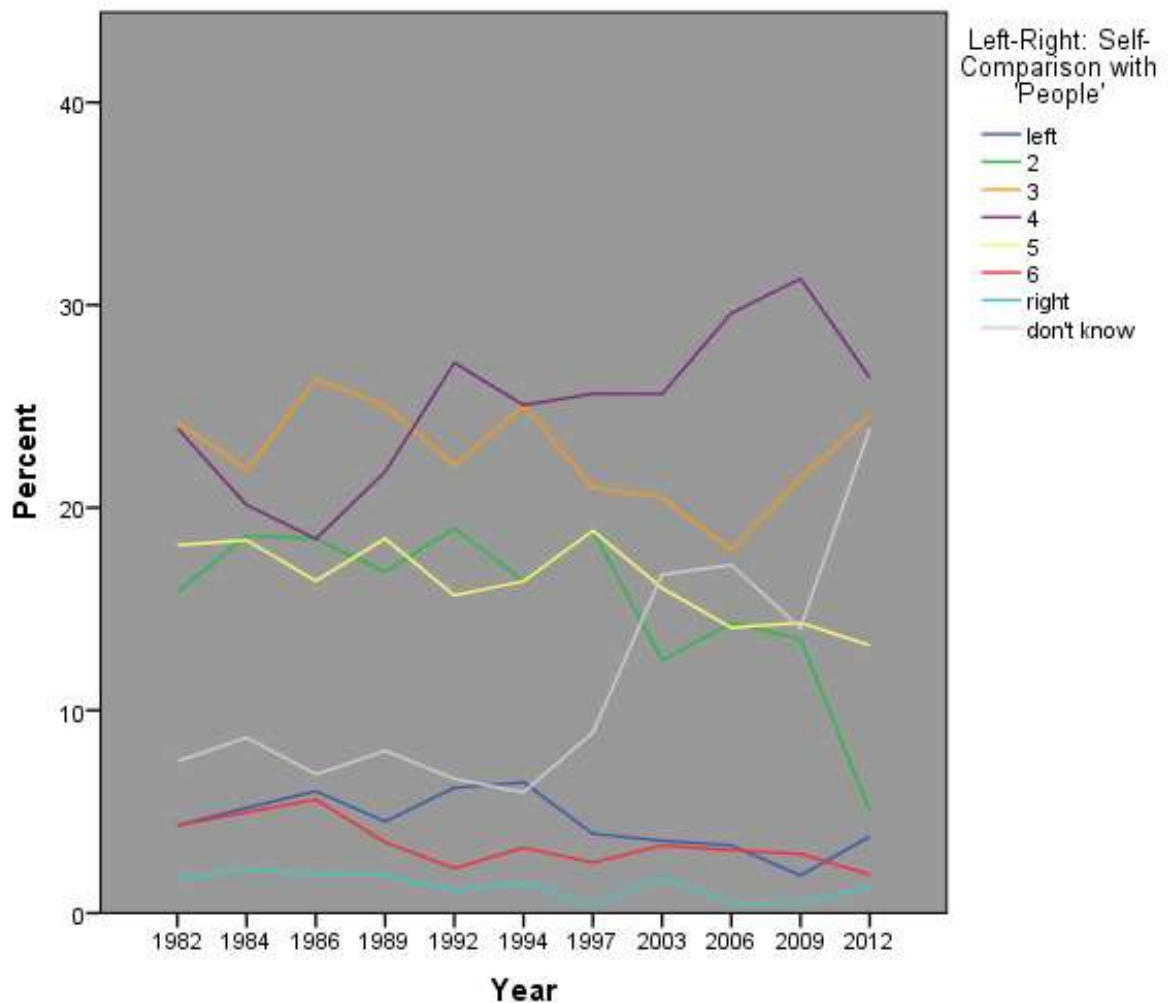
Figure 11 Development of left-right Self-Positioning of Sociology Students over the last 30 Years¹¹⁰



¹⁰⁹ No doubt we must bear in mind that this is a 'representative' sample, and thus as such not comparable with my own very selected sample of recognised students. Nevertheless, it is adequate when applied in this perspective. But this, then, begs the question for the sociological *meaning* of all the other students' answers. I shall come back to this point in my conclusion.

¹¹⁰ Source: KSS

Figure 12 Development of left-right Self-Positioning of Political Economy/Economics Students over the last 30 Years¹¹¹



Surely, it has been shown that the intellectuals as a whole group exhibit a form of ambivalence, springing from the fact that they are a dominated group within a dominant class (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 283-93). But how to make sense of this specific form of ambivalence? We must attempt to link their humble ambition, their interest in politics via conspicuously unpolitical methods, to their social origin. In a way the inheritors tend to gravitate to what C.Wright Mills asserted as the political indifference of the middle classes about 60 years ago: “They are strangers to politics. They are not radical, not liberal, not conservative, not reactionary; they

¹¹¹ Source: KSS

are inactionary; they are out of it.” (Mills 1956[1951]: 328). But is no longer true that groups of this ‘politically indifferent’ cadre-type “[...] are detached from prevailing political symbols but have no new attachments to counter-symbols.” (ibid.: 326). Within Economics at least, they have found a way of expressing a peculiar kind of political stance that may be called ‘conservative’ in a peculiar, specific sense of the protection of liberal values (such as meritocracy), to be distinguished from ‘conservative’ in a more ordinary sense (see Stigler 1959).

Mills also comments that - “Fewer individuals manipulate things, more handle people and symbols.” (ibid.: 65). In fact, it is precisely the great transformation in the professional structure from predominately manual to ‘spiritual’ tasks that might have provided these Economics students, and possibly substantial numbers of academic Economists as well, with powerful tools. These tools are powerful both for themselves and for agents outside of their field in developing, if not a coherent political position, then at least a considerable political effect. Moreover, this is precisely due to the *overlap* between the *internal* reasons supplied by Economists and *external* reasons of politicians, lobbying-groups and the like. This amounts to saying that the neoliberal power arrangement draws considerable symbolic consecration, and thus conservation, from *cultivating* hitherto more politically ambivalent fractions of intellectuals. It does so by furnishing them with specific possibilities of expressing their particular structural ambivalences, such as orthodox neoclassical Economics. This only works so well because of the belief in objectivity and neutrality that is obtained during disciplinary socialisation, and which masks the political implications and appropriations of these forms of Economics.

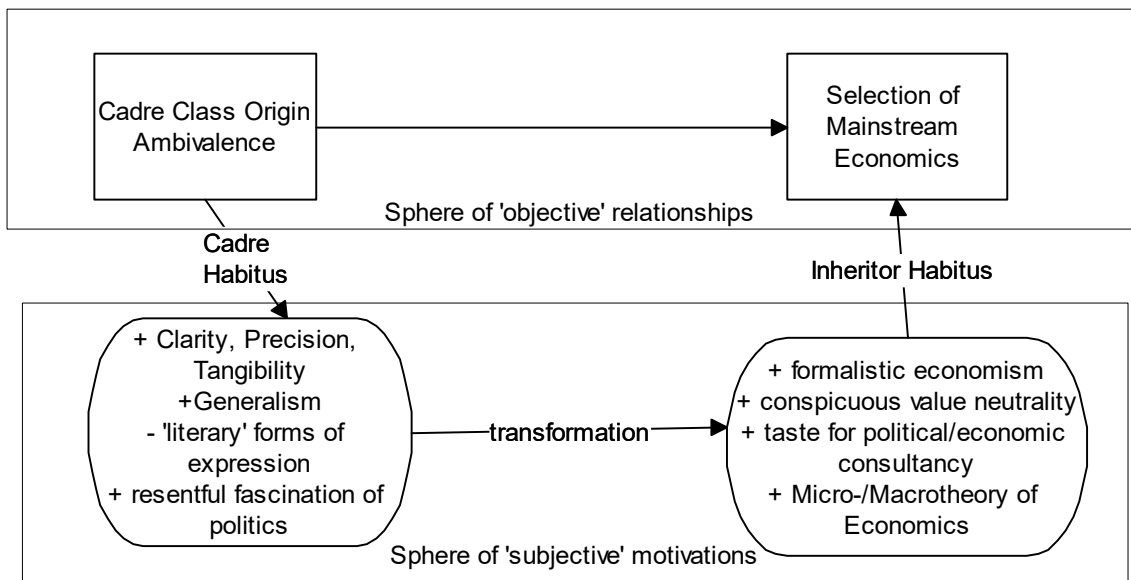
It is the *belief* in one’s objectivity in *general*, which would be a result and cause of one’s sociodicy of *specific privilege* through the selection processes in Economics, and which, in turn, might give these positions their particular, objectively political punch. Since Economists have historically been rather dominated within the German academic field (as we have seen in chapter 4.2), is it therefore so

surprising that the intellectual products and position-takings that emerge from this position attract the approval of those dominant outside of that academic field (and vice versa!)? Rather than cynicism or stupidity as causes or reasons for this, it might be more adequate, therefore, to speak of a specific, socially caused propensity for self-delusion. How to explain it sociologically?

Economism I - An explanatory Attempt

We might try to summarise in an analytic schema (Figure 13) what we know about the motivations, selections and attitudes of the Inheritors. In how far might it be related to a particular social origin? I here define as economism all attitudes that prefer narrowly conceived economic arguments and assumptions in questions of analysing social phenomena over other, and possibly broader, conceptions.

Figure 13 Proposed Relationship between Cadre Class Origin, Habitus, and Selection of Mainstream Economics



This schema obviously is very much simplifying in the sense that it obliterates the relational, or structural, aspect, both of the class origin and the motivations and attitudes of the students, both of which are situated in *fields* of different conditions of existence, resulting dispositions, and choices that these dispositions guide. But it might help to construct the connection between a specific social origin, or trajectory and perceptions and preferences of method and discipline within formalised mainstream Economics. This might contribute to understanding a social process presumably central in the (re-)production of academic Economics, at least in Germany. The Inheritors are born into conditions on the boundary between bourgeois and petit-bourgeois living conditions. Having not quite the cultural or economic capital of the upper classes, but certainly being better equipped than petit-bourgeois students, the predispositions developed are *ambiguous* (which does not necessarily mean cleft). There is a concern for dealing with the general and the pure, the ‘big questions’ of the time like national politics, economic crises or the nature of political systems. On the other hand, this sense is refracted through preference for rather ‘technical’ methods and indeed world-views which seem formed and informed by the initial impression of *different kinds of rationality* operative in various school subjects, such as languages or the Humanities which fellow pupils of presumptively more bourgeois origin, or at any case with more cultural capital, have inherited with greater ease. The initial cadre-habitus tends to lead to assessments of experiences that corroborate it, and thus compound it. Bit by bit, what had been perceived as ‘fuzzy’ or ‘imprecise’ in secondary school transforms into knowledge that is dismissed as ‘anecdotal’ or even ‘normative’ under the impression of introductory Economics courses. Under the impression (and pressure) of the standardised curriculum, and given the increasingly homogenised group and the temptations of success and distinction by excellent marks and first academic job, who or what should stop the Inheritor in his active cherishing of his particular form of ethnocentrism, in which his initial individualism is buffered by a historically grown ‘positive’ philosophy? The process is irreversible (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 133f.; also Wacquant 2014: 6-8). There is no way back, only forward. The Inheritor has become convinced deeply, through the combined pedagogic work of the university, himself and his peers, of his own world-view and

its objectivity. There is the generally perceived toughness of the studies, the ‘asceticism’ allegedly required to endure it - Nicklas (44) for example thinks one needs ‘to have punch’ to graduate in Political Economy - which resembles the process of initiation undergone by elite students at French Grandes Ecoles, the ‘rite of institution’ which makes the privileged “[...] experience their privilege as a duty, a public service.” (Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 103f.). Surely, this latter privilege is more specific or differentiated, as is the resulting nobility (Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 112). But the point is that both institutions produce specific forms of conviction or belief (Bourdieu 1980[1977]).

Via the concerted efforts of objectively aligned habitus, the ambiguity of dispositions in general social and educational space (rejection of one kind of forms of expression and hence of the forms of *social reproduction* while affirming another form of cultural expression and social reproduction) is transformed, under the impression of the existing social structures of educational differentiation, into a more *rationalised* ambiguity where specific kinds of social organisation of economic and social affairs, and their inherent power structures and forms of domination, are rejected in favour of others, mostly economically liberal ones. The original interest is thus superimposed, thus hidden from awareness from both its bearer and his commentator. One may see this ambiguity in a few examples: We have already shown, in an earlier chapter, Samuel’s admiration for executives and politicians like Yanis Varoufakis who is admired as a ‘quite an MC’, as is a famous German Social Democratic Politician. On the other hand he also acknowledges his limitations in this area:

I: I mean, I ain’t keen on having a politician’s life.

T: No?

I: I think it is extremely strenuous.

T: Hm.

I: And I don't know, in the end you only have power games that you need to be mindful of and some intrigues. This only keeps you from working in fact. Also takes care then that only people get into these positions who are extremely good at these power games and then maybe not those who, who are most savvy in something.

T: Hm.

I: It is a bit sad.

One wonders whether this Inheritor, son of a medium-level policeman and an administrative clerk who studied Psychology, has acquired this ambiguous disposition from every-day talks with his parents, when his father, for example, might have criticised the newest decision by a minister of the interior to cut the amount of available positions with the police force, or this or that scandal within the higher officer corps. It would make sense, then, that this fascinated scepticism is, under the impression of studying Economics, transformed into a view on the state and its dignitaries that is stripped of most of its 'appearances', such as its altruism, against which the 'honesty' of business appears more appealing:

T: I always think then, like a private, a commercial company, they always want to make as much dough as possible, like, this is its goal. Ahm, ... like a state-run supplier ... I mean they, well.

I: But what does a state-run supplier want?

T: Well, to satisfy a need after all. That is the idea, although they also often want to make much dough, right?

I: I mean these are also the, the .. ok, they of course don't have that pressure, that they often want to line their pockets, but then they have the pressure, they

do somehow want to retain their status and expand it, they want to have a big company, because it's simply more awesome to have a big, a big company than a small one. They also want to maximise something, and these are not all ... altruists.

Mainstream Economics, then, offers some sort of convenient, and rather cynical, haven of established, recognised sense for this ambiguous vision (think of Public Choice theory). The inheritors present themselves as humble persons who mostly 'don't need to be chief executive', as Jonathan (55) puts it. In his statements on political preferences one may again see the essential ambiguity that characterises the students of this ideal-type:

I: Yes, I am a very liberal, market-oriented person, I mean ... always learned that in my studies, nobody could falsify that for me, that markets function quite well.

T: Hm.

I: But also with a very strong social component, right, I mean I am somebody who ... does not like what the FDP [liberal party of Germany, somewhat close in its positions to Britain's Liberal Democrats] sells as liberal, that it ... throws the weaker into the market. They go down, I should not permit that, as a state I first have to, I can only allow the market if I have relatively equal market conditions beforehand for the participants, and of course establish hard rules. So that the market does not get out of hand, then this may work.

T: For example?

I: The education system, I can't, the children already grow, grow up differently, the ones have the state schools, there little money is spent, because the city politicians send their children all to private schools, so these schools are strangely enough the most beautiful, and the state schools, these are 50-year old prefab buildings where nobody even repaired a window in the last 10 years. You

may have a look in the city. [...] In this schoolsystem, a top performer always has been a top performer and is supported, has been since generations. That doesn't work. That is their thing. [...] one must establish rules and create equal starting conditions before the competition starts and that is exactly what they are not doing. And the other [parties] haven't done [anything], I mean the Greens [Green party of Germany], pf, right? ... These are also people that want to preserve, they also want to preserve the old rules somehow. I mean if I have a look who votes Green, these are all people who are home and dry they will rather go to hell than to endanger that.

This is borne out by empirical research on 'mature' Economists as well, who are much more likely to advise a politician than actually becoming one (Frey, Humbert, and Schneider 2007: 368)¹¹². On the one hand, there is the rejection of the dominant political discourse and its 'un-masking' as purely self-interested, hypocritical and even cynical. On the other hand: the view that the creation of a 'fair competition' between equals is possible, and in a relatively easy way. It is true that this attitude, abstractly speaking, can be interpreted as an attitude of *intellectuals in general*, given their dominated position within the dominant class as a whole, one that predisposes them to 'unmask' the hypocrisies of the powerful, to question the 'self-evident appearances' (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 397).

But with Economists, and with the Inheritors in particular, this unmasking takes on *a specific direction* that might be quite unique relative to other sciences, in the sense that the unmasking often involves part of the very same intellectual world of which these Economists are a part (namely, the academic field), and in which, speaking in terms of *internal* prestige, they are rather dominated scientifically (or at least not dominant, see chapter 4). The creation of a perfect competition in one's thinking and model, the resort to 'incentives' and 'purely economic interests' may seem as a conceptual way out for the Economists in this situation, a way to

¹¹² In a postal survey of German Economics professors undertaken for this project, 73% answer yes to the question whether they would take up an advisory role on economic-political grounds, but only 40% were ready to become finance or economic minister.

solve their (arguably) structural, and dispositional, sandwich position. Does the structural ambiguity of Economics match with the attitudinal ambiguity of its Inheritors anyways? If this is so, could this contribute to explain why “[...] economics is always more of a state science and is, as a result, haunted by state thinking: being constantly preoccupied with the normative concerns of an applied science, it is dependent on responding politically to political demands, while at the same time defending itself against any charge of political involvement by the ostentatiously lofty character of its formal, and preferably mathematical, constructions.” (Bourdieu 2005: 10)?

It is as if these students adopted, and are able to acquire and to develop in this particular institutional environment, a stripped down, consciously simplified (their opponents would say impoverished) version of the fully accepted, more ‘ornamental’ and more ‘playful’ rationality that still reigns in other Social Sciences and Humanities. Even though they sometimes lament it themselves, they are still drawn towards ‘chopping off the branches of the tree’, as Simon (63) calls it. Rather than embracing a conception of rationality that encompasses all available elements, they reduce it to what is *essential* (or ‘tangible’) in their view, its economic dimension. This is then, in turn, defended in its centrality in all aspects following a thorough formalisation and transubstantiation into academic- economic terms. These students, then, fight for an *equality* which resembles, precisely in this stripped-down version of fully accepted culture, the meritocracy of the high bourgeoisie. It is a sort of transformed Jacobinism. Hence perhaps the tendency in the profession for what Sebastian Thieme (2013) has called the ‘misanthropy of Economists’, the frequent attacks on jobseekers and ‘shirkers’ who are ‘too lazy’ to adapt to economic necessities, as one can see with Aaron’s (74) rejection of both a guaranteed minimum income and a minimum wage:

I: The incentive to work then simply falls very, very low for many people. Yeah. [...] Then we will get problems in the long term as a society. [...] I mean I am critical in terms of that, as with the minimum wage by the way. Like this, this stuff, I think this is not beneficial, simply.

T: Although, minimum wage, the people somehow need to survive. They can-
I: [...] they did that before via topping up [the salaries by the state], in principle this was already there. Explicitly, implicitly, a minimum wage, yeah. Which of course is not optimal but on the other side you have to say that today, in many areas, people, for example from Poland etcetera, are prepared to work for less money than Germans.

T: Hm.

I: And .. this is a basic attitude which perhaps is a bit misguided.

T: Yeah. How do you mean, [the basic attitude] of the Germans? Or of the Poles?

I: Yeah, yeah, right, of the Germans. I think this is partly misguided. I mean I for example have in, during school, yeah, have given private tuition, considerably below my normal fee simply, because, because it wouldn't have worked otherwise.

T: Yeah.

I: But the mother, she had, to feed the family, to be able to afford something, she had three [jobs], yeah.

T: [in English] Hardcore.

I: Yeah, hardcore. I mean she overall probably put in many hours, without exaggerating at all. [The money she earned] probably somewhere was limited. But, this you've never heard from a German family.

T: Hm, hm.

I: I have to say.

T: And then-

I: And then there was motivation to offer the kids something and to say [...] that they should have a better life and they should get their education .. and I work an additional amount of time, so that my children get additionally, their additional private tuition etcetera, because I can't give that to them. That is quite fascinating and this, ah ... I also found it somehow inspiring in my view.

One senses clearly Aaron's ethical urge for a radical levelling without taking account of the different perspectives that economic conditions inscribe into minds. And could it not even be argued that disadvantaged children that go to state

schools and poor, aspiring immigrants are *metaphorical placeholders* for these young economists to be which express their own position in, and trajectory into, academia, and in a fashion which distinguishes them from, say, young Sociologists (or at least some of them)? Is not the imagined free (or freer) market a vision of society spurred by ‘people with problems’, as Bourdieu says somewhere in *Distinction*? Is this really so much different, sociologically, from competing visions in Sociology, Philosophy, or Anthropology?

This specific habitus and its structural, positional roots, may be grasped by drawing an analogy with Norbert Elias’ concept of the ‘two front-strata’ (Elias 2002[1969]: 441-47) in absolutist France. These middle-classes (the burgher stratum in Elias’ work), couched in their social position between upper and lower classes, tended to be predisposed towards producing an ideal of rationality and of freedom which distinguished itself from that of the upper classes by its conspicuous *simplicity* while at the same time keeping a distance from the ‘common people’. We can clearly see this when Elias describes their houses.

„If we look at the structure of such a house, we find by and large the same elements as in the *hôtel* [...]. The domestic architecture of the aristocracy as the authoritative class in all questions of styles of living is the model for that of the upper bourgeoisie. But all the dimensions are reduced. The courts and above all the two *basses-cours* are quite small; the rooms for domestic services surrounding them are of a correspondingly reduced size; kitchen, a larder and a small office are there, nothing else. The apartments of the master and mistress of the house have relative spatial confinement of bourgeois marriage as compared to the spaciousness of marriage for the court-aristocracy. But it is above all the society rooms that have shrunk. The circular *salon* is there but smaller and limited to one storey; adjoining it on one side is a longish room combining the functions of a cabinet and of a gallery, on the second a small boudoir, on the third a *salle de compagnie*. The antechamber to it also functions as a dining room for the family. When it is used for the latter purpose, the servants are sent into the entrance hall. These are the only social rooms to be found in these houses.” (Elias 2006[1969]: 63)

Indeed, I am holding that there is a *sociological* kinship between both 21st century German apprentice Economists' study selection and 18th century French bourgeois housing styles. Both reduce their representative, 'gratuitous' expenses to a relative minimum while at the same time still being vigorously fixed in their ideas of excellence to the absolutely dominant groups of their respective societies. Can we not see in the economism of these students a 'shrunk', and perhaps somewhat coy, form of a more dominant form of thinking (such as philosophy, or cultural sciences), expressing both positions and relationships between the academic *and* the social field? Just in the same way as we can see in the shrunken 'maisons particulières' the integrated yet distinguished houses of those groups not quite yet at the top of their society (or field).

Likewise, Pierre Bourdieu might describe another empirical exemplification of the *same* structural ideal-type when talking about French executives and engineers of 1960s France:

Although executives and engineers have the monopoly of the means of symbolic appropriation of the cultural capital objectified in the form of instruments, machines and so forth which are essential to the exercise of the power of economic capital over its equipment, and derive from their monopoly a real managerial power and relative privileges within the firm, the profits accruing from their cultural capital are at least partially appropriated by those who have power over this capital, i.e., those who possess the economic capital needed to ensure the concentration and utilisation of cultural capital. It follows from this that their position in the dominant class is an ambiguous one which leads them to a highly ambivalent adherence to the firm and to the 'social order'. When making demands or rising in protest, they are actuated as much by their concern to maintain the legitimate distance, established by academic verdicts, between themselves and ordinary workers, or by meritocratic indignation at being treated like them, as by the sense of a real solidarity of condition; and, conversely, their

anxious search for integration into the dominant class, either for themselves or for their children, always includes [...] an element of ambivalent resentment towards prizes they can neither completely possess nor completely ignore and refuse. (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 301-04)

I think it is possible to interpret the Inheritors as I have defined them here in the same (positional) way. The ‘technical’ instruments handed down to them by their parents indeed do represent a specific power and hence source of capital which is *reconverted* (see Saint-Martin 2011 for a theoretical exposition and development of that point) into this more intellectualist, more specialised way, congruent with the changes in the occupational structure, with ‘de-industrialisation’. Model-building, then, would be the specific equivalent in *this field* to what Bourdieu here calls ‘cultural capital objectified in the form of instruments’. The method and ordinary topics and questions of Economics then offer a way in which these students and young academics express their ambiguous position in social space in their new microcosm. In it is congealed the fascination at the power games in politics and Economics but also the resentful objectivation of these games. It also serves well to explain their opposition against other Social Sciences and the Humanities (recall, for example, the quote of the professor in the last chapter).

Deflections and Deviations

One can see that not everyone that has been classed here among the ‘recognised’ students as an Inheritor actually has all of the significant characteristics that I have associated with them earlier - for example not succumbing primarily to mathematical or modelling-type Economics, or at least becoming substantially critical of these kinds of Economics. Sometimes these inheritors even turn away wholly from prestigious academic Economics despite the fact they have been successful during their initial studies. This seems to be the case with Hannah (23) who at first thrives in the subject (‘... I mean I was simply good in the Bachelor, like 1.0 [the best mark available], no problem.’) but then starts to question, also

through fellow critical students and their organisation, the implicit economic determinism of the mainstream curriculum:

I: [...] for which I needed a long time to understand are .. certain assumptions that are made in Political Economy, which, which I only understand afterwards, as for example this, this question whether we are in a, in a .. yeah this very positivistic view onto the world for example, I had totally adapted that.

T: Hm.

I: There I had, I still know that I had a lot of discussions with a friend of mine. Where I was like '*Look, look at the reality, look at it*', and bla, bla, bla, bla, bla.

T: Like these [...] facts and so on?

I: Exactly. [...] And I had to think about it first, what does it actually mean, what does Positivism mean, what does normative assumptions mean, what does it actually mean ... ah, I mean, right, that there is a whole science that only deals with this question, how we cognize, that there is a knowledge generated, I first had to acquire [this] to then to realise how, how Political Economy works, and if you don't do that then you adopt that [mainstream curriculum] very clearly. Then you assume [...] [that] humankind consumes, always must more, always wants to consume more ... you can only subscribe to that. Because you see that humankind at this point has [utility]functions, out of the data, and then this is not questioned .. where it comes from, and that it is just a description of the status quo which itself springs from that but doesn't have to do something with [human] nature, like with a natural law. One, one quickly built up natural laws in Political Economy ... which are all taken to be axiomatic somehow, because one is, because one is quite positivistic, for example.

Another Inheritor, recognised but not scoring high on the recognition Index, who experienced a similar alienation from his hitherto cherished subject is Theo (40), who is pushed away from his early acceptance of the taught canon and its political implications:

I: Yes, the arguments, we all have, we practically have proven all [economic policy recommendations emanating from orthodox Economic curriculum] during the course, in mathematical equations, that neoliberal politics, as I simplify it-

T: Yes.

I: - is profit- and welfare-maximising.

T: Yes.

I: And I wanted to optimise welfare. I had a thorough idealism, that was [...] That was my conviction, that it is the best for society.

This change of orientation is accomplished with the help of his experience of his fellow critical students that organised in a local, pluralistic Economics association, his reading of a specifically heterodox Economics¹¹³ book, as well as a year abroad:

I: [...] I mean I can't even remember properly how this [process of change of mind] started. There were reading circles, discussion groups and these were all extremely critical [of the curriculum].

T: Hm.

I: Found that interesting at first, I mean to discuss and then to see other perspectives, then also very left, ahm. And then I had a book, I mean I believe this was one of the most impor-, one of the decisive turning points, was that I read 'Debunking Economics' by Steve Keen. Do you know that?

T: Yes, I know that.

I: Ok, yeah it was like, after I had read it I practically couldn't take the curriculum really serious anymore. [The book] blew it all up for me, this .. Mathematics which even isn't logically coherent in itself. Course of wanna-be-mathematics. I mean this really, this was a great disappointment actually, I mean I felt a bit .. punked.

T: Hhh. Ok.

¹¹³ I define the term 'heterodox' here in line with the Bourdieusian terms outlined in his *Sociology of Science* (Bourdieu 1975, 2006) as those approaches within a discipline and its representatives that evidently do not hold central, objectifiable positions of capital and power, such as professorships at prestigious institutions or specialisations or public visibility. That this orthodoxy is differentiated in itself, and most likely has an internal hierarchy of prestige which may be objectively found out via appropriate indicators, I duly acknowledge, but cannot go further into at this point.

I: That I was served with this in this way, and then I more and more busied myself with critical .. perspectives.

T: Hm.

I: Yeah, and this, then there was no turning back, then I saw more and more difficulties. [...] I mean I also looked a bit into other subjects in the USA [during his study year abroad].

T: Yeah.

I: Because there I wasn't limited in my choice of courses to Political Economy, but could also attend the the whole, whole course spectrum. There I for example also did a course on Philosophy, Politics, ahm, something else .. Anyways, this was, exactly, Psychology. I had a look at that, and that I found super interesting, I mean there I again saw the value of interdisciplinarity.

T: Hm.

I: And also that this was totally missing, this was also a totally important insight for me as an Economist that I had there, indeed from Politics, Philosophy, Psychology, .. exactly. I simply liked to do something interdisciplinary, but still with the emphasis on Economics.

T: Hm.

I: Virtually as an enrichment of my knowledge in Economics.

Overall these students¹¹⁴ seem somehow to transcend the limitations of the Economics curriculum by questioning some of its assumptions and methods, and by introducing views and insights from both heterodox Economics, (such as like Feminist, Post-Keynesian or Marxian perspectives), as well as other Social Sciences and Humanities ('Political Economy is a Human Science for me', says Hannah). The question now is whether this can still be linked to the posed structural ambivalence of cadres, or whether we can concede an emancipation from rather strictly limited forms of reflexivity.

If one is to believe the interviewees, this emancipation is indeed the consequence of a more or less purely intellectual, and individual, effort. Through their

¹¹⁴ The other Inheritors also refer to heterodox currents of economic thought, but there they are generally a side-note. It tends to be said that these forms are important and tolerance towards them is displayed - without however engaging deeper into the discussions they pose.

experiences they realise the limitations of their curriculum, start to battle for its reformation and ‘ideological broadening’, for a ‘real-world’ Economics beyond the supposedly narrow mathematical models and thinking they encounter in their courses. But this ‘enchanted’ view leaves out important questions: Why is there still a vast majority of Economics students that are arguably not involved in this emancipation/expansion process? What do they lack in their experiences that these heterodox-minded students have?

In order to develop a critical attitude towards one’s own curriculum beyond simple rejection (‘It’s fiddlesticks!’), as Anne -64-, who, at the time of the interview is both not ‘recognised’, succinctly sums up her view of the Economics curriculum), a sufficiently thorough knowledge of it seems to be required. But the taste and preference for this thorough knowledge seems, as we have seen, linked to specific forms of social origin and thus cultural capital. It seems to be one precondition for appreciation of and conversion to heterodox Economics. It is likely to be a necessary (yet not sufficient) precondition for a true *scientific* revolution (see Bourdieu 1975: 33; 2006: 64).

That also implies that it is again the specific habitus, for example that of a cadre origin as described here, which tends to be required in order for a person to be predisposed to ‘see’ various aspects more critically. That critical activity may encompass attending lectures and extra-curricular reading circles, or reading books on debunking orthodox Economics. It may be described as the disposition towards a specific connection at a specific time that sparks an experience that might be compared to the metaphor of a bursting dam (‘after I had read it I practically couldn’t take the curriculum serious anymore’, as Theo says). On the other hand, despite the professed plurality of the new way to do Economics, old habits remain. Theo, for example, admits with the typical conspicuous humility of Inheritors as described above, and despite his otherwise sweeping verdicts on mainstream Economics, that the minimum wage is ‘not necessarily my topic. I am always cautious to speak out on that.’ He furthermore inquires, as quite a few Inheritors do, about my ‘central research question’ and my way of data acquisition, having an ideal of representativity in mind which shows his ongoing commitment to certain

‘precise’ ways of doing research (and corresponding unease with methods that are viewed as too ‘unsystematic’, therefore not ‘precise’ enough). On the other hand, he does score very low on the Recognition Index, which might also be due to the fact that, at the time of the interview he had left academia. Moreover, it can be seen that one of his main points of critique of academic Economics is the *incoherence* of mathematical models, that is, the alleged lack of *rational rigour*. This is his personal meaning of pluralism:

I: Methodological pluralism.

T: Aha.

I: I mean, away from these simplistic, mathematical calculations of equations.

T: Yes.

I: And then also historical analysis, I mean more like social scientific methods, case studies. Ah, also more complex mathematical procedures. I mean like network analysis for example [...] which you, which is also so absurd, on the one hand, in the beginning I started to criticise this Math, but there is much more suitable Math, which is more complex but about which you don’t hear anything during your studies.

This form of critical attitude might be called a sort of hyperbole, extending existing aspects of the curriculum. There is still the taste for precision, for clarity. In that sense, Hannah’s critique of academic Economics seems a bit more comprehensive, and antagonistic. Despite, or due to, her initial success in Economics and apprenticeship with a mainstream professor (who was nevertheless ‘super as a person’ and with whom she ‘learned a hell of a lot’, in a ‘dialectical way’), she now rejects central assumptions of academic Economics:

I: These are wrong in my opinion. [...].

T: For example?

I: For example, well, the classic, classic point is this homo oeconomicus hypothesis, that all are rationally thinking persons [...] and this rationally thinking person thinks marginally. This alone. [...] This I think is difficult. Then this nice term, methodological individualism. [...] This general equilibrium assumption I also find very difficult. I mean this assumption that everything somehow tends towards an equilibrium I also think is not, not correct.

She holds that in her central master's courses in Macro- or Microeconomics she 'didn't learn anything, that is wasted time for me', and that the utility function of economic models 'is not tenable' because it is 'too abstract'. She sees herself as 'not the type that thinks in models'. She also questions the 'growth fetish' of the subject and the wider society. Indeed, her rejection of the curriculum, and mainstream academic Economics, seems quite spectacular, quite thorough-going. It seems as if this Economics has been overcome and can now be criticised as 'dogmatic'. But that depends how one defines 'transcending' and 'overcoming'. If this simply means to take an opposing view, then that might be true. However, in a Bourdieusian perspective, it may be that precisely by taking an opposite view to the mainstream one signifies one's attachment and indeed commitment to it. That may be interpreted in many ways. For example, Hannah seems to fall from economic determinism into a sort of idealism:

I: I mean it is, I mean in general I find this area very exciting, to say .. mh, I mean this concept of thinking Economics anew. That one says, if you think Economics anew, you can also, in practice .. change things. Or the other way around, the economy also runs as it does with a lot of things, because we teach them the way we do. So that means that Neoclassical Economics and Neoliberalism are mutually dependent. [...]

And in that moment where we start to think Economics anew, we can make possible a new form of economic activity. And the question is how one .. I mean roughly in this field I would like to work.

T: How do you think Economics anew?

I: Ahm, well, firstly by beginning to think plurally.

T: Hm.

I: In my opinion. And that, that begins, begins with looking at different theoretical schools. That one asks different questions. That one rethinks the goals, that one has. And that we work methodically in a more varied way. So that we do not [only teach] these very mathematical models [...] it's not about abolishing them, they also have their right to existence, and sometimes one cannot express [things differently]. As I said, I really am no critic of mathematics, I actually always like to do that. But there are many questions that cannot be answered via, via Mathematics, so there has to be, there has to be after all a plurality of methods, I mean method plurality. It has to be worked more interdisciplinary, I mean especially with Sociology, Politics, Philosophy. Political Economy, I mean Political Economy is a Human Science for me.

T: Hm, hm.

I: And yes, most of the, most of the [teachers/professors] in Political Economy or in Neoclassics take themselves to be in Natural Science and that doesn't make sense, as if one would erect irrevocable [axiomatic] laws that are not so irrevocable after all. Because this is still a system made out of, made out of a group of people that form a system. And as I said, [...] especially in Economics where one always describes laws, that, in part, mainly depend on that one expects that someone else reacts like this.

T: Hm.

I: I mean it is the expectation, that the other has within the economic system [that] is basic for what happens in the end. Therefore you can, I think that Economics is a field where one, in that moment, where one thinks the Economy anew. I mean whatever, if we for example all would assume, ahm, .. whatever the price falls, then everybody walks away [from a good that is perceived as too expensive at that point]. But if now everybody assumes it is a mechanism for, don't know, the share price afterwards will in any case be doubled, everybody would buy it again, so I mean it is only about what people think what happens. That what they think, so informed by their neoclassical thought, that doesn't necessarily need to be right, which is sprinkled with assumptions that are

extremely sketchy, like. In that sense I think that one can do unbelievably much. And as I said the first point is the opening up [...].

At face value, it appears as if the economic realm of the mainstream is left entirely from view and replaced by a perspective that privileges *only* the power of ideas ('it is only about what people think what happens'). In other words, one may interpret this as a typical form of dichotomous thinking. It would then be the sometimes very visible and publicly spectacular, fierce conflict between 'heterodox' students and orthodox professors¹¹⁵, their antagonistic struggles, that in fact unite them, and exert a very effective, and arguably updated, censorship on the field. This implies that from our perspective the differences as they are explicated here between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, at least with the students, appear less radical, more superficial, and in line with Inheritor dispositions for distinctions as laid out elsewhere (for example Bourdieu and Passeron 1979[1964]: 53).¹¹⁶

Indeed, one may interpret these position-takings as thoroughly influenced, *ex negativo*, by the orthodox, central position of neoclassical Economics. This of course is inevitable to a certain degree (and shows the necessarily thorough orientation of these students towards neoclassical Economics - in this they behave like Weber's thief who orients his own actions on the generally accepted rule of law by keeping his thievery surreptitious- see Weber 1978[1922]: 32; see also Elias ideas on the mutual dependence of 'established' and 'outsiders', Elias 2009[1982]: 140f.), but it does not seem to be apparent as such to these rebellious Economics students, who *de facto* need the orthodoxy as a foil, which they are forced to admit when asked why they do not leave for another field altogether if they dislike

¹¹⁵ See Hans-Werner Sinn (2014) and his debate with members of the German Network for Pluralist Economics (Hafele, Heußner, and Urban 2014) for an example of this.

¹¹⁶ We find similar conspicuous positions also in textbooks that are seen as heterodox. The rationally acting, selfish agent tends to be replaced by the selfish agent that follows inexplicable and irrational 'animal instincts' (see for example Hill and Myatt 2010: 244f.). The celebration of absolutist, 'positive' Economics assumed to be completely value-free is sometimes replaced by an almost relativist and nihilist concession that every position contains norms and a political agenda, and the 'sober' analysis is replaced by moral arguments.

academic Economics so much ('I first have to understand neoclassics a bit more if I am to criticise it', as Hannah says). As in other sciences, orthodoxy and heterodoxy exert profound influences onto each other, and they most likely share certain doxic and even epistemological assumptions (Fourcade 2018: 6). The fundamental contradiction¹¹⁷ of the economic method - that between determinism and voluntarism - is played upon to seemingly dissolve the problem by taking a rather voluntarist position. But despite the aims of working 'more interdisciplinarily, I mean especially with Sociology, Politics, Philosophy', Hannah also acknowledges elsewhere that working with sociological notions like class, status or structures is 'not really tangible' for her, which of course takes us right back to the initial dispositions of an inheritor habitus. Thus, when she talks about 'opening up', this seems to mean first a dissociation from mainstream Economics rather than actually commencing a deeper intellectual exchange with other Social Sciences.¹¹⁸

Another area where the heterodox inheritors resemble their orthodox counterparts is in the drive to engage with, and to contribute directly to, general politics, while at the same time nevertheless upholding their claim to scientificity which implies a social *exclusion* of alternative approaches. This would fit with the accounts from various non-heterodox students of the exclusion of 'orthodox' students from heterodox social circles. Klara(72) reflects: 'I mean, a few friends of mine also are stark pluralists and, ahm, [I] found that, ah, that they don't like other people if these say something positive about something like Neoclassics. [...] Then they are characterised as bad people, simply put.' The claim to scientificity amongst heterodox students is complemented by the urge to 'shape the Economy'. Theo, for example, is a chairman of a non-academic Economics initiative and has started to earn his money by being invited for talks on various economic subjects to lay publics. Hannah also mentions this kind of 'education work' as a kind of professional goal. This also fits with the general eagerness of heterodox Economists

¹¹⁷ What is the process of buying into doxa? It means to forget certain things and to become more sensible to others, a more or less thorough reconfiguration of tastes and outlook, which is also a shorthand definition for disciplinary doxa.

¹¹⁸ One would need to validate this supposed discrepancy by a more systematic contrasting of heterodox student's self-presentation and what they actually say and do, for example in reading groups or seminars.

to contribute to the political and economic process by aggressively pushing into the public domain, with the help of newspaper articles, consultancies to more left-wing think tanks such as INET or other organisations (such as trade unions), by blogs, videos, and the like.¹¹⁹ One might ask whether is this still a position-taking situated in a scientific field or already in a field of ‘economic activism’. That the two seem to blend into each other so apparently well would be a good example of the low scientific entrance fee that might reign in Economics. Rather, the entrance fee might be of a *social* kind, thus still functioning as an effective barrier, yet not a scientific one.

We might therefore pose that in the case of heterodox students the cadre dispositions of tangibility, of precision of thinking and of the peculiar attraction to state politics is still there, but that it is here somehow expressed in a different way, sometimes by hyperbole (even more rigorous formalisation) and sometimes by antidote (idealism rather than materialism, altruism rather than egoism, irrationality rather than rationality), or a mix of both. One may interpret this as another expression of the aforementioned ambivalence which is suggested by a different *point of reference* that follows a different *aspired position* within the academic field. While the orthodox Inheritors take the whole academic, or at least Social Scientific, field as their point of reference (from which Economics appears to be more ‘tangible’) for assessing the curriculum, the heterodox Inheritors tend to have only the economic academic field as their primary focus, from which follow their proclaimed openness towards other Social Sciences and the antagonistic definition of ‘tangibility’. In any case, both groups seem closely linked by their commonalities in social origin and basic dispositions, namely a specific taste for ‘precise thinking’ and the drive to acquire general, public approval beyond the strict limits of the academic field- two expressions of an ambivalence theorised earlier in the chapter. This is seen well by those who are outside of both groups, and hence are better placed for an economic analysis of these Economists. As an informant who is active in the German heterodox scene remarks: ‘Most of the

¹¹⁹

This also, once again, lets us ask about the objective possibilities - money support, publicity, and the like - given to these dispositions from *other fields* to express and to ‘unfold’ themselves. I will come back to these questions in the conclusion.

heterodox could have easily become Orthodox' because 'there is a certain proximity' and even 'interchangeability', for example in terms of determinisms as in the case of certain forms of Neoclassical Economics and Keynesianism ('Mechanics and Hydraulics', as the informant calls it somewhat ironically). However, the sociological reason *why* some Inheritors become orthodox and others heterodox still remains to be explained.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to explore, and to make sense of, the 'intrinsic' motivations and selections of a group of 'recognised' Economics students that I have grouped according to their intermediate class origin between dominant class and petit-bourgeoisie. It is the group that seems to fit best to the current disciplinary requirements and has thus been termed the Inheritors. The Inheritors come from an ambivalent structural location in social space I have termed a 'cadre' origin. From this follows, I have argued, a peculiar form of general interest in economic questions with an outspoken disposition for the division of 'facts' and 'values' as well as formalistic methods of enquiry. On closer inspection, this 'choice' of discipline, method and specialisation appears as a expression *and* transformation of a particular cadre habitus that attempts to assert itself in the competition of the dominant class fractions - and by this I mean both the economically dominant and the scientifically dominant- by constructing an image of vigorous impartiality and technical competence while at the same time following the logic of state and political thinking very closely. Even inheritors who deviate somewhat from this disposition, for example by advocating less formalised methods, can still essentially be grouped under it, although this begs further theoretical elaboration and explanation. According to this, the gulf between 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' students of this ideal-type is less wide than it might appear. But what, as a whole, distinguishes the motivational structure of these students, their 'habits of the economic heart', from those of other students? How can we otherwise empirically distinguish them?

Chapter 7 - The Fallen Nobles

Very soon I turned away from politics and concentrated on literature. I invited to my Cambridge rooms the vermillion shields and blue lightnings of the Song of Igro's campaign (that incomparable and mysterious epic of the late twelfth or later eighteenth century), the poetry of Pushkin and Tyutchev, the prose of Gogol and Tolstoy, and also the wonderful works of the great Russian naturalists who had explored and described the wilds of Central Asia. At a bookstall in the Market Place, I unexpectedly came upon a Russian work, a secondhand copy of Dahl's Interpretative Dictionary of the Living Russian Language in four volumes. I bought it and resolved to read at least ten pages per day, jotting down such words and expressions as might especially please me, and I kept this up for a considerable time. My fear of losing or corrupting, through alien influence, the only thing I had salvaged from Russia - her language - became positively morbid and considerably more harassing than the fear I was to experience two decades later of my never being able to bring my English prose anywhere close to the level of my Russian.

Vladimir Nabokov - Speak, Memory

The Ultraliberals - Fallen Nobles

I put into the category of 'Fallen Nobles' all those students who evidently come from a longer-term (that is, encompassing two generations) bourgeois or grande-bourgeois backgrounds (such as physicians, entrepreneurs with large businesses, industrialists, high-ranking civil or private executives) who however, in one way or another, have lost some of this privilege, or capital. The reasons, or causes, of this loss may include the dispossession of property due to political reasons (such as in former East Germany under communist rule), depletion via wars and economic crises or a decline of cultural prestige via the decrease of educational changes of capital reproduction (which, again, may be enforced by politically arbitrary

decisions, as in withholding study opportunities, or of course simply by lack of educational success for the inheritors of bourgeois or grand-bourgeois classes). The Fallen Nobles, for the most part, take a distinctive and rather radical liberal standpoint within (and outside) academic Economics that is different from that of the Inheritors.

Obviously, given the exclusive realm of this social origin, there are far fewer exponents within the sample than with the inheritors, no more than 7 to 9 persons (two of them female), depending on how strictly the above criteria are applied. These are Eric (53), Elias (13), Leon (15), Sophia (16), Jakob (24), Juergen (38) and Johanna (59).¹²⁰ Of these, two (Elias and Juergen) are not 'recognised' students in the sense that I am using this term. Structurally speaking, then, the Ultraliberals-Fallen Nobles have a different relationship to Economics than the Inheritors. This, to be consistent, also resonates with the allegedly non-dominant position and prestige of Economics objectively within the field of German academic disciplines. This position, one might speculate, is respectable enough to be a choice of refuge for those with privileged yet marred origins who nevertheless aspire to reproduce and increase their capital. Their choice would then say at the same time something about the position of Economics within German academia. But, once again, this would need to be proven by statistics, i.e. by showing that Economics is preferred, relative to other Social Sciences or Humanities, by students with the above-mentioned origin.

In terms of the Economics Recognition Index, the Fallen Nobles rank mainly in the middle (many score 3 points, merely Johanna- Nr.59- only scores one point), but never at the top. We thus have to explore their specific kind of economic liberalism and how it can be linked to their specific social origin and trajectory.

¹²⁰ Yannick (62) and Stefanie (32) might also be counted as Fallen Nobles, the former because of his professor grandfather, the latter because of her mediocre grades despite a bourgeois origin. But both cases seem less clear and 'dramatic' in terms of loss of privilege than the other 7 introduced above.

Characteristics and general Attitudes

The distinctive Liberalism of the Fallen Nobles might be summarised in two aspects: they are more inclined towards ‘literary’ means and modes of expression and later and concomitantly predisposed towards a critique of excessive mathematical-formal reasoning. This, of course, puts them in a somewhat heterodox position in relation to the mainstream without however touching in the slightest other important cornerstones of the accepted economic perspective (such as methodological individualism and homo oeconomicus). They are more openly political, early on, in their consequent support for economically and politically liberal policies and measures.

These students seem, then, from an early age, more sympathetic to non-formalised ways of expression when compared to the whole of the Inheritor category.¹²¹

The Fallen Nobles turned Ultraliberals never express any hard rejection of literary forms of expression (as the Inheritors often do), which does not mean at all that they rejected Mathematics or Natural Sciences before their selection of university Economics. Indeed many of them seriously pondered studying, or actually select a ‘literary subject’ for a while. Elias (13), for example reminisces:

I: [...] where I also thought about Romance Languages, like, Spanish and Portuguese. That I found quite interesting, but there the whole literary part deterred me somewhere. There I thought this is somehow German and I need to write some texts, I couldn’t be bothered about that.

¹²¹ Even though one has to mention Inheritor cases like Jan (57) who actually studied a language alongside Economics in his Bachelor but then switched fully to Economics because the Language he studied was too philological for him and he ‘wanted to do more substantial’ work in it, or like Lina-47- who also studied a language but eventually transferred to Economics due to professional considerations and who valued ‘actually the mathematical in a language’ such as grammar rather than the actual literary studies where she wonders: ‘Why do I actually need that! I just cannot think of anything that I can do with it later on’.

Sophia (16) first aspired to be a translator of literature, but then settled with a Bachelor degree that combines Languages and Economics, even though she would have liked to study Psychology as well. ('Of course my favourite would have been a combo of all these three'). Juergen (38), among other things, takes Psychology into consideration, whereas Jakob (24) thought about studying Journalism and Eric (53) selected a mix of Philosophy and Economics. None of them, unlike quite a few Inheritors, selects a mathematical or natural scientific subject, if only as a minor.

This main difference to the Inheritors in terms of their interest profile is that they exhibit a *more outspoken political leaning*. While the Inheritors tend to be interested *in general* in social and political events but tend to reject political positioning, the Fallen Nobles are clearer and more decisive in taking sides. While the Inheritors become liberal through their studies, the Fallen Nobles often are already politically liberal when they enter their courses. Johanna (59) accounts for her selection of Political Science and Economics via attendance of antifascist reading circles.¹²² The interest and motivation seems to be less that of a spectator and more of an involved participant as Jakob (24) expresses it:

I: It's quite hard to tell [how he came to Economics], I'd say I was *politicised* in a certain way, and, yeah with us this was of course the Iraq war especially that brought my class cohort or my generation onto the street for the first time, ahm. And because of that, of course somehow, I engage with the injustice of this world and the challenges that our world faces. And there of course you get to economic questions, I mean Economics is simply the management of scarcities and, like most of the problems of our society some scarcities are responsible [for the difficulties to solve them], and so it went that there was interest, of course rather via a political [interest] [...].

¹²² Leftist youth groups that vigorously combat what they perceive as fascist thought.

This more 'engaged', less 'value-neutral' interest in Economic matters seems also to be expressed via the alternative study option of journalism, or related activities during studies. All students except Elias (who is not a recognised student in the strict definition employed here) have done some journalistic or publishing work before, during or after their studies, that is, they worked for a newspaper, wrote for a blog or a website. Conceptions of justice play a large role [in these respondents' accounts of] opting for Economics, as Johanna (59) describes:

I: In the focus on material necessities so to speak, I mean there are manifold ways to illuminate society [i.e. to make it understandable] and people in their needs, and one of them is clearly the material side and, I think when it is about to somehow care for more justice in the world then the material care of people cannot be left out and therefore we need the Economy.

One defining idiosyncrasy of the Fallen Nobles seems to be their tendency towards strong opinions, positions that tend to be outspoken, rather extreme and therefore visible among other students. This can be seen when Eric (Nr.53) describes his initial study choice (and once again, one sees the political motivation in his selection):

I: So originally my [in English] first best option, ahm, was [study degree combining Philosophy and Economics in a German city], the P and E [...]. The professor there, X, thought, allowed himself to affront the philosophers, that this study degree wasn't to be taught in the ivory tower or seen as a value in itself, but he wanted to underscore the utility for society for the economy. [...] In the end the background motivation was that, ahm, already back then I have been strongly politically interested and engaged. I was with the JUSOS [German Social Democratic Party youth organisation] and, ahm, had the feeling that every argument sounded suggestive as a knowledge of domination. Both conservative,

liberal, socialist, whatever side. And, ahm, this knowledge of domination I wanted to dismantle.

This is in line with his earlier dispositions towards being ‘politically incorrect’ in his youth when he was part of a group of ‘boys who had fun with militarism’, by which is meant a fascination with Wilhelmine pre-1918 Germany.

Like Eric, other students of this group stand out by their (self-)positioning during at least some points of their educational trajectory. Sophia (16) was recommended to me as an interview partner by a professor in the CSI who remembered her extraordinary defence of Hayekian Economics. Jakob (24) was close several times to being expelled from grammar school due to undisciplined behaviour. This ‘extravagant streak’ that might also be called a ‘taste for provocation’ is usually accompanied by the strong tendency towards an economically and politically liberal stance. Rüdiger (38) for example, just in his second semester, remarks that he has ‘always been in the liberalistic position’.

In any case, the study selection of these students overall, and that of course includes how this selection is made sense of, seems less determined and clear, less driven by confessions of early precocious interest and inevitability. Jakob, for example, freely admits that his choice of Political Economy over Journalism was for more or less practical reasons, due to the fact that he could study something ‘where you build up an expertise’ rather than having the handicraft of journalism in which he already had years of experience as a student reporter. Elias selected Economics after a few other options for apprenticeships did not materialise. He describes his thinking to himself: ‘Then you go studying and have a look at it.’ More than the actual interest, the political dimension, in the sense of the political use of Economics, is emphasised. Eric (53) remembers his selection of Economics as a motivation to ‘dismantle knowledge of domination’. This is understood with regard to the economic ‘incentive processes’ of what he perceives as ‘every-day ordeals.’

One cannot help but feel that with these students there is some deeply-felt, personal political investment involved in their selection which is quite different from the excited, but rather distanced perspective of the inheritors. It might be expressed in sometimes convoluted ways, but there is an outspoken *projection* of a political purpose onto the studied (and otherwise rather casually chosen) discipline. Indeed, it seems as if it is *explicit liberal political* considerations and valuations that lead these students to study Economics, at least in part, whereas with the Inheritors it is the study of Economics that tends to lead them towards these explicit political values.

How does this early attitude retranslate once these students enter Economics? What they seem to be drawn towards within academic Economics is a specific and rather radical form of liberalism and individualism that aspires to be more encompassing than that of the Inheritors, but which is nevertheless critical of, and reflexive about, the assumptions that made in economic models, as well as of the widespread trust in the objectivity of these models.

While the Inheritors emphasise a rationality that is, for them, rather uniform and thus conducive towards mathematical modelling, the Fallen Nobles tend to think in broader terms. Elias (13) for example explains:

I: Ahm, and it was after all, it was after all somehow quite theoretical and so. But still had a certain area of application. I find with a bit of phantasy you indeed can *transfer* that to what you do everyday.

T: Give me an example, I am not well-versed in microeconomics.

I: Yeah at the end of the day, to make decisions and stuff, you have a budget and you decide now how you divide the budget to achieve your highest level of utility. That I always find, I mean I do that all the time, I think, what do I have there, how do I make the best of it? I certainly don't construct a mathematical equation at all costs, or. But in terms of *the way of thinking* it certainly is all, I mean when they assume you are homo oeconomicus and you in the end always

decide rationally, that doesn't make [sense], I always like to talk about individual rationality, everybody has his own. Everybody has a bit his own preferences, that are not strictly rational in the mathematical sense, but that make sense for oneself. One person likes that, another that, and according to this they decide. And that was *indeed*, it was indeed [interesting].

On the one hand there is the interest in general economic matters (as with the Inheritors); on the other hand an acknowledgement that emphasises the unique, *individual* character of every rationality, which of course makes formalisation rather hard in this logic. In that sense (and to a certain degree also objectively speaking), this attitude can be regarded as heterodox within academic Economics. Sophia (16) describes her disposition to be mindful of the assumptions that go, or rather don't go, into models:

T: What did you like and what didn't you like, if you had to put it down a bit more concretely, in your Bachelor studies?

I: Yes. Ahm, I liked that one tried to solve problems a bit more logically, to solve them analytically. I mean that one sometimes says 'Ok, yes, I got pro and cons arguments, I can now argue well with them', but rather that one approached it in a way that you say 'I try to solve the problem in a way that I do not alienate it. And then I see whether I cannot somehow build a model from that, for example that is what is often done. That one says 'Ok, I simplify that somehow, then I check how can I express it in a way that am able to see what variables are influential, and what these variables influence in each case, whether they mutually influence themselves again. Whether there are feedback effects. [...] Then of course, as a critique, that the assumptions that one makes are not criticised sufficiently, or that the result is then assessed as too secure, that one feels simply too certain, because somehow one has'a model, and a model cannot lie. The model indeed is always logically consistent in itself, but maybe the assumptions are false already. [...] What disturbed me already during the

Bachelor studies, and then even more in the Master [was the lack of reflections on assumptions made in models], because of course you are then deeper into the topic, ahm, one knows more about it, thought longer about it, that, very, very rarely has one bothered whether one also made implicit assumptions.

T: For example?

I: Ahm, yeah for example if I construct such a growth model, ahm, let's say a Keynesian model, and I nicely calculate 'Ok, I have my output, which somehow depends on Export, Import, Production, Consumption, Investment, and ahm, State Purchase [...] then I already assume that I do not have a natural catastrophe. I, ahm, don't have a large work movement, I mean I for example don't have streams of refugees, I don't have immigration, I don't have emigration.

T: Hm.

I: I don't have war. [...] But in the end one again doesn't follow up sufficiently and says 'Ok, what actually happens if I hadn't made this assumption? Would this influence my result now? What, ah, better assumptions could I take? What assumptions did I make of which I am not even conscious [...]? [...] That one, if you, ok, these are not the theoretical models, ah, with empirical models, that one questions too little the quality of the data, or that one assumes: 'Ok, maybe I could have chosen a different empirical method.' What would happen then?' That one too rarely compares these with one another.

This sceptical attitude towards unreflective constraints in models, as well as their arbitrary nature, can also be seen in the case of Jakob (24), who expresses this through the choice of the Austrian School of Economics and its proponent Friedrich Hayek:

I: [...] once one is in this Hayekian problematic of knowledge [refers to Hayek's article on the use of knowledge in society] , then one is, ah, relatively quickly

sceptical towards all, ah, simple approaches of explanation, and therefore it was swiftly the case that I found and find many macro-economic explanation attempts *exciting* and so on, but this was always a certain distance to say ‘oh yeah, ok, I am now a proponent of the big push theory, or I am a proponent of bottom up, or ahm, or I am a proponent that somehow thinks that with institutions everything can be explained. That is, right, that is always there a basic scepticism towards every simple, one-dimensional explanatory attempt. [...] [The Solow Model] is after all a model that deals with economic developments, with the capital assets or capital intensity and which, ah, can explain certain things, but the only focus of the model is on capital, and that is the aim of the model. [...] but of course in reality it is not the case that economic developments are observable via changes in the per capita capital assets structure [chuckles], but that [rather], as I said, institutions, ah, certain economic freedoms, ah, the labour market, technologies, I mean all these are of course decisive aspects for the economic development, for the development prospects of National Economies.

T: So in other words the context, that is what counts?

I: Ex-, yeah exactly, the context, and ahm, I don't know how it is, I mean there I lack the understanding of other sciences, but with us it somehow is very of-, often not like, at least not in scientific terms, to say ‘Ok, we explain the world with model A, B and C together.’ That somehow is always a competition which., which model now explains the world better now.

The general attitude is one that is supportive of pluralism and competition, but a pluralism that is uncompromisingly individualistic and which takes in this stance both a moral and scientific-epistemological position, as Eric (53) does when he justifies his preference for methodological Individualism and an extended form of homo oeconomicus, to which is also attached an implicit political position:

I: [...] I mean we all have preferences, those are different, logically. And insofar is ah ... I mean we all have a preference to earn good money. I don't believe anybody who in principle first, maybe there are some, but I first don't believe anybody who says '*I am totally indifferent what future economic prospects I .. ah, have for that.*' That is always put with side conditions, like, that I am already doing reasonably well [...]. And ah, to what degree preferences are distributed .. and how much of that is due to monetary things, maybe with status and prestige and who knows what could play into that as well, into a monetary perspective. Compared to 'I want to do something what ah, .. what I like, or a deeper understanding of society, or whatever. [...] Where is the difference there? I mean, purely normatively, I don't get it. [...] if we speak of greedy people, for example, then we always speak of people greedy for money, but you could also be greedy for smoking dope.

T: Yes, but.

I: Nevertheless, you wouldn't label greedy, wouldn't label the dude that smokes dope daily as greedy but as the contrary to greedy. But this is simply a preference for ah.

T: Something different.

I: For something different, exactly. Insofar, yeah. How, yeah.

T: [You] Can also be greedy for titles, greedy for recognition.

I: Exactly.

T: So the aspiration is then, the decisive thing is then, that the aspiration or the degree of aspiration is the same and not the aspiration for a specific-

I: Exactly.

T: - thing, like money for example. That is correct, you are right, yes. I see that exactly like you do. [...]

I: I mean the investment banker thinks, I mean, he rather thinks 'ok, you guys think that I am the devil's advocate here somehow. [in English] *All right*, ok,

yeah well doesn't bother me much, there my preferences are different, with the person that studies social work it may be exactly the other way around, maybe these are two extremes, boldly speaking, yeah. [...] Then these are, these are two extremes on a continuum [...] I don't understand why one should put a normative assessment into these differences - [in English] *peaks and lows* [...] it was in principle, about figures of thought, I mean whether one argues collectivistically or individualistically, or whether one attributes special worth towards .. holistic figures like .. workers or the precariate or not [...]

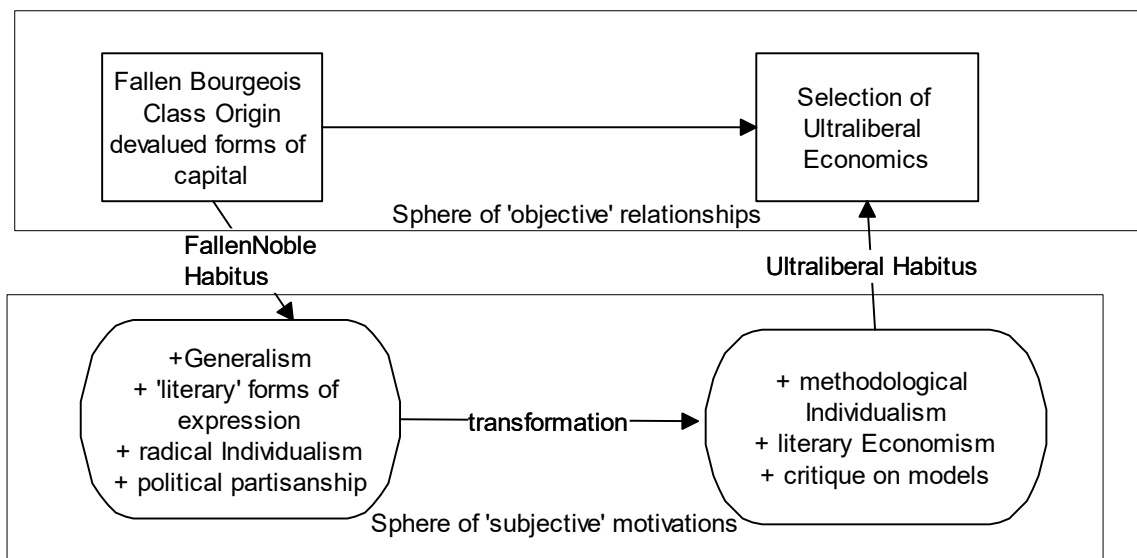
Thus, this radically individualistic attitude that is, at the same time, more critical towards objectivation and more open towards alternative ways of economic enquiry within these individualistic limits, seems almost naturally attracted to ultraliberal approaches like those of the Austrian School of Economics (linked to the names of Friedrich August Hayek and Ludwig von Mises), to Ordoliberalism (Walther Eucken, Wilhelm Röpke, Alfred Müller-Armack) or to anarchocapitalist schools (Murray Rothbard, David Friedman etc.). Hence, most of these students, such as Jakob (24) or Eric (53), refer to themselves as 'classical liberals'. This often goes hand in hand with a marked distrust of everything collective, above all the state. Elias (13) confesses that he doesn't 'like laws' and that 'we have a twisted financial system' which is 'manipulated' by the state. He favours a currency competition and has written his Master's thesis about the subject (similar to Sophia who dealt with a very similar topic in her final dissertation). He tends to favour Austrian Economic theory because it is 'surprisingly simple' and 'much more illuminating for me than other theories'. Sophia (16) favours 'somehow free markets and really free economic policy' of which she is a 'fan', and she adds 'perhaps also because of my family history' (her family were of rather bourgeois origin but suffered severe repressions under socialist Eastern Germany), once again showing a typical form of reflexivity that may be called a folk explanation for one's attitudes. She furthermore prefers the 'pure facts' of news agencies over the major broadcasting agencies in Germany. Likewise, Jakob (24) champions Hayek's theory of spontaneous order, describing himself as 'thinking liberally and socially'.

Part of this adherence to ultraliberal forms of thought is moreover a marked interest in *historical* topics and data (without giving up in the slightest the perspective of homo oeconomicus), such as Economic History or the History of Economic Thought, in which the preference for ‘verbal argumentation’, as Jakob (24) puts it, is expressed also, again from a typical individualistic-liberal perspective. Lastly, these students are also the ones that tend to consider voting for the most openly ‘politically incorrect’ parties such as the right-wing “Alternative for Germany” party AfD (roughly the German equivalent of UKIP).

What we find here, in conclusion, seems to be a distinct route into Economics and to Economism. It is an ‘intrinsic’ motivation that exhibits a greater taste for the literary, that is more politically outspoken and that is also *rather hostile towards all forms of objectivation*, all operations that, in their view, threaten individuality. This leads them to ascribe nearly *all* forms of social behaviour to economic interpretation and to an ultra-individualistic form of utility-maximising. How can this be explained within our perspective? What does it all mean?

Economism II - An explanatory Attempt

Figure 14 Proposed Relationship between Fallen Nobles Class Origin, Habitus, and Selection of ultraliberal Economics



What we need to explain now is how the specific conditions of existence of the fallen Bourgeois or Grand-Bourgeois produce a disposition that expresses itself (as we assume, for the sake of exploration), in the specific field of German academic Economics, in an ultraliberal stance, in the choice of rather strict ordo-liberal, Austrian or anarcho-capitalist schools of thought (see Figure 14). One might construct the following chain of argument: A loss of privilege for people of grand-bourgeois or bourgeois origin, via dispossessions, misfortune in the economic or educational markets, creates a *gap* between the actually existing social position and their self-perception which, by virtue of the *hysteresis* of habitus (Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 183-87; also Bourdieu 1984[1979]), continues to have a high view of itself and the expectation as to the social position that one should occupy. But these fallen bourgeois are caught up in a social space which does not share this expectation anymore, in which there is not any more the immediate harmony of

institutionalised and embodied structures for them. Unlike agents from other social backgrounds (like *petit bourgeois*) whose self-perception as 'chosen' *Parvenus* is also often not fulfilled and who, as a result of that, tend towards regressive attitudes as they progress through their lives (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 346-51), these formerly bourgeois agents tend to have *more resources* at their disposal, either in terms of actual forms of capital (economic and social and cultural) and/or symbolically, in terms of *self-belief*. The relative incommensurability of self-perception and ambition in relation to one's actual position and capital-endowment engenders a predisposition towards *conspicuous and more active* distinction, different from ordinary bourgeois distinction that is characterised by its subtlety, effortless ease and somewhat 'passive' nature (for example Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 280-82). The form this distinction takes will be dependent on the specific fields in which the Fallen Nobles live and work, and thus the specific cultural fund of resources on which they draw on. Distinction is likely to be attempted in such a way that shared cultural resources will be utilised so that they are made amenable for this more active type of distinction which has to produce *a marked symbolic effect on its own*, in the absence of its material-structural underpinning. Hence one has to expect from this type of habitus a position-taking that might be described as rather bold, radical and daring within its particular field. Therefore, one might say (and construct) that this sort of habitus of Fallen Noble turned Ultraliberal, in a social world dominated by the different, antagonistic yet complementary habitus, acts *as if* it tried to compensate for the loss of capital, *as if* it tried consciously to reinstate and uphold its differences vis-à-vis the lower classes, *as if* it attempted to close the gap between claim and reality. From this it follows that these are agents that are predisposed towards bringing about *symbolic revolutions* which can have a profound transformative influence on social institutions and social organisations within a particular field, if the circumstances are right and they 'play the game well' (see again in particular Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 183-87).

Hence, in the field of marital relationships in the Kabyle society of the mid-20th century, with distant, inter-tribe relationships being assigned the highest prestige (extra-ordinary marriages) and local, intra-tribe marriages assigned the lowest

prestige (ordinary marriages), the groups that hold a structurally homologous position as Fallen Nobles¹²³ will (have to) choose the least costly yet, under these circumstances, most distinguished form of marriage, namely parallel-cousin marriage, which serves to conserve the integration of the 'basic unit', distinguished both from ordinary marriages and prestigious inter-tribe marriages with their conspicuous generosity in terms of giving, or giving back, marriage gifts (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 182-84). The Fallen Nobles lack the necessary capital for this display of riches that produces easy 'symbolic profit' (ibid.: 184), and therefore choose another strategy, i.e. their very own ideal marriage, which they cover up, for themselves and spectators:

“In practice, this ideal [i.e. parallel-cousin] marriage is often a forced choice which the group seeks to present as a choice of the ideal, thus making a virtue of necessity. As has been seen, it is often found in the poorest lineages or the poorest lines of the dominant groups. It tends in any case to be the choice of groups characterized by a strong desire to assert their distinction, because it always has the objective effect of reinforcing the integration of the minimal unit and, consequently, its distinctiveness vis-à-vis other units. It is predisposed by its ambiguity to play the role of poor man's prestige marriage, and it offers an elegant solution for all those who, like a ruined nobleman unable to manifest his refusal to derogate other than symbolically, seek in the affectation of rigour the means of affirming their distinction. This can be the case with a lineage cut off from its original group and anxious to maintain its originality; a family seeking to assert the distinctive features of its lineage by doing one better in purism (almost always the case with one family in the marabout communities); a clan seeking to mark its distinction from the opposing clan by strict observance of the traditions (like the Ait Madhi at Ait Hichem), etc. Because it can appear as the most sacred and, in certain conditions, the most 'distinguished' marriage, it is the cheapest form of extra-ordinary marriage, obviating expenditure on the

¹²³ This implies that both are Fallen Nobles, but only in the specific condition of modern German Economics these Fallen Nobles transform themselves into Ultraliberals.

ceremony, hazardous negotiations and a costly bridewealth. Thus there is no more accomplished way of making a virtue of necessity and putting oneself in line with the 'rule'." (Bourdieu 1992[1980]: 186f.).

Likewise, in the field of life-style in 16-18th century France, a field where the average member of the aristocracy declined in relative prestige and power due to the power gains of the absolute monarch and the rise of bourgeois groups¹²⁴, this group of Fallen Nobles was furthermore inclined towards a selection that took its distinctive value from its relative boldness and focus on purely symbolic effects in the relative absence of forms of capital. That can be seen in their rejection of the highly 'rationalised' and 'disciplined' ways of gardening as they were practiced in the main court in Versailles while favouring more freely growing plants (Elias 2002[1969]: 374-85), and in their romantic views on 'natural' country life, in painting, in literature and even in intimate relationships when the king and his inner circle concentrates power more and more in and around Paris, with their own, highly regulated styles of life (ibid.: 385-91 and 434-43). This, of course, at the same time does not imply a complete overlap with 'popular culture' since these Fallen Nobles took pains to distinguish their *regulated* ideal of country-life from the 'uncultured' life of the lower classes (ibid.: 434f.). If we remain in this universe, and come back to the issue of housing, we see that the Fallen Nobles of this era were practically forced, by their own self-view, to invest in their houses all the more due to the representative (symbolic) functions it fulfilled as a sort of *surrogate* for the slipping away of more material (economic, and political) powers. Hence we have a focus on 'purely aesthetic' forms of housing that are not 'diminished' as compared with that of the Burgher class of that time - the houses are full with ornamentals which "[...] were perceived by their contemporaries also as the finely shaded expressions of social qualities." (Elias 2006[1969]: 65). It is a form of distinction, of individualisation, which in current German academic

¹²⁴ It becomes obvious at this point that the term 'Fallen Noble' has a relational, anti-substantialist meaning that strictly refers to the *position* a group has, and had, in a particular social structure rather than a title attributed in it.

Economics is achieved by students of this habitus by a conspicuous, radical individualism in economic analysis.

Another historical example of Fallen Nobles in a concrete field would be the declining former Wilhelmine Aristocracy and Haute Bourgeoisie in the Weimar Republic (Elias 1996[1989]). Having been pushed out of positions of significant influence by the rising liberal Bourgeoisie and organised labour, and being of a militaristic, authoritarian cultural imprint, their ousting tended to predispose them towards a radicalised rejection of the Weimar Republic and its democratic principles, towards romantic-idealistic Nationalism and Anti-Semitism, even towards terror towards these people in the form of assassinations and coup d'états (ibid.: 182-228), opposed both to the republican political strategies of the supporters of the republic and the communists' revolutionary tactics. Elias gives further insight into the 'subjective' feelings of these groups: "There have been many such situations in the development of human societies. Such cases of loss of power by former establishments in relation to rising outsider groups trigger bitter resistance [...] not only for economic reasons, but also because through such a loss of economic power the old ruling strata find themselves on the same level in the hierarchy of power and status as the groups they had previously despised: groups of low standing, of lesser human value, of rabble. As a result, they feel themselves lowered in their self-esteem." (ibid.: 184). Similar processes can be observed with the leading intellectuals of that era, the declining German 'mandarins' (Ringer 1990[1969]) as well as French philosophers (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 153-56).

What all these cases have in common is that a *distinction* is attempted by a formerly elite group through the *conspicuous accentuation and intensification* of field- and position-specific cultural ideals of excellence that have a strong symbolic emphasis: extra-ordinary marriage in one case, romanticism in the other, authoritarianism in the next, perspicacity in one's mother tongue in the initial quotation from this chapter, and finally Ultraliberalism in the field under consideration here. The way in which the position is expressed depends on the particular fields and cultural endowment of those thrown into the position of Fallen

Nobles. The ultraliberals in the German academic field of Economics can, and do, express their social position and trajectory by the choice of a highly ornamental and attention-seeking form of liberalism. They are predisposed to be agents for a conservative revolution.

In the field of Economics, then, one might reconstruct that very same interplay between socio-cultural origin, current position and available position-takings. The Fallen Nobles entering the field tends not quite to have the ‘technical cultural capital’ that seems to promise the most ‘return’ to the Inheritors, with their advantage in acquiring the necessary sense of manipulating formulas and equations in rather abstract, theoretical models. On the other hand, the high self-esteem and ambition of the Fallen Nobles forbids them from entering into, and settling with, a mere technical speciality (so that Sophia -16- responds to the question about whether she considered an apprenticeship that ‘this is a question that I never posed to myself’), as students of petit-bourgeois origin seem much more likely to do. The question then still remains why they select (and are selected by) Economics in the first place. That might be accidental, in the sense that there may be relatively equal percentages of Fallen Nobles studying in very different subjects. But given the fact that disciplinary differences carry significant prestige, and hence capital, differences within the German background, I think this is rather unlikely. It might be that Economics as a whole is more attractive to Fallen Nobles than other subjects due to its overall position in the social hierarchy which might be still ‘extra-ordinary’, yet not as ‘extra-ordinary’ as, for example, Medicine.¹²⁵ Hence it might be, both in terms of subject selection and theoretical-epistemological selection, in each case rather ‘outdated’ positions that are still distinctive in the field *and* outside of it. *In this field* this means literary, non- or only mildly formalistic variants of economic thought. I hold that those appear most attractive to these students because they match with their specific predispositions. Part of

¹²⁵ In that sense, the tendentially more restrained, less ‘enchanted’ stories of how the Fallen Nobles came to select Economics as their subject might indeed reflect a different, somewhat more distanced and more ‘realistic’ view on it than the Inheritors have. These more ‘extrinsic’ attitudes towards one’s own subject might also be facilitated by distinctive ‘intrinsic’ values, as was shown with Eric (53) earlier on.

this is obviously the partially critical, and therefore very visible, stance taken by the trailblazers of this position within Economics, their scepticism towards the blind trust in scientific, formalistic methods (Mises 2003[1933]; Hayek 2001[1944], 1945), which is directed both against Keynesian and Neoclassical Mainstreams at various times, while at the same time radically emphasising traditional liberal-economic values and norms (Hayek 1960; Röpke 1963[1937]). Just as the Fallen Nobles of 18th century France reacted to their decline by increased emphasis to ornamentals on their homes, so the Fallen Nobles of German Economics today react to their decline by selection of increased individualisation of their perspective. Both are, I hold, symbols of one and the same position and trajectory in their respective fields.

The Fallen Nobles effectively try to rehabilitate outdated methods of enquiry (textual interpretation, pure logical analysis, see for example Machlup 1961) via an uncompromising, zealous and radically individualistic epistemology. In and through that zeal for the values of ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’, they are particularly prone towards reaching audiences beyond their particular field, of engaging in popular agitation (see Hayek 2001[1944]), and their products seem particularly likely to be ‘polyphonous’ (see also Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 151f.), that is, to be understood well in more than one field. Sociologically speaking, the Fallen Nobles act *as if* their uncompromising stance of Ultraliberalism and their fight against ‘collectivism’ is a *symbol* of their particular habitus and origin within the field of academic Economics, a sort of institutionalised embodiment of the fears and hopes and perspective of a very particular group of agents with a particular social history.

It might be objected that the stance of contemporary Ultraliberals is quite different from that of Ultraliberals in earlier times. That is quite true - so that for example some schools of current Ultraliberalism seem more radical in their free-market views (e.g. Stringham 2017[2007]). Accordingly, Sophia (16) asserts that Hayek and Mises ‘often also argue impurely’, that they ‘have taken over a lot from the Neoclassics’, and she detects an ‘ideological closure’, their disregard for their own assumptions. Others try to develop further Austrian or other ultra-liberal approaches, for example by comparing or even partially amalgamating them with

Keynesian approaches. This, of course, can be explained rather well from a Bourdieusian standpoint. Since the field of Economics, as the whole social field which harbours it, has changed considerably towards a neo-liberal mainstream during the last decades (for example Harvey 2005), academic orthodoxy has adopted quite a bit of the ultraliberal standpoint, which prompts a Fallen Noble habitus, at least within the academic field and its acceptable positions, towards position-takings that are *even more radically liberal*, or by extending the ‘liberal’ gaze towards other practices and aspects of society that are not strictly, or obviously, economic (which may include History). The similarity, therefore, is just as much about an *analogical position* in the social and academic field (always loss of high privilege, enhanced clinging to ‘traditional’ norms that are pursued with conspicuous vigour) as it is about identity of substantial theoretical or political positions.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, despite their (sometimes) felt, partial emancipation from Hayek and Co., it is still true that these authors serve at least as an initial guide, based on the sympathy due to a similarity of social position, which lets students of this category select this type of neo-liberal Economics. ‘He put me on a search’, admits Sophia (16), and Jakob (24), somewhat embarrassed, admits that he ‘read Hayek too early’ when the interview comes to his favourite Economists.

There seems little doubt that there is this overlap of initial social position and trajectory if one looks at some of the more famous ultraliberal, or Austrian, Economists and political Philosophers themselves. Both Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek, as the names already state, came from the minor Austrian Nobility. Both lost their positions either to the rising tide of Anti-Semitism or to the political and economic transformations that took place in Austria in the wake of World War I (MisesInstitute ; Mises 1978: 45; Kresge 1994: 37-39; Hayek 1994: 59). A similar fate befell some leading Ordo-Liberals such as Walter Eucken, son of Nobel-

¹²⁶ This of course is an implicit answer to the question of pertinence: How do we distinguish different schools and styles of thought? Is it purely through forming groups according to thought *in* itself, according to whatever criteria that might be? That would mean to adjudicate intellectual thought an autonomy which it likely does not possess, thus to succumb to a quite un-sociological idealism. The parameters of pertinence shift considerably as soon as we attempt to link thought with material relationships and positions.

laureate philosopher Rudolf Eucken¹²⁷, and Wilhelm Röpke¹²⁸, son of a physician (both to be found at BavarianAcademyOfSciences 2010ff.), whose inheritor-position of cultural dominance vanished with the disappearance of Imperial Germany and the rise of Nazism (Ringer 1990[1969]: 435-49). Proponents and originators of the American schools of Ultraliberalism, such as Murray Rothbard (see Raimondo 2000: 24-59) or Ayn Rand (see Burns 2009: 9-14) have similar social trajectories, as do lesser known libertarians such as Gerard Radnitzky (2006: 43f.)¹²⁹. Indeed, the link between loss of bourgeois privilege and proclivity for ultraliberal positions seems rather cross-national. It can be found in various political and academic fields in various countries, such as Germany, Austria, the USA and even France (Lebaron 2001: 101f.).

And with the similar trajectory comes a predisposition towards the characteristic individualistic, literary Economism typical of the Fallen Nobles in this specific field. Sophia, for example, rejects the Marxian theory of value in favour of a subjective one, defined ‘already through everyday-experience’¹³⁰, as she says, citing an

¹²⁷ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz13830.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed March 4, 2018

¹²⁸ <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz106346.html#ndbcontent>, last accessed March 4, 2018

¹²⁹ Although one must readily admit that the latter two are no academic Economics. Nevertheless, they too show a clear preference for ultraliberal Economics.

¹³⁰ Indeed, it might well be that the condition of loss of privilege engenders a turn towards the ‘practical’ aspects of social and economic life, as Bourdieu (2000[1997]: 82) sees with conservative writers like Michael Oakeshott, which might unleash “[...] social drives strong enough to give them reasons to overcome the aversion to everything associated with practice [...]” (ibid.), and which might be visible indeed in the writings of Hayek or Mises as well. Often enough, this lucidity on the one hand goes hand in hand with falling into the opposite trap of what one managed to avoid in the first place, namely irrationalism. So that Hayek’s exploration of ‘the sensory order’ essentially seems to recognise the existence of something like a habitus (“[...] a system of connexions is acquired in the course of the development of the species and the individual by a kind of ‘experience’ or ‘learning’ grounded in ‘experience [...]’”), without, however, posing that this system can indeed be investigated rationally and scientifically. (Hayek 2014[1952]: 53).

Similarly Mises:

“All action is economizing with the means available for the realization of attainable ends. The fundamental law of action is the economic principle. Every action is under its sway.” (Mises 2003[1933]: 86)

And again Mises:

“Catalactics does not ask whether or not the consumers are right, noble, generous, wise, moral patriotic, or church-going. It is concerned not with why they act, but only with how they act.” (ibid.: 102)

acquaintance without a university degree who, in certain places, earns more than a professional. She reiterates that we can only 'know a part of reality' and she emphasises the constructed nature of economic models. This critical stance carries over into the assessment of other spheres, such as the media or politics. Or, put another way, these spheres tend to be *politicised* through the perspective the ultraliberal Fallen Nobles take on them. Sophia, for example, criticises publicly funded broadcasting in Germany due to what she sees as their one-sidedness and skewedness, and instead favours 'pure facts' by news agencies. She is furthermore disappointed by the German liberal party because of what she perceives is their catering to the 'Economic lobby' rather than a 'truly free economic policy'. Thus her vote, at the time of the interview, tended to sway towards a libertarian splinter party in which, as she says, some 'weird people' congregate, in which there are 'conspiracy theories' thriving. In the same vein, Jakob deems the liberal party 'too little liberal' and favours a more direct Democracy 'possibly on the smallest possible scale' which for him is, of course, ideally the individual level. This, once again, is seconded by Sophia, who expands this into an individualistic critique of actually existing Democracy:

I: [...] But [...] I think the majority of people or the majority of votes is often influenced for example by lobbyism, and, ah, by long-existing laws. Ahm, that are often tightly entrenched, I mean this public opinion is then not really the opinion of the majority, or respectively, if I follow the op-, the majority always via laws, then of course I also suppress minorities through that.

Like Sophia, Jakob tends to vote for small splinter parties or 'joke parties' - 'the modern form of not voting', as he calls it - all the while emphasising liberty and protection of minorities. He even includes the right-wing populist alternative for Germany (AfD) in this thought, yet eventually discards this option since it 'is in certain areas too illiberal'. Likewise Eric (53), who, with his 'existentialist as opposed to a deterministic world view' (by which again is meant a consequential individualism in all areas of life) sees in the political realm, after the 'departure of

the liberals from Liberalism’, ‘a gap for all middle-class people’, by which he justifies his sympathy for the AfD, although he is ‘to and fro’ because of the ‘nationalist kerfuffle’ which he is prepared to concede in the interests of a wider societal acceptance of the ‘classically liberal’ stances that he supports. It goes almost without saying that the idea of a minimum wage is unanimously rejected by these students (although this is somewhat different from their attitudes towards a guaranteed minimum basic income, which is more reconcilable with libertarian ideas, depending also on, and to what scale, it is put into practice).

These students seem to be in line with the political stances, understood in terms of the positions within a field, of their structural predecessors. The comprehensive criticism and identification of social problems and power imbalances, attributed exclusively to ‘collectivist’ and state responsibility from the standpoint of radical individualism, leads to rather gloomy and even apocalyptic predictions. Thus Hayek’s analysis of the 1944 New Deal world is to be read as revealing more about his position in this world than something about this world:

“How sharp a break not only with the recent past but with the whole evolution of Western civilization the modern trend towards socialism means, becomes clear if we consider it not merely against the background of the nineteenth century, but in a longer historical perspective. We are rapidly abandoning not the views merely of Cobden and Bright, of Adam Smith and Hume, or even of Locke and Milton, but one of the salient characteristics of Western civilization as it has grown from the foundations laid by Christianity and the Greeks and Romans. Not merely nineteenth- and eighteenth-century liberalism, but the basic individualism inherited by us from Erasmus and Montaigne, from Cicero and Tacitus, Pericles and Thucydides is progressively relinquished.” (Hayek 2001[1944]: 13f.)

Mises' fears are in a similar vein, when he writes about the 'red Vienna' after World War I:

“I knew what was at stake. Bolshevism would lead Vienna to starvation and terror within a few days. Plundering hordes would take to the streets and a second blood bath would destroy what was left of Viennese culture.” (Mises 2009[1978]: 15)¹³¹

A similar mistrust is directly exhibited by Jürgen (-Nr.38- who, being just in his 1st year, is the only non-recognised Fallen Noble and thus not yet a complete, 'transformed' ultraliberal in the above-specified sense, which would be consistent with the fact that he is the only one not naming an Ultraliberal, but rather a more mainstream neoclassical Economist as his rolemodel, however with the - rather typical- justification that he feels that that Economist is 'politically incorrect'). From earlier work he has saved some money and decided to invest it. Due to the low-interest policy of the European Central Bank, a policy which he perceives as 'the lousiest approach one could have chosen for Europe', he ceased to have trust in German stocks. He predicts that due to these politics 'there will be massive problems' for rich countries because of the easy ways in which poorer countries can take credit to little avail which leads to a procrastination of crisis rather than its solution. This is why he invested his capital mainly in government bonds ('the only safe haven') or gold ('real gold, no certificate gold').

One may see in this strategy of 'playing it safe' an analogy to Bourdieu's Kabylean Fallen Nobles that also play it safe by marrying the parallel cousin. Without

¹³¹ See for another example the statements of the following generation of Austrian Economists, like Murray Rothbard for example (Raimondo 2000: 39).

seemingly even knowing of ultraliberal economists at the time of the interview, Jürgen essentially follows the same logic of Austrian business cycle theory (see for example Hayek 2009[1929-1937]). Perhaps one may here particularly see, with a Fallen Noble not yet fully ‘transformed’ into an ultraliberal stance, how specific, socially induced fears and perceptions are transposed, transformed, from a more private, individual concern to an accepted, public position-taking within or outside of academic Economics. In the process, these contingent and personal factors are eclipsed, veiled.

And so, within and without the economic academic field, the Fallen Nobles tend to struggle for their particular way of radical individualism, their essentially conservative interest being transformed through their education into a stance that appears progressive (at least for some) from the outside. Like the fallen aristocrats of French absolutism, with their romanticism for rural life which exhibits a seeming respect for the ‘man on the street’, these Economists seem to associate with ‘the masses’¹³², via their romantic individualism transported into their institutionalist critique. It is therefore barely surprising to see them at the forefront of the ‘conservative revolution’ that has swept over western societies during the last

¹³² This ‘populism’, however, is ambivalent and remains essentially elitist, as has been shown for the French Aristocrats of Absolutism earlier on. Likewise, one finds a similar ambiguity of a symbolic strategy - one that ‘flirts’ with ‘the man on the streets’ and his practical wisdom while nevertheless retaining a distance - with Ayn Rand’s position. There is elitist rejection on the one hand: “When contrasted with other contemporary celebrations of individualism, however, it becomes clear just how innovative *The Fountainhead* [book by Rand] was. Elitism and populism were two impulses that had always coexisted uneasily in the defence of unregulated capitalism. [...] Defenders of laissez-faire invoked both elite privilege and the wonders of the ordinary, self-sufficient citizen, often in the same breath. *The Fountainhead* finessed this contradiction and escaped libertarianism’s fatal elitism through Rand’s theory of ethics.” (Burns 2009: 87f.). And then there are feelings of solidarity and sympathy on the other: “Before campaigning, Rand had been suspicious about American democracy. Instead of government of, for and by the people, she thought the state should be ‘a means for the convenience of the higher type of man.’ [...] Now she found herself impressed by the questions her working-class audience asked and their responsiveness to her capitalist message. She said of her time in the theatres, ‘[It] supported my impression of the common man, that they really were much better to deal with than the office and the Madison Avenue Republicans.’ It seemed that the faceless crowds she condemned, rather than their social and intellectual betters, understood the dangers of the Roosevelt administration.” (ibid.: 56). Angus Burgin recognises this as well when he concludes about the early members of the Mont Pelerin Society, many of which were Fallen Nobles, and their populism: “A veil, however thin, needed to remain between their social philosophy and the world they hoped to transform (Burgin 2012: 71).

decades, and which still continues up to this very day. However, unlike their French counterparts, the more contemporary Fallen Nobles live in a *much more differentiated* society. It therefore still needs to be enquired how their field-specific products function outside of their immediate environment, why and how they are adapted and potentially used for other purposes than the intended ones.

This might be approached from a rather psychological angle as well, from the perspective of the ‘inner eye’ of those students. We might construct a sort of ideal-typical psychological profile of what goes on in a Fallen Noble: You are born into a Fallen Noble family. Early on you recognise, at first somewhat blurry, yet nevertheless decisively, that something is wrong with the world. Things are not as they should be. The wrong persons are in power, incompetent persons. And not only that, the whole system seems wrong. You tend to sympathise with everyone that fights this state of affairs. You begin to get active as well, participate in demonstrations, writing articles in youth newspapers, in blogs, always the bigger whole in mind. Then you come across those Economists that actually kind of *do* criticise mainstream politics, and that from a scientific standpoint. After all, you have guessed it all the time anyways that the current system is inefficient, that if things go on like this there will be a crisis that will cost all of society dear. This crisis will not only be economical, but cultural. You feel that your culture is threatened by dictatorial means, some of which come in well-sounding phrases of the political left, transmitted by the left-leaning media What is the solution? You choose Economics and Humanities for your studies because it seems the right thing to do. You deeply value the emphasis on efficiency and individual freedom and responsibility that come with most of academic Economics, even though all that mathematical stuff really is a bit annoying after all. You like in particular that Austrian Economics course about the history of economic development, where they deal with how specific institutions made a properly functioning market possible in the first place. You become convinced that we can deduce from historical examples how to establish your own society best, including the stopping of its current demise. In short, you really like history and you excel in that course, which earns you a top mark from the Austrian Economics professor who, during the next semester, offers you a job on his tutoring team. Of course, since you have nothing

else to do, you immediately agree - after all, why not earn money with what you love to do anyways? The professor has excellent connections to various think tanks and to large corporations, so you get to know these as well over the years, in workshops and at conferences. Still, they do not become kith and kin. You stay with your professor and become his PhD student. You really feel justified, after all that fuzzy feeling of rage and not belonging here in your earlier youth, in who and what you do. The world may be far from being perfect, but you have found an island to rest on, a sort of safe zone from which fighting expeditions can be undertaken to the outside world, for a free market and against the crusted structures of politics and big business. After completing your PhD you start your new post as director of an ultra-liberal think tank, where you will find a profession, identity, a place in the world. Still, not everything is great - sometimes your expeditions backfire, like when you support an emerging, liberal-conservative party which, for some reason you don't understand, bit by bit turns more into a xenophobic and anti-immigrant party. But this, like anything regarding individual action, cannot be investigated anyways, so that you just shrug your shoulders and move on with your daily business.

Indeed, this brief psychological profile points towards the Fallen Nobles' thorough integration into structures and mechanisms that are barely understood, such as the rise of the right-wing populist alternative for Germany party AfD.¹³³ These experiences warrant further detailed studies, which, from a Bourdieusian viewpoint, concern the 'travelling' and adaptation of ideas in different fields with different logics(see also the section 'relation between fields' in the conclusion of this work). There is furthermore a dimension relating to the very fact of *integration* (both social and psychological), which points towards a specific guiding and channeling of the subversive powers of these young students into a final position-taking that probably has conservative effects. But this further line of research, which leads us into the sociology of revolution (or lack thereof) must be developed at a later stage.

¹³³ <https://www.wiwo.de/politik/deutschland/afd-das-ende-der-oekonomen-partei/12011514.html>, last accessed June 2, 2019.

Lastly, as with the Inheritors, this Ideal-type still leaves some cases unexplained.

Deflections and Deviations

One mustn't close one's eyes to the fact that some students who are *not* Fallen Nobles nevertheless favour ultraliberal Economics. This is the case with Leon (Nr.15), Anton (Nr.27) and Leonard (Nr.58), who are all of more petit-bourgeois or inheritor origin (even though their grandfathers also were either dispossessed or driven out of office during Eastern German socialist times). Despite the fact that they share most of the position-takings with those fallen noble-women and men who favour Austrian Economics (for example, calling themselves 'classical liberals', being very sceptical about state intervention in general, welcoming market solutions to as many social problems as possible) there remain a few differences in trajectory and positions that might be rather important in this light. First, non-aristocratic 'Austrians', contrary to their Fallen Noble cousins, may be said to have a more inconspicuous trajectory and self-presentation. Unlike the Fallen Nobles, their subject selection seems less motivated by an urge to be politically efficacious as an individual and rather more by *practical* (indeed 'extrinsic') considerations about the public common good and one's own professional advancement, as Anton (Nr.27) explains:

I: Because this just interested me. I mean I was fascinated by it, or interested by it, what you can do to fight unemployment, all these things. Which factors are important, it was just a time of high unemployment, maybe because of that. Don't know. And, yeah, also the, the differences between Socialism and Capitalism have interested me. [...] Because there was a strong change. That is maybe, maybe this is from my biography, but maybe it also comes from my grampa or so. Don't know. [...] [talking about alternative studies] I have discarded that relatively quickly then, because I had a look what the starting salaries are in Political Science [i.e. with a Master's degree of that subject], and these were roughly on a level with taxi drivers, there I thought [with a chuckle]

that is not necessary. [...] There also were Political Science Diploma [graduates] back then with a mean age of 28. While Political Economy these were around 9 to 10 semesters. I didn't want to study forever after all!

In a similar vein, Leon (Nr.15) explains his desire to finish his studies on time:

I: I always wanted for myself, for myself it was always clear that [...] I wanted to be finished in the *normal* study time. That was also for me, I did it after all, and that was very important for me.

Likewise, Leonard (Nr.58) remembers his initial interest in the subject:

I: [...] and that you can, with his approach, this technical approach Political Economy, so to speak, what is welfare, I mean how you can define that on the one hand, and ahm, which factors play a role [in increasing it], what politics can do [...]. After one has defined welfare at first.

These more petit-bourgeois students seem on the whole less flashy and iridescent in their (self-) presentation than the Fallen Nobles. There are no stories by third parties about being outspoken (although I have to admit that I did not look for those explicitly). The students seem to have a more 'humble' view of themselves as well - visible for example in how they speak of their own trajectory which Leon describes as 'down-to-earth'¹³⁴ several times. Both Leon and Anton work or have worked as accountants (the former in a proper job, the latter in a student union), and have no history of motivation or activity in Journalism or History ('I have my Mises biography at home, that is enough for me', confesses Leon). On the other hand, the more petit-bourgeois Austrians seem to be more concrete, and in a way considerably more brutal, in their policy recommendations than the fallen-noble men Austrians.

¹³⁴ The translation of the German term 'hemdsärmelig' obliterates somewhat the negative connotation this word has in that language which might be more adequately translated with amateurish, not professional. In this, too, one may see the rather petit-bourgeois inclination to good-will by readily admitting short-comings and mistakes.

Anton's policy recommendations are perhaps the most brutally liberal in the whole sample. He ponders about what policies he would like to see implemented:

I: *Hmmm!* That is a good point, that is not that easy, I think I would not pay the first three months of job seekers allowance. If you become jobless, the first three months, just a transition period. That would work quite easily, right? I would not start many construction projects by state expenditure. [...] Of course I would privatise the railway, everything¹³⁵. [...] I don't know what I would do with health insurance because it is very difficult at the moment. We still have this weird system. [...] I would like it better if it was private.

He also argues against any regulation of the housing market:

I: Yes, for example. I think people have a sort of, tradition, I just take the example of rent control, right?

T: Yes, yes.

I: They always talk about the granny who has always lived there.

T: Yes, hm. There is always this sociological argument of gentrification. You've probably heard that.

I: Yes. That always seems to be something bad. Why actually?

T: Hm.

I: [more aggressive] Why actually is it bad if rent prices in X increase, if people have, finally, a higher purchasing power? That granny perhaps cannot live in the centre in prime location anymore, that's just the way it is.

Leon ideally would like to partially privatise the educational system:

¹³⁵ In Germany, up to now, the railway system has not been privatised fully yet and thus still counts as a state company.

I: I mean I as an Austrian [Economist] can now say I would be for a hundred percent privatisation, with all consequences. Would certainly be an interesting scenario [clears his throat]. But, one is also somehow for a *Realpolitik* [...] So I would proceed and say 'every student who finds a study place gets an education voucher from the state, and via this voucher she can go to university.

Compare this with Jakob's (Nr.24) reflection on Hayek's work, which he uses in his own work on the *tension* between protectionism and liberalism:

I: Ahm, basically Hayek is, don't know whether this is true for any scientist that one deals with more intensively, but of course you recognise that although in many instances he is seemingly very outspoken and radical- somehow as little state as possible, a lot of freedom and so on - you still feel how he weighs in many instances. Especially if you, ah, read the constitution of liberty, then it is astonishing what roles he makes sure the state gets, and with Hayek it is always rather the case that he tends to show what roles the state should not take, or not take alone, and that he, on the other hand, still leaves the state with lots of opportunities to get active. And that is, I mean I also found that surprising in dealing with this, hm. And, I mean we see the challenge one faces in the case of development Economics. Somehow you then find, on the one hand, concepts of a strong state are not really successful, but at the same time concepts such as the Washington consensus didn't really work either.

The decisive thing here, it seems to me, is the 'reserved' and 'circumspect' character of the thoughts which tends, practically, to constantly hover between liberalism and state involvement. The state is to remain in place, but its activity is to be conceived very differently from what it is now, and in this new utopian state it will foster the freedom of its inhabitants rather than hindering it. But how exactly this new state should look like seems rather unclear, and what remains for the reader is a rather radical-seeming and indeed primarily *symbolic* message which distinguishes the sender from other messages and senders, whether he or she is aware of this effect (and wants it) or not. There seems a profound difference in the degree of radicalism as regards the critique of existing economic and political

arrangements and normative liberal principles on the one side, and actual, often rather balanced ideas about to restructure society, on the other. It seems that, here again, the privileged heritage predisposes towards imagining, and working towards, a social vision which is different from the current state yet where the game of distinction is not abolished (the ‘gaming table not knocked over’ as Bourdieu used to say), merely altered to the favour of those who bring about a partial revolution. Once again we are reminded of the aristocratic French Nobles and their romanticism for rural life, their self-imaginaging as shepherds in their literary works, yet always at the same time distinguishing themselves from actually existing peasants. The state, after all, is still needed to protect the educated minorities against the ‘hordes’ and their ‘foolish ideas’ and ‘whims’¹³⁶. The Fallen Nobles seem not to be able to shed the idea of planning and state control, despite all initial appearances, which leaves them with a strategy that is, willy-nilly, more *symbolic than practical* and substantial (in the sense of policies ready to be applied). This would help to make sense of the fact that Robert, an Economics Bachelor student from a rather bourgeois, yet fallen background I interviewed for my pilot study, justified his political provocations, such as defending far-right free speech: ‘I just need to do this for my own sanity, get things off me.’ The more petit-bourgeois students, however, not burdened with this heritage, are freer to develop an easier and perhaps looser relationship to Austrian Economics, one that corresponds better to their dispositions of asceticism and cultural good-will (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 318ff.). It would therefore not be surprising to see the simplification and watering down of the Hayekian (or Misesian) message to a relatively simple one of the commodification of everything. Emphasis on the symbolic dimension, in the first case, emphasis on practical political implementation, in the second.

Angus Burgin’s (2012) detached and careful account of the History of the Mont Pelerin Society and its main agents allows us to cast a sociological, comparative eye on the relationship between petit-bourgeois and more bourgeois economic liberals

¹³⁶ These are my own summarising paraphrases of the Fallen Noble’s attitude towards ‘the people’.

as a concrete empirical example.¹³⁷ In it one can see how Hayek's nuanced, and essentially social-conservative liberalism influences, and is eventually replaced by, a radical, super-consistent and unconditional blessing of market-forces in and through the (petit-bourgeois) Milton Friedman (Burgin 2012: 175-85). Hence, the partial revolution is replaced by a more complete, less reserved revolution in mental structures, both in the academic field and in the social field. Even though both Hayek and Friedman might have called themselves 'classical liberals', as do all those attached to Austrian Economics in this sample, it seems they *mean* different things by that (very much in the same way as students mean different things when they assert their study selections as 'intrinsic'). It seems clear now that, for the Fallen Nobles, the alignment with 'classical Liberalism' is sociologically a sort of attempt to symbolically reconstruct their original social position within the field of academic Economics. In this they follow their structural predecessors, who, as Lawrence Stone observes, "[...] developed a frenetic interest in heraldry, the diligent commissioning of family histories." (Stone 1965: 750f.). The focus on the past, I argue, is a symptom of despair and wish to reconstruct vanished glory for representatives of this ideal-type. But for them, compared to Fallen Nobles of earlier ages, it seems more sublimated. This is perhaps due to the more intense and longer period of formal education. For the more petit-bourgeois Ultraliberals, on the other hand, the reference to classical liberalism is connected to hope, to social ascent. It has a progressive meaning, from the standpoint of these agents.¹³⁸

Lastly, one may not close one's eyes to the fact that there is at least one student in this sample that is a Fallen Noble but nevertheless no Ultraliberal in the sense specified before. Yet Johanna (Nr.59) also distinguishes herself by a certain, albeit different, radicalism and outspokenness of her views. She was part of antifascist circles and reading groups in her youth. In itself this might not be an indicator for

¹³⁷ Even if it applies a theoretical perspective that seems close to symbolic interactionism (with Hayek, Friedman etc. as inter-related actors on a stage with no backstage, that is, no particular structural history or context other than the most general Zeitgeist)

¹³⁸ Or to quote Burgin again, Milton Friedman, at the first Mont Pelerin Society meeting in 1947. was "[p]erhaps the most vociferous advocate of the adoption of the language of progressivism [...]." (Burgin 2012: 108)

the habitus of a Fallen Noble (her father being a physician and one of her grandparents owning several factories but being dispossessed), or not the only one. Felix (Nr. 19), who is clearly of a more petit-bourgeois origin, was also engaged in an anti-fascist group during his youth. One would need to see which of the two was, or is, more probable for the respective social origins by looking for studies or sources that tell us something about the social origin of young antifascists. It is Johanna, however, who goes one better by being critical of what is happening within these antifascist reading circles - unlike Felix, who, to the contrary, shows respect or *goodwill* by the characteristic cautiousness of his remarks such as 'one would need to have a closer look'- by stating that Adorno (a standard author in these circles in Germany) is 'one of the upheld, and much too often cited, luminaries'. This carries on into her Economics studies. Johanna is, within the group of pluralist-minded students at the case-study institute, the one with the most outspoken and sweeping critique of mainstream Economics. She describes her studies as 'actually very bad' and concludes about the teaching: "In the end one could have taken Olivier Blanchard's [neoclassical text book author] textbook and read it aloud to class, [but no more would] come out of it." She feels that 'critique is not admitted' in class, and that the lecturers 'preached up and down the Marshall-cross'¹³⁹ and that the bibliography was filled with 'free market preachers'. She concludes that it is a rather unchallenging subject which too often goes 'according to the book' while 'the [neo-classical] theory 'has no explanatory value and therefore is obsolete.'

But the subject of Economics is not the only one that is criticised. About her fellow students she thinks that 'there were not too many gems among them', and her specialisation of international economic relations offers 'too little critique of the existing world economic system'. Even her first Masters degree at a prestigious western European 'heterodox' institute 'could have been a bit more strident'. During the reading group sessions of the pluralist Economics association I attended

¹³⁹ The standard economic model of price determination as a function of the relationship of supply and demand.

she was regularly the most vociferous and sweeping in her critique of the mainstream literature discussed, and hence was often countered by her more moderate fellow students. But the critique as such is perhaps not as radical in terms of the actual study content (after all, there are more moderate voices within this ideal-type as well, such as Jakob - Nr.24) than in terms of actual *economic policies*, which implies the measurement of these policies¹⁴⁰ according to a certain ideal or *utopia*. This utopia, or the path towards it, may be described in terms of the abolishing of perceived interferences, truncations, distortions and artificial boundaries. These distortions are examined, within the study of Economics, above all in terms of Economic policies regarding finance and money or currency issues. But then again, the actual recommended economic practice is less conspicuous, less radical than the critique and the norms taken.

This guided analysis, then, puts those seemingly different position-takings - economic ultra-liberalism here, leftist radicalism there - *alongside* each other, as two expressions of the *same* (or at least very similar) motivation and habitus. Is there a feature in social origin that distinguishes the two, such as gender, geographical origin, or age? In any case, lucid observers of intellectual history, like Michel Foucault, observe the same phenomenon of fundamental similarity of attitudes beneath seemingly very different position-takings when he remarks on the 'curious closeness' (Foucault 2010[2004]: 105f.) that exists between the intellectual 'neighbours' of the Frankfurt School and German Ultraliberals (or Neoliberals, as he calls them) in the German intellectual field from the 1930s to the 1960s. Both, that is, see an 'irrational rationality' in Capitalism that is solved in different ways (creation of a new societal rationality to sublimate economic irrationality in the case of the Frankfurters, creation of a new economic rationality to sublimate societal irrationality in the case of the Ultraliberals). The structural reasons why this rift occurs need to be found out separately.

¹⁴⁰ The Fallen Nobles are almost all specialised in Economic Policy and/or Macroeconomics.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have formulated another ideal-type according to social class and trajectory. I have grouped all those students into a category that exhibit clearly a dominant class origin that has, however, evidently faded in one way or another. I have termed these students Fallen Nobles and explored the usefulness of this concept in making sense of their study selections and motivations as well as general world views. I have argued that the lack of capital emerging from a background of abundance of capital predisposes these students to a strategy of distinction by overemphasis of symbolic effects, to be seen in the specific field of German academic Economics in ultra-liberal, explicitly political and literary position-takings. Even though this may seem, at first glance, very similar to the liberalism and economism of the Inheritors, there are important and recurring differences to be detected, above all the preference for literary forms and methods as well as the more direct, less value-free engagement in politics. In this, the ‘intrinsic’ study selection of the Fallen Nobles appears sociologically different from that of the Inheritors. And, like with the Inheritors, there are deviations whose rootedness in the same disposition may be posited, without, however, being able to explain, at present, these deviations. Starting to emerge from this is a classification of students that is quite different from the established lines of ‘intrinsic’ vs. ‘extrinsic’, ‘reflexive’ vs. ‘non-reflexive’ or even ‘orthodox’ vs. ‘heterodox’. It seems necessary at this point to complete the set of ideal-types under consideration, and to look at a third group beside the inheriting and fallen students: those students who ascend socially, the Parvenus.

Chapter 8 - Parvenus

The choice once made had to be adhered to, and there was no one more conformist, in the United States as elsewhere, than new immigrants who, with the exception of anarchists, regarded any criticism of their adopted country as sacrilege. For them America was liberty, justice, virtue ; everything predisposed the newest elements of American society to become conservative and rabid patriots.

Marc Ferro - The Great War

Intellectual Goodwill - Petit Bourgeois and Parvenus

The Parvenus in this sample all have in common the fact that their parents usually work or worked in rather medium-status jobs (such as technicians, qualified machine operators, medium-level executives) and that none of them have studied at university. As with the Inheritors, there seems to be a concentration of rather 'technical' professions, and hence the likely possession of a specifically 'technical' type of cultural capital. Nevertheless these students managed to obtain a certain recognition within the academic field, by obtaining scholarships and/or tutorships, or by enrolling for a PhD in Economics or Political Economy. Again, this would need to be demonstrated more conclusively with statistics that prove the somewhat exceptional trajectory of these students relative to all other recognised German Economics students and relative to the other representatives of this class within the student population as a whole.

This is especially so since *inflation of educational titles* must be factored into the determination whether a student from ‘lower’ class background indeed is ascending socially or not. Often enough, the assessment of intergenerational mobility happens only on the basis of simply comparing the achieved certificates of education (see for instance FAZ 2013), while a relational analysis must always factor in the *relative position of the students within the body of all students* and, more generally, all members of a class of a particular cohort. In other words, educational progressiveness and inclusivity (see Ringer 1979: 22-31) are often confounded in these substantialist perspectives.

John (6), Anna (Nr.39), Leo (Nr.48), Tom (Nr.50), Linus (54) Vincent (Nr.69) and Lennard (Nr.70) seem to fall most under this ideal-type, at least when it comes to recognised and/or insider students. Unlike the Inheritors and the Fallen Nobles, these students diverge quite substantially in their scores on the Recognition Index - while Tom, Lennard and John score quite highly, Anna and Leo don’t, and Leon figures in between them.

Characteristics and general Attitudes

In terms of concrete economic attitudes, this ideal-type is much harder to pin down to a specific theoretical or epistemological perspective. Their respective orientations, like their scores on the Economic Recognition Index, are very diverse. On the other hand they seem to have in common a more ‘practical’ (or ‘extrinsic’) orientation both in terms of subject selection and selection of specialisations. Thoughts about commencing an apprenticeship are much more prominent than with the other ideal-types. John (6), for example, pondered a career in administration before turning to the idea of studying at a university, partly because he ‘had no plan [what to do] after high school’. Vincent (69) completed a commercial apprenticeship before selecting Economics while Anna (39) was pushed by her parents to opt for an apprenticeship. This, at least initially, rather loose connection to the academic content of Economics can also be seen in their own justifications

for their choices which put a heavier emphasis onto aspects such as employability and future professional prospects than was the case with the other ideal-types¹⁴¹. Leo 'found it good to have professional fields where you could have certain chances to be successful'. Similarly, Vincent states that 'back then I had the professional eye' which is why he selected Economics over Philosophy or Psychology. Tom (50) confesses that he thought 'completely selfishly' about his own wealth and 'how to manage it' when he selected Economics because 'it seemed to me logical'. Anna (39) first selected a Business Administration subject because she 'was more security-fixated back then'. The 'softer' attitude towards more 'technical' and 'practical' aspects of the Economics subject seems to significantly shine out with this ideal-type. All of the students have a comparatively positive attitude towards Business Administration, unlike the vast majority of students of the other two ideal-types. Anna (39), likewise, emphasises the practical character of this subject vis-à-vis Political Economy:

I mean I indeed find that quite important [...] because it is a problem that Business Administration communicates so little with Political Economy, because I think the drifting off of it [Political Economy] towards unreality has one cause in the fact that you don't have a connection anymore to Business Administration, which simply is a bit closer to reality, I think.

Lennard (70) also talks about the 'practicability' of certain parts of his studies alongside Sociology:

I: For me somehow nothing else was possible in the beginning.

T: Hm.

¹⁴¹ In this they are quite close to Leon -15- and Anton -27-, who would have to be placed somewhere between all three ideal-types, with objective aspects of all three of them present.

I: Therefore I did these Economics Introduction affair. Äh. And accounting. Like balance sheets, [in English] financing, that sort of stuff. Exactly. That was so much fun somehow, because it was a different, and it was so practical and - And that, that I somehow continued, and then I thought now you started it, why don't you continue with it, count it towards Sociology [the degree], as a sort of mini-Bachelor?

On the whole, then, the term 'practicability' or 'tangibility' takes on a slightly different meaning here compared with its use by the Inheritors - less philosophical and abstract, more technical, or more 'artisanal' so to speak.

Even if the interest is more in Political Economy from the very start, these students then tend to specialise in more technical areas within the discipline, above all Econometrics and Statistics. Leo (48) describes:

I: Yeah, I mean the practical, the practical work with data. To seek out, to find out relationships that are not that obvious, that fascinated me quite quickly. Especially if you become more stable with Econometrics in terms of theories and models. I found that fascinating, everything you can do with it. Effectively when you augmented your tool box in the empirical area a bit. Then the possibilities grow very fast.

Tom's experiences and selections seem to be very similar:

I: Actually, overall I was drifting [towards his specialisation]. Simply by what I received from outside, right? Ahm.

T: What did you receive from outside?

I: Ahm, I had a good Econometrics Prof in X. He taught me a lot methodologically. And then I was interested more in the method part, right? I mean, how do I estimate, how, ahm, do I collect data correctly? How, ahm, how do I analyse correctly, right? I mean if I see econometric models, then it is often the case that people throw in there things that do not belong there, right?

Somehow estimating a regression with some nominal data where you ask yourself ‘Ok, that is not the right approach, yeah. How do I do that correctly? [...] Simply rather these, these theoretical questions ,how, how do I estimate something correctly?’, and. And then I was drifting more into this direction.

The Parvenus seem more focussed on the technical, methodical aspects of their studies than the inheritors and especially the Fallen Nobles. This is also valid for Lennard (70) whose reflexivity about the limits of his subject cannot conceal his clear preference for its technical aspects:

I: [...] ahm, statistics and the like I like, this .. translation of behaviour into numbers, although you partly need to be aware, because Prof. Y always said ‘Yes, we are not Physicists who are able to determine exact experiments and interpret numbers directly’.

T: Yes.

I: We can perceive tendencies. And this translation from theory, empirical content and quantitative analysis was really exciting. So that you then can make statements. Like inference-statements of [...] a sample, of a basic population. And this with a methodical approach, ah, how do I ask people, how do I observe people. Like, what can I derive from it? What could be interference factors that influence that. There you need to be creative, partially. You need to be able to be creative, so to speak, and to consider how these things relate to each other, which mechanisms react with each other.

Vincent (69), too, specialises in econometric and statistical methods:

I: I mean I first put everything into formulas, and that I only did because you can .. structure your data better this way, I mean I find that very helpful for me

simply, and I think Economists also like to do it in this way, ahm, simply to write down the effects formally, and I would never claim that this is the true model. [...] It simply helps me to structure my thoughts and to bring them across well. [In regards to professional activity later on] I would also try to walk towards statistics, data analysis, or something in this direction.

It seems that a lower class origin tends to result in the selection not only of a less prestigious subject, but also a less prestigious subject specialisation once the subject is selected. This is similar to some student groups in 1960s France (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979[1964]: 13-15). Moreover, the lower class origin also prompts more reflection about the study choice and its advantages, which might be seen in the comparatively extensive material considerations of these students vis-à-vis the other two ideal-types (ibid: 62-64). It cannot be fully delineated here how the experiences of these students in their studies, their encounter with other groups such as the inheritors or fallen noble-women and the assessment and self-assessment that follows from these encounters in the framework of the Economics studies, lead towards the development of a disposition to serve as a 'technical specialist' within the discipline, perhaps not unlike a technician of earlier ages (and indeed: Leo's -48-, Tom's -50- and Vincent's -69- fathers all work as, or were educated as, electricians). It might be fruitful to compare this sort of 'technical' approach to specialisations in other disciplines, such as Sociology, where it might be expressed a bit differently (such as a specialisation in qualitative methodology with little focus on theoretical issues). On the other hand, Anna (39) does not fit into this pattern, and neither does John (6). The former tended to reject statistics and specialised in Finance, and the latter specialised in developmental and heterodox Economics.

Perhaps because they, initially, do not fit that well with their subject, experiences of conversion seem more numerous with this ideal-type than they are with the other two. This is true for both students that gravitate towards a critical view of their subject and those who rather support it as it is. Anna, indicatively, describes her 'drift' towards a more heterodox standpoint:

I: Yes, exactly. And then I worried [more fundamentally about Economics] quite a bit here, I mean this was quite funny because I had, like, this basic dissatisfaction where you thought in the beginning you mainly have it for yourself.

T: Hm, hm.

I: You only recognised in the course of study that you share it with other fellow students. Ahm, and then I was with [a student organisation that also hosts alternative Economics events], and there I somehow got to know more people, who thought more alternatively. And then X and I, don't know how that came to fruition, .. but we somehow had the idea of founding these reading circles.

T: Aha.

I: Because we said, man, we want .. also to read other things, than what we [normally read]. And I think I somehow had, in a certain way, well, I probably would have finished the studies, but it has after all, it has [given] me, opened up, a very different relationship to Political Economy somehow. Because I then did [participate in the alternative Economics students organisation], worked at the Z-conference and again met people there, who, ahm. And then also recognised how my, well convictions, but like the questions that one asks changed and somehow also the attitude towards, towards some things shifted. Ah, yeah, exactly, this I experienced as very, I mean [case study institute-location], have recognised it as very positive. Which somehow was linked to the university, but had actually nothing to do with university teaching. Like, more through this self-organisation and also through this network of pluralistic Economics, where I partially was, and ... yeah [names another Economic initiative], the people that I sometimes met there, yeah.

Tom (50) also acknowledges a shift in his economic, and political, attitudes since the commencing of his studies, but one that leads, at least at first glance, into a very different direction:

T: How would you, ah, how is your own political attitude? How would you describe this? Is there anything specific or?

I: I mean in terms of party politics I couldn't slot myself at all. Ahm, probably, I mean, a higgledy-piggledy mix of liberal and left. Yeah? Certainly not conservative. Ahm, but this is a changing process. I mean five years ago I wouldn't have said that for example dairy farmers do not need a guaranteed price for their milk. This has been abolished, and now they need to struggle along quite a bit. Ahm, there I perhaps wouldn't have said five years ago, that you say 'Ok, actually there are market forces that care, ah, [for the fact that] those who produce efficiently on the market stay in the market and that the market price is justified in some way. That this asserts itself best in this form. Five years ago I perhaps would have said 'the guaranteed price for milk is something good after all'. But in the meantime I would rather - [...] [The price floor] has been abolished a few months ago I think.

T: Oh I see.

I: And, ah, ever since then the milk prices have plummeted. And now they're upset quite a bit, mobilise their lobby. But, yeah. There I think I do have a different insight today than compared to earlier, and would say 'They of course try to hold their position, their previously comfortable position. But probably, for the whole society, it is better if there is no-

T: Price floor anymore

I: Exactly. And that you leave it to the market forces to regulate that.

T: And why do you think that? Because, like, research shows that or what?

I: Yeah, because I think that it is an efficient result, and ah, certainly for the dairy farmers it is a sharp break, but for the consumers it is rational. Ahm, and if you start from the fact, that you say 'before you somehow had a political measure that truncated the market, in a certain direction. That gave a group an advantage, which would'nt have been there, in that sense, if you would have had

a normal market price from the beginning. Ahm, there I think it is rational [sensible] to abolish it because a part [of the market] profits, and you would normally have a [better] market result if the consumers somehow wouldn't pay less for the milk.

Likewise, Vincent (69) 'after all needed some time to get into Political Economy' because somehow 'this wasn't so clear'. Leo (48), too, even though stating that he 'came through [his studies] quite fluently' nevertheless also confesses:

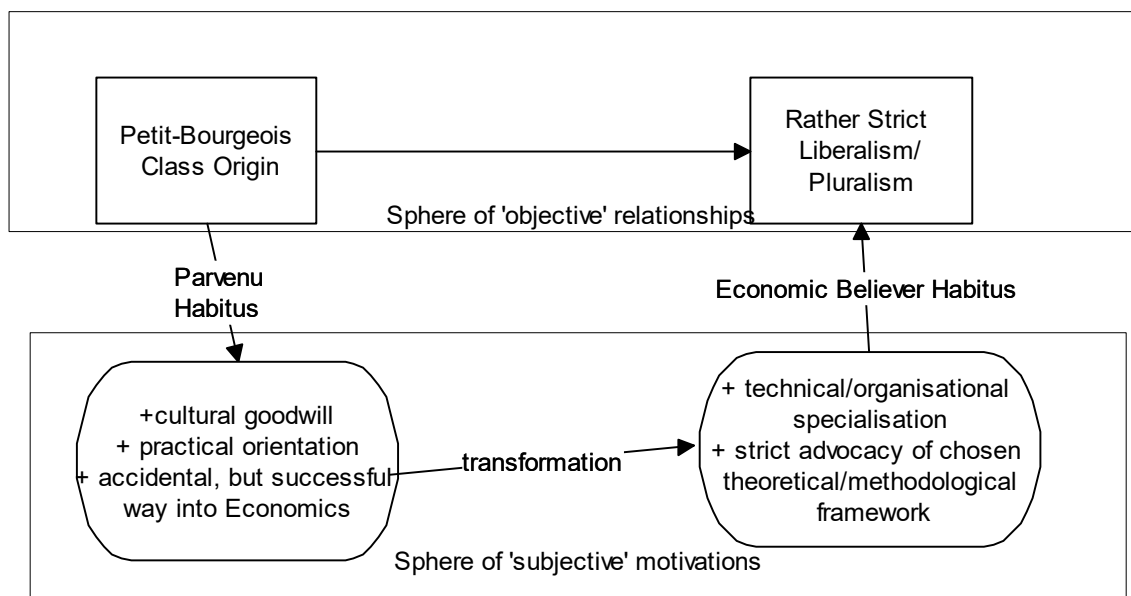
I: I also think that I, like most of the Econs [Economics students], went into my studies dewy-eyed. Had a look at the modules, what will come and so on, and thought 'Well, it will be fine..'. Maybe not as dewy-eyed that I thought I get through this without Math, but..

Hence the relationship with academic Economics is less 'inevitable', and also less natural, than is the case with the Inheritors (and perhaps even the Fallen Nobles). The Parvenu's experience of their study selections diverges quite clearly from those of the other ideal-types discussed so far. These students are exposed late to the idea of studying Economics, they accordingly construct their choices for themselves and others as much more accidental and 'random', in contrast to the Inheritors. One could say that their selections are relatively 'extrinsic'. However, once they are acquainted to their new universe, they adopt with all the more fervour the assumptions and tenets of it, indeed not unlike the immigrants named in the quote at the start of this chapter. The specific focus of their creative, diligent pursuit towards technical, 'concrete' statistical-methodological problems (in the case of orthodox-minded students) or other 'practical' approaches (in the case of heterodox-minded students) from this particular starting point of 'immigration' into the field may induce one to coin the concept of Economic believer. How and why did some Parvenu's become Economic believers?

Economism III - An explanatory Attempt

The theoretical attitudes of the Parvenus in this sample are very varied, as could be seen already in the last chapter. How does the petit-bourgeois come to his/her form of economism?

Figure 15 Proposed Relationship between Petit-Bourgeois Class Origin, Habitus and Selection of Economics



The original living condition of the petit-bourgeois student tends to produce a gap between available capital and aimed-for position, “[...] between knowledge and recognition [...]” (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 319). Unlike with the Fallen Nobles this gap tends to instil recognition rather than animosity towards cultural norms and ideals, at least initially (ibid.: 319-28). This gap tends to predispose towards rather ‘disparate’ tastes and choices that are not consecrated by established rules of excellence and hence transform, in the course of a ‘typical’ petit-bourgeois educational trajectory, gaps in knowledge into gaps in age at certain stages of one’s education (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979[1964]: 6f.). In this case the initial

good-will transforms in time into a rather regressive, conservative disposition. Sometimes, however, a petit-bourgeois is able to 'catch up' with the specific Inheritors of a field, and to acquire the needed dispositions to play the game sufficiently well to be able to compete fully in it. But this comes at a price - the gap of ambition and capital tends to be *replaced* by an internalised contradiction of primary vs. secondary habitus that is all the greater the steeper the social ascent (producing, in other words, what Bourdieu describes as a cleft habitus). This can express itself in condescending and embarrassed views towards the original culture while at the same time wholeheartedly embracing field doxa. The objective dependence of the Parvenus on the educational system as a whole - both materially but also mentally - leads to a 'subjective' constriction, a 'hardening' of one's viewpoint vis-à-vis alternative approaches. One clings all the more to what one has achieved, or what one wants to achieve, if one does not think very highly of one's original culture, and one's original self, in the first place.¹⁴²

In Economics, this encompasses the thorough acceptance of the reigning economistic mainstream as well as the focus on the technical prowess of model building. In its influence on the whole habitus, it also engenders vigour in the assessment of political or individual questions. The petit-bourgeois and Parvenus in German academic Economics tend to become radical individualists as their habitus transforms towards that of an Economic Believer.

The initial gap habitus-field may be seen in the fact of their process of 'stumbling into' the discipline. John (6) too pondered about doing an apprenticeship first, but then decided to study due to quite non-academic reasons:

I: But the studies only came [into focus] when I got to know my then-girlfriend, and I am here to study only because of her.

T: Ok.

I: I mean if I wouldn't have come to X I wouldn't have studied in Y.

¹⁴² This disposition to 'clinging onto' certain ideals of excellence, and the social standing these guarantee, is certainly nothing alien to German history. See Arendt (1994[1965]) for a particularly prominent example.

T: Why not? No interest?

I: I mean I wouldn't, I wouldn't really have known what.

The trajectories presented here tend to be less smooth and friction-less than those of both the Inheritors and Fallen Nobles. Quite a few of the Economic Believers started out in a different subjects such as Political Sciences, Philosophy, Sociology or Business Administration before finding their way into Economics. It is therefore not really surprising to see them, at least initially, having a rather 'pragmatic' approach to their subject (one would say, within the epistemology criticised in chapter 2, 'extrinsic'). But this tends to change rather significantly during their Economics studies, the more so the more success they enjoy in it, or through it. Theoretically, this may be explained by the specification of the predisposition towards cultural goodwill bolstered by the catalyst of success, to accept and adopt as one's own ideal the inculcated ideals of one's social universe. The fact that this happens to such a varied case may perhaps be explained theoretically by the fact that Parvenus by definition do not have a position carved out ex ante that is made for them, and so are forced to adapt to whatever they find in their fields, at least initially. To most, in the case of academic Economics, this inculcation will only be fleeting and will tend to pass quickly. But to those successful in the field, it will likely leave a more defining mark. For the Parvenus there is a small, yet definite chance that they can acquire the required habitus of an academic discipline, to become a 'true Believer'. Thus, John's (6) hard work, during the process of 'converting' to heterodox Economics, can be said to be a result both of his goodwill as well as a hard, indeed ascetic, discipline:

I: It was [a course in his Economics studies] there I still know, I have, ah [...] before Christmas I had a look at the book list.

T: Hm.

I: Then got the books. [...] [Talking about a particular book] It was recommended, it was not necessary, but recommended as additional literature, and then I read it completely over Christmas

T: But it is 400 pages or something, right?

I: Yeah, yeah, but this was the way I was back then. In principle, in the first two years [of my studies] I did not do much else than learning. Right? [...] Read incredibly much for Politics, as I said. Don't know how this is in Sociology, but in Politics the reading lists are *very long*. I mean for each lecture there are like 10 to 15 articles recommended, as additional material, I had a look at *all* of them.

T: And you didn't get tired-

I: Nope.

T: - to read this stuff? Why not? Simply-

I: Yeah, I, I liked it after all. And I also thought I had to do it. Back then I was totally paranoid, I thought if I don't do that I won't pass.

It is no accident that this is reminiscent of Calvinist ascetics (Weber 1950[1904]). Therefore, it is in the context of trajectories such as this that one finds quite a few stories of 'conversion' of tastes, as in the case of Tom (50), who specialises first in econometrics and then Macroeconomics and who may be defined a Parvenu due to his establishment in a rather prestigious specialisation, the degree of his advancement in the discipline at a relatively young age (he is in his mid-20's, like the Inheritors), and lastly his high score on the Economic Habitus Index. He describes his change of mind on the example of specific economic principles, as we have seen above.

One might think that, for the Parvenus, the technical-formal aspects of economic thinking and models represent a ready possibility within the field, a visible sign of recognition and discipline-specific sign of being 'cultured', even though it is not the

only characteristic one must have in order to acquire *higher* standing within the field. And so one might interpret the taking-up of statistical, methodological and formalistic specialisations as the field-specific version of “[...] the minor forms of the legitimate cultural good and practices [...]” (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 319), which Bourdieu describes in relation to the acquisition of a field-specific middle-brow art. Concentration on the *technique* of producing a model, of its formalised parts and workings, as opposed to freely drawing it from one’s ‘natural inclinations’, as the Inheritors do, may be analogous to the relationship of the stamp to the art collection, of the kitchen- or bedroom-corners in one’s flat to real kitchen rooms or bedrooms in a bourgeois mansion (ibid.: 321), or to the technical vs. aesthetically-oriented use of photography (Bourdieu et al. 1990[1965]: 103-28). More closely, it might have its sociological analogues in subjects like Sociology in a meticulous but narrow qualitative analysis or commitment to ethnographic research. Once more we might look to 18th century French housing to see a group of an analogous position and to compare it with these Parvenus. It is ‘symmetry’ and ‘solidity’ (Elias 2002[1969]: 99) that are most important for the tradesmen and small merchants of the time. Elias writes: „The lowest social classes did not need to keep appearances, they had no real obligations regarding status. For this reason they gave priority to building characteristics which, while they need not be absent for the others, were entirely eclipsed by display and prestige. Utilitarian values such as convenience and solidity thus became quite unashamedly the main architectural concern of these classes. The need for economy became quite apparent in the outward appearance of the houses.” (Elias 2006[1969]: 62)

Solidity and Symmetry, these correspond, I argue, in the field of contemporary German Economics, in a taste for particularly technical and statistical tasks. They are sociologically related to the ‘convenient’ and ‘solid’ housing of the French petit bourgeoisie of that time.

What remains clear is that this acquisition of economism *via* the cultural good-will of a petit-bourgeois habitus - which is nevertheless transformed through this acquisition - may still produce a neoliberal disposition although one that seems, implicitly or explicitly, to defend the specific technical textbook solutions to

economic problems. One is reminded of the way Milton Friedman, himself a Parvenu by origin (see Friedman and Friedman 1998) and Economic Believer, adopted and processed the original neo-liberalism of the Austrian Economists. His version became what one may describe, paraphrasing Angus Burgin (2012: 168-85) as a ‘super-consistent, provocative apology of the pure market’ after an initial learning period of ‘parroting’ the original Neoliberals (ibid.: 170f.), and against the then prevailing Keynesian paradigm with its justification of the welfare state and “[...]the culture of politeness that characterized much of the academic world.” (ibid.: 171f.).

There are also rather harsh statements from deviations from the accepted ways of doing things in Economics, visible especially in Tom’s (50) case and his reaction to doubts about homo oeconomicus that often come from heterodox students:

I: Ahm, nope, a mean point of critique to begin with. Ahm, a lot of people that say that never dealt seriously with models. Because they can’t be bothered. Because they .. aren’t able to do it. To put it wickedly. I mean, nah, I mean I believe a lot of people haven’t dealt seriously with it, and, ahm, relate homo oeconomicus to too many things. Right? I also think that’s fiddlesticks. I mean, ahm, homo oeconomicus is an idea, and in the models in which it is used it deals with [speaks more emphatically] *extremely specific* styles of life, right? You speak of the question: how do I invest, how do I consume? And these are decisions that in my view are well constructible with homo oeconomicus. [...] But I cannot somehow apply homo oeconomicus to psychological questions. I cannot assume that homo oeconomicus works in interpersonal relationships, right? [...] I mean [as Economists] we do *not* try to describe the whole life world in which we are. But we describe specific, economic problems. Yes. And *that you can do* with homo oeconomicus or with ordinary mathematised Political Economy very well.

T: Hm.

I: The question is what people make out of it. Yeah, do they apply it to things where it should not belong, right?

One can interpret this as expression of a rather rigid, narrow form of economism that is less 'playful' than that of the Inheritors and Fallen Nobles. It is also quite strict in assessing the methodological position of other students. But indeed, the way in which this cultural good-will is expressed is not always the same even *within* the field of academic Economics. What are these deviations? What do they mean? How can they be explained?

Deflections and Deviations

The first case, that of Linus (54), who comes from a Humanities background yet is now quite successful in Economics, is an exception in so far as there is objective recognition without its 'subjective' counterpart. Rather than expressing a deep belief in Economics we encounter - and that is very rare among these students - a quite high degree of cynicism and pragmatic ('extrinsic') behaviour which cannot be explained with the tools at hand (although it might have to do something with his relatively late entrance into the field and earlier Humanities education). He specialises in Econometrics but is aware that the methods and models he applies are 'more of a description rather than an explanation' of economic phenomena. He has a knack for building models - recognised both by fellow students, who admire him for this ability, as well as an Economics professor who provides funding for further studies for him - but nevertheless criticises the 'overly mathematicised' character of Economics. Still, Linus' (54) motto for life after all is 'let it happen'. Overall, he subordinates to the existing order and forgoes his critique:

I: [...] If you then tendentially pull the rug out from the feet of those people that have built up their career on certain basic assumptions. That is this Kuhnian theory of science, that with changes of generation there can be changes of paradigms, but tendentially not within the same generation of scientists.

T: Hm.

I: [imitates professor] *I have worked for 15 years to get this professorship in this topic and then it is this way, nobody can tell me that everything that we have learned is wrong or not well-founded.*

T: Why not?

I: Well, that is.

T: Theoretically, this should be possible.

I: But seems to be inside of the people. ... And therefore, my plan is first to nicely.. to pass unnoticed in the paradigm, without much of an innovation and if this works out, if one actually comes out somewhere at the back [i.e. on the top] and perhaps [acquires] a professorship or so, then you are also free.

T: You can stir it up from the inside.

I: Exactly. [laughs] This was the idea, through the middle .. Oh well, honestly I don't have too many hopes. Whatever will be will be, and what won't won't.

But one may see here that even this 'opportunism' is supplemented with a symbolic (an 'intrinsic') justification, i.e. the use of Kuhnian ideas of scientific revolution (2006[1973]), that imply some kind of 'automatic' change of the science, and only in the long run, so that against short-term obstacles supposedly one cannot do anything,¹⁴³ which allow one to resign oneself to the forces that be.

¹⁴³ Incidentally, this is precisely the weakness Bourdieu finds with the Kuhnian Sociology of Science (Bourdieu 2006: 15-17; 1975: 32)

Indeed, if it was not for this caveat of a ‘better future’ this ‘opportunism’ would almost turn Linus - in his own eyes - into a Goffmanian theatre-player (Goffman 1971[1959]). And one cannot but think that this attitude ends up serving a conservative function within the academic field. These might be those groups in science that are only *moderately* adjusted to that paradigm, at least ‘subjectively’. What role do they play in modern science? Is their number increasing with the growth of the educational system? If so, how does this work? Do they fit Bourdieu’s ‘Academic Mediocrity’ (Bourdieu 1996[1989]: 23-29)?

The two students who deviate most from the original ideal-type of Parvenu - Economic Believer are John (6) and Anna (39), both of whom would call themselves heterodox students. Anna is very critical of neoclassical Economics and model-building overall. ‘I had the feeling I simply learn baloney’, she reminisces about her experiences during her Master studies in Political Economy, and thinks that it is ‘completely irrelevant what we calculate there’. She is very active in the pluralist Economics student movement and in particular advocates an idea called ‘positive money’. She explains:

I: [...] I mean I have a bad conscience because I talk so much, but these are the topics that are, where there is so much on the tip of my tongue, exactly. And the [association that deals with positive money] is basically this thought to create an alternative [to the existing financial system] and for me this is what is behind it. Ahm, should there be another great crisis sometime, which will certainly come at some point, if not in 10 years, then in 200 years it will come. It is somehow reasonable¹⁴⁴ to grapple with these alternatives, ahm exactly. And that the [association] does. Don’t know exactly either whether I deem it as the ideal solution, but it is about creating a monetary system which, ah, basically serves

¹⁴⁴ I am here translating the word reasonable for the German ‘sinnvoll’ to designate the rather vague connotation it has in this context. In a former quote by Tom, I, on the contrary, translated it into ‘rational’ to designate the more rigid use and meaning it seems to have in the theoretical and practical context in which Tom uses it. This practice is of course debatable.

all people, where money creation and redistribution processes are no longer attributed to private banks, but, ahm, benefit the general public. The general public in the sense of state income. And [the association] deals with that, exactly. How one could do this and so on.

T: Hm.

I: This is quite funny because they got out of this weirdo-corner to receive more recognition [...] But that is interesting I think, because if you [deal with this topic in this way] you very quickly are slotted with the anti-semites. Happened to me as well already, somehow.

T: Oh, ok.

I: Which I then, then you need to somehow, this is actually, I find that difficult economically, if you deal with certain topics, because you then are linked to certain societal groups somehow. .. Yeah. But I think this is just changing with the money and the financial system.

T: Hm. I mean what do you guys demand, or what do you demand in terms of economic policy with this positive money?

I: That [...] [when private banks give credits to private consumers they] do as if they issue a piece of paper where they say '*I owe you*', and that piece of paper they then use as money. You can imagine it like this, and the [association] would want [...] that this book money could not be used as a medium of exchange anymore. But that banks basically are pure intermediaries, and the money that you bring there they can lend further. But, exactly, nothing else. And at the moment there is this extreme instability because of the fact that money functions as debentures that banks actually cannot redeem, .. at least not all at once. But that is indeed this problem with the bankers, if we would all go to the bank and retrieve our money, that would not work because they don't have enough cash, and so on. Out of this follows instability and redistribution and what the [association] would want to have is, so to speak, that only the central bank can create [book] money, that you can only pay with this money then, for example your taxes and the like [...]. At the moment this profit of money

creation is with the private banks and then it would be with the central bank and this would [generate] income for the state and relieve debt, and so on.., and this problem of instability, where the actors in this financial system have an extreme power, simply because they have this large threat of instability, which is also a real threat. And I think if you would take out this instability further, which the [association] pursues, that is, ahm .. could contribute also to the disempowerment of the financial sector.

At first glimpse, these statements seem as if they are the direct antithesis of Tom's (50) attitude, discussed above. However, both have in common a very focussed, very passionate view of their chosen specialisations - indeed like Economic Believers, although with differing thrusts. Unlike Theo (40) for instance, for whom heterodox Economics is *one* activity among others, Anna (39) does nothing else, both intellectually and generally. In addition to that, of course, there seems to be the serious, heterodox challenge to economism, a broad and general outlook on the whole economy, a taste for tolerance in intellectual matters, that we have already encountered with the heterodox Inheritors. These are surely their own 'intrinsic' motivations and reflections, to be taken seriously. On the other hand, one may attempt to situate them in a material context.

Once again, one finds, as with the Inheritor "deviators", what might be called the 'paradox of heterodoxy': if indeed Political Economy is 'complete bollocks' and 'something that no one understands', and if it is understood as a Social Science, to be combined with Sociology for 'a truly holistic study', why not simply study something else than Political Economy? Why not simply turn away from Economics altogether? The answers given here (and elsewhere in a similar way) - that one 'wants to understand it' and 'to follow through to the end', since one is not a 'quitter' - seem to be *ex post* justifications designed to hide from everyone's view the still existing fundamental links to orthodoxy *and* to the academic field in which it reigns. So that, for example, Anna emphasises the normative, and practical, utility of economic research in sharp distinction to the 'logical understanding of science' found in orthodoxy: 'I want to do something that benefits society.'

Peculiarly, this attitude is not so far away from the preference for the ‘tangible’ aspects and methods that typically figure in Economist’s justifications against ‘fuzzy’ and ‘gratuitous’ disciplines like Sociology as shown in earlier chapters - only that now the normative assessments of precision vs. fuzziness are *reversed*¹⁴⁵. Relative fuzziness, rather than exactitude, is now equated with ‘tangibility’. It is in line with the counter-culture that heterodox Economics represents, with its emphasis on ‘plurality’ - but a *limited* plurality defined strictly in relation to mainstream Economics. The same goes for its emphasis on ‘autonomy’ - but a *limited* autonomy in which (self-)organisation and communication patterns are patterned equally strictly against the mainstream. In short, what one seems to encounter here are boundaries of fields and their doxa that are denied.

The remarks made above, about the mutual relationship of the positive and the normative, the altruistic and the egoistic seem to apply here as well. Anna’s ‘transformation’ of thinking (as that of others) can be interpreted as a ‘changeover’, the taking of an opposite position which, however, still has *the same distance* from the opposing concept. Besides this there are also obvious constancies designating her discourse as profoundly ‘economic’ in the accepted term: there is, for example, the already discussed tendency for political neutrality: She ‘also finds it problematic that one thinks in these [political] extremes.’ And: ‘I wouldn’t see myself absolutely with one party in terms of positions.’ Perhaps then, one might just as well see in these changes the transposition of ‘cultural good-will’ to a new topic and area, which includes a new sort of utopia to be aspired to as well as a new expression of the idea of ‘fairness’ in the economy perhaps not so far away

¹⁴⁵ This reminds one of Levi-Strauss’ analysis of the mutually alternative, alternating yet complementary uses of totemic systems for ancestors of neighbouring, northern Australian tribes: “[...] the Arabanna and the Warramunga think of their totemic ancestors as *single individuals* who are half-human half-animal and have an *air of completeness*. The Aranda on the other hand favour the idea of a *multiplicity of ancestors* (for each totemic group), who are, however, *incomplete* human beings and fully fledged men. In general, the distribution of beliefs and customs on a north-south axis shows sometimes a gradual change from one extreme type to its reverse form and sometimes the recurrence of the same forms at the two poles but in that case expressed in a reverse context: patrilineal or matrilineal; the structural inversion then occurs in the centre, that is, among the Aranda [...]” (Levi-Strauss 1966[1962]: 86f., my emphasis). The Aranda here having the same middle position between Arrabanna and Warramunga as orthodox Political Economy has between Sociology and Heterodox Economics.

from the ideals of Parvenus-Economic Believers that remained in the established orthodox pattern, like Tom (50). One may therefore construct that they have an interest in taking this position. I do not have the means here to explain this change-over. Nevertheless, Anna's positioning can be compared with that of a 'cultural intermediary', in the way in which Bourdieu talks about the non-legitimate popularisers of legitimate works (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 323ff.). Against the 'auctores' (i.e. the Inheritors and Fallen Nobles) and the 'lectores' (i.e. those petit-bourgeois who, at least initially, accept the assumptions of orthodox Economics), this group try to carve out their own space within the field. Like them, Anna wishes one day to write her own 'Economics book, easy to understand'. She shows the willingness to get into contact with agents and audiences *outside* the field, which Bourdieu derives as an important characteristic following from a heterodox field position (Bourdieu 1975: 30). But at the same time these external 'flirtatons' and 'irritations' (see the remarks on Anti-Semitism above) are also rather established within academic Economics, as we have seen in the last chapters.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have constructed a relationship between a petit-bourgeois or Parvenu habitus and a disposition of goodwill within the economic field that I have termed the Economic Believer habitus. This habitus is characterised by strong, diligent attachment to the orthodox, or heterodox theories and methodologies of the field, which sometimes implies rather harsh, open depreciations of other approaches. With the tools at hand I cannot say why some Parvenu choose orthodox or heterodox standpoints. What may, however, be sketched, is how their social origin and the accompanying interests are exhibited, in a transformed, field-specific way, compared to (most) students of the other two Ideal-types. The orthodox Economic Believers, in relation to them, tend to accept and welcome the delegation to technical, statistical duties and specialisations. Other than that the Parvenus usually construct their study selection as much more accidental than the other two ideal-types, and consequently experience their initiation into the field as

a form of conversion, which sometimes extends to their very attitude to academic orthodoxy. One may therefore conclude that this is yet another distinctive form of ‘intrinsic’ motivation and reflection which is unique insofar as it is the expression of a habitus that is more predisposed and dependant on institutional benevolence than others¹⁴⁶.

Perhaps one must now attempt to organise the insights gained in this section towards a fresh theoretical statements towards study selection. Finally, we will return to the questions posed in the introduction and see how far we can contribute to answering them.

¹⁴⁶ The concept of the ‘oblate’ comes to mind (Bourdieu 1988[1984]: 100f.). I would like to thank Prof. Bridget Fowler for making me aware of this.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

“No doubt relationships between any two societies would be made easier if, through the use of some kind of grid, it were possible to establish a pattern of equivalences between the ways in which each society uses analogous human types to perform different social functions. Instead of simply arranging meetings on a professional basis, doctors with doctors, teachers with teachers and industrialists with industrialists, we might perhaps be led to see that there are more subtle correspondences between individuals and the parts they play.”

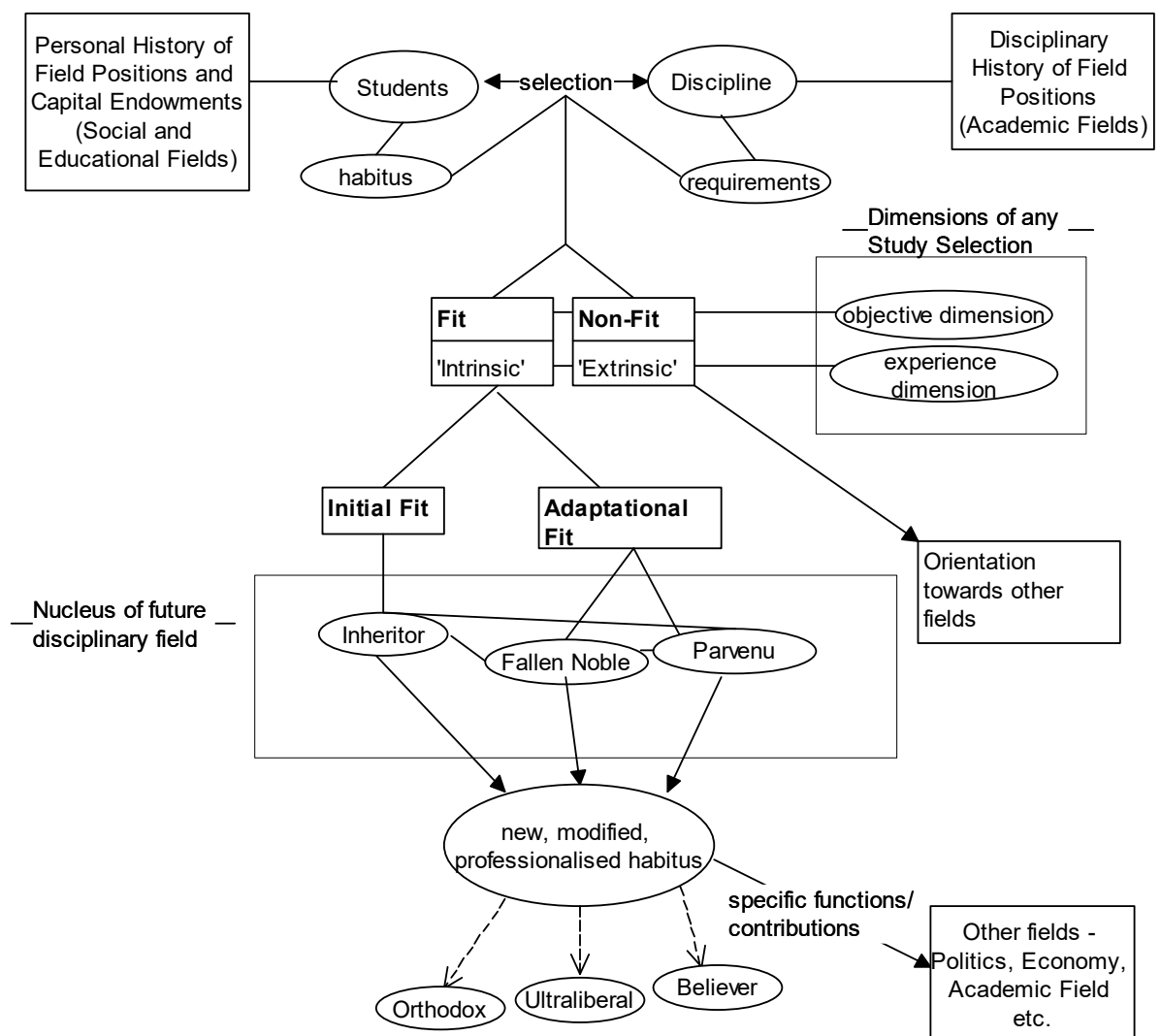
Claude Levi-Strauss - *Tristes Tropiques*

Recapitulations

In this work I have attempted to combine research questions that fall both in the field of the Sociology of Economic Knowledge and the Sociology of Education, or, more precisely, study selection. I started from a critique of the substantialist German and British literature on study selection - substantialism denoting a one-dimensional meaning of ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ study ‘choices’ in the former and a one-dimensional, partial meaning of ‘reflexivity’ in the latter. Against this I opposed the basic principles of a Bourdieusian epistemology which holds that meanings of actions, whether they concern the selection of study disciplines or reflections on one’s life, are not simply what they appear to be in common sense (or even alternative sense), but are the *expressions* of particular necessities of social condition that have been inscribed into the dispositions, the thinking reflexes so to speak, of the acting people. They are also influenced by the specific social environment in which they are in. This, then, forces us to see study selections within a conceptual chain of original field-habitus-current field-‘choice’, where all the concepts are influential at any time during the educational trajectory of a person. It opens up another, structural, dimension of interactions (of students with the academic field, with their field of selection, with other students, with staff and professors, etc., with the curriculum of their selected subject etc. - in other words,

between an embodied history and another embodied, or institutionalised, history) that takes place beyond the immediately visible 'choice' that is given to the interviewer or ticked in a survey. This dimension is not simply mirrored in empirical phenomena or not. It is a *vital part* of them, and it is so through the habitus, the lynchpin between structures and actions of people, that these dimensions are practically linked and realised. I hold that they are two sides of the same coin, so to speak.

Figure 16 Synopsis of a theoretical Sketch of a Bourdieusian Theory of Study Selection



But this makes the question of study selection more complex - we cannot, as with other approaches, simply pose group specific selections as 'genuinely' 'intrinsically' or 'extrinsically' motivated or deem certain groups as 'reflexive' per se while others are not. It is only through reconstructing the specific histories of the agents and the field they are in that one can make a better statement. This, of course, also implies to grant the possibility that some 'intrinsic' motivations are closer to some 'extrinsic' ones than originally thought, and, conversely, that some 'intrinsic' motivations are further apart. The point is to show how and why.

For this I interviewed around 50 German Economics students of varying disciplinary recognition and in varying stages of their education on their study selections. I contextualised their statements with their own original position in social space, their educational trajectory up to the point of the interview as well as with the field of academic Economics and its peculiar standing and history. This field, it seems, was and is characterised by a rather mediocre standing within the German academic field but a dominant one in terms of relations to extra-academic fields. This fits with statistical indicators of the social origin of both its students as well as its staff vis-à-vis those of other disciplines. Based on this contextualisation, and by way of theoretical induction, I first explored differences in attitudes and motivations between what I call 'recognised' and 'non-recognised' students before further exploring the differences between different groups of 'recognised' students, the Inheritors, the Fallen Nobles, and the Parvenus. I believe it is fair to say that in these interviews, as well as in other complementary sources, there is at least initial evidence to be found for the adequacy and explanatory power of these distinctions. There are, first, discernible differences between the attitudes of the 'recognised' and 'non-recognised' students in that the former tend to construct an earlier, perhaps more mystical, relationship to Economics than the former. Curricular concepts and terms - the typical economic liberalism and propensity towards mathematical modelling that prevail in the discipline - tend to fit much more to their thinking, and tend to be more far-reaching, extending onto areas not directly linked to their academic expertise. Second, there seem differences in *how* this acquisition of economic concepts and assumptions is done and inflected,

namely according to class origin. The Inheritors, students from a parental background of middle and technical teaching as well as engineering and natural science, tend to be most at home and at ease with the concepts offered by Economics. They thrive in mathematical and abstract model-making and exhibit an outspoken disapproval of more 'literary' forms of enquiry into social phenomena. The Fallen Nobles are coming from a dominant class background that has been deprived of its dominance. They value above all the liberal philosophy and individualist epistemology of Economics but are nevertheless critical of the discipline's mathematics and model-making. They are fervent advocates for extending the meaning of homo oeconomicus to all spheres of life. The Parvenus, coming from petit-bourgeois backgrounds with a strong technical emphasis, particularly tend to value the statistical, methodological aspects of their curriculum while adapting to its new social philosophy with outspoken fervour.

In a sense, then, this work is somewhat reminiscent of Bourdieu's and Passeron's early work *The Inheritors* (1979[1964]). Not only does it thematise and show social reproduction via educational selections and dispositions of the 'elect' of Economics. It also helps us to make sense of certain differences in position-taking within that group of recognised, 'elect' students, that is, their choice of specialisations and even to a certain degree their conflicts among themselves (orthodox vs. heterodox) as being part of the specific academic distinction games that are somewhat reminiscent of the 'mutually opposing Trotskyisms' presented in *The Inheritors* (ibid.: 47-52). And, like in that specific French world, there are empirical indicators that seem to point towards the fact that the rift orthodox vs. heterodox or intrinsic vs. extrinsic positioning might actually help to hide more profound differences that are grounded in a different class trajectory of the students. Surely, this also means to invest psychologically in the specific form of the 'charisma doctrine' which in German Economics is inextricably bound with mathematical model building. This is least possible for those not recognised who therefore, somewhat like working-class students in Bourdieu's and Passeron's work, "[...] cannot fail to wonder what they are doing." (ibid.: 62-64). On the other hand, most of the students in my sample certainly do not seem to exhibit, apart from occasional displays of good-faith into the values of the discipline, much of a gap between objective position and

subjective expectation as it was described for those without family experience in schooling in France in the 1950's and 1960's. This would point towards a higher degree of integration of hysteresis, in the sense described by Bourdieu in *On the State* (2014[2012]: 358-62), with philanthropy being linked to such relatively new institutions as think tanks. But at this point, one may only speculate why this is.

Fresh Views

What do these explorations point towards when re-thinking study selection with a Bourdieusian lens? First of all, there seems a case to be made for *theoretical distinction* of groups of students within a discipline. In times when the function of tertiary education seems to change more and more from a reproductive arena of intellectual circles towards an indispensable way station to *any* professional distinction, it becomes important to develop and devise indicators to distinguish, say, a scientific-educational from a rather professional orientation. These are not anymore 'genuine' motivations, but rather aspirations towards specific fields that have particular requirements. One should think about possible empirical indicators for this. Those should be adapted to discipline-specific doxa and assumptions. In any case, there seems little reason to assume, neither theoretically nor empirically, that there is such a thing as one unified 'field of study choice'. One should differentiate the students much more than has been done hitherto. As an epistemological rule we might therefore establish: do not say: 'People of this or that social origin and history will be likely academically successful and interested Economists or Sociologists or Philosophers.' Rather, say: 'Among academically successful and interested Economists or Sociologists or Philosophers you are more likely to find people of such and such social origin and history.'

Second, within scientific-educational orientations it seems to make sense to theoretically distinguish not between 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' motivations as such, but between motivations that are *embedded* in a system of relations constituted by the habitus of the students and the particular field they are in or want to be in. In this way study selection acquires a more theoretical and at the same time practical

meaning. In how far a particular student exhibits a more ‘intrinsic’ rather than ‘extrinsic’ motivation depends now on the position of the student and her habitus relative to the field, not simply on her ‘free’ motivation. This structural relationship is the *abstracted dimension* of the *likely* experience of the students and the *likely* actions that follow from it, how their habitus ‘presents’ the field to them and thus suggests and guides further selections and actions. It is the ‘other side of the coin’ that is to be illuminated by the Sociologist.

This explains why the Inheritors seem, from all the recognised students I have considered here, ‘naturally’ as the most ‘intrinsic’ ones, at least at first. Their particular ‘interest in disinterestedness’ is obliterated early from their view and those of most observers (except in Economics, of course, by critics such as those listed in my introduction above, who are pre-disposed, by their marginal position in the field, to critically objectify these selections, but also to reduce them, either to intellectual inadequacy or to cynicism). This is unlike with those less-fitting (i.e. the Fallen Nobles and Parvenus), who, by their relative mis-fit to the field’s requirements, tend to be reminded of their gap. ‘Extrinsic’ motivation, experienced and voiced, is therefore in any case a clear sign of a *gap* of impersonalised history and institutionalised history of the field. And even if it in time gives way to more ‘intrinsic’ motivations (as we have seen with the Parvenus in particular), I have argued that these ‘intrinsic’ motivations are quite *different* in terms of their circumstances of genesis and meaning than those of the Inheritors, and thus need to be grouped into different Ideal-types. In the case of the Inheritors, it is the expression of an ambivalent position in social space (and, later, academic space) which predisposes them towards developing a keen interest in ‘clear’ and ‘tangible’ and ‘positive’ and thus mathematical-modelling ways of reasoning while at the same time anxiously responding to political or extra-scientific demands. This, of course, overlaps significantly with the disciplinary requirements of German academic Economics which has allegedly a homological position in the academic space. With the Fallen Nobles ‘intrinsic’ motivation for Economics denotes, on the other hand, a predisposition for symbolic enunciation - the surrogate of those formerly privileged groups that have declined in their position - by the taking up of a conspicuous individualism and radical liberalism while also showing a very

sceptical attitude towards mathematical modelling. With the Parvenus, 'intrinsic' motivation signifies yet another meaning, that of an aspiration (a good will) towards a field and status formerly unknown, which results in a specific selection of technical, statistical aspects combined with extensive adaptation of the neoliberal field doxa. But using the word 'results' is probably too mechanistic, because we always need to empathise how the original structural resources of these students show themselves in specific perceptions, impressions and classifications which provide orientational guidance in the maze of possible choices of disciplines and specialisations.

Moreover, it seems clear that the selections themselves, even with the Inheritors, change the dispositions and the habitus to a certain degree, so that people with an original cadre origin, even though having lots of common social ground with Inheritors in Economics, are still somewhat different. But how are they different from one another? Following the data analysis I would argue that it is their deep *belief* in the objectivity and truth of academic Economics, and thus in their *own* objectivity, that distinguishes the finished Economist, the orthodox Inheritor, the Ultraliberal or the Economic-Believer statistician from his or her otherwise socially similar Cadres, Fallen Nobles or Parvenus (Bourdieu 1980[1977]). The study of Economics (as that of other disciplines, one might argue), that is the transformation of normative assessments into legitimate 'truth', and first in the eyes of the Economists themselves. It is the firm grafting of economic principles and assumptions onto the existing and required social characteristics of its elite students, and hence the transformation of the dispositions of the habitus. This can go even so far that areas that are not strictly economic in the narrow sense of the word (such as study selection itself) are viewed through the 'economic lens'. Economic thinking becomes tendentially omnifarious - this, incidentally, might be another way to produce more reliable empirical indicators of habitus change. We might pose as an epistemological principle for further studies: Find out what the major assumptions of the legitimate way of doing a science are, and then enquire whether they are applied in areas *remote* from the actual remits of that science.

With these results in mind, one may return to the sociological specialisations discussed in chapters 3 and 4 to spell out the implications of this study. For the sociology of education it makes the case for a materially grounded and anti-substantialist and anti-essentialist epistemology. 'Intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' study 'choices' as well as 'reflexivity' are not simply concepts that are the same everywhere and with every student. They are, like study choice as a whole, integrated into the individual history and trajectory of a person and hence need to be interpreted and grouped according to the relationship and interaction they entertain with these structural characteristics. In the end this calls for a re-grouping of disciplines and groups of students according to analogical similarities of this relationship rather than according to superficial similarity.

For the sociology of science (discussed in chapter 4), I hope to have shown, firstly, that 'betting' on Bourdieusian epistemology can yield at least some fruitful insights and results that were hitherto hidden. If this is so it means that controlled reduction, understood as a theoretically guided decision to emphasise some relationships over others in analysis, is a necessary practice both in epistemology and resulting specific theory. The case is to be made for the development not of abstract economic, but specific economic theories of interaction of specific habitus in specific fields. This leaves the sociologist to construct a theory of what he sees and hears from the subjects' constructions he observes in the 'as if'-manner - ideal-type so and so acts *as if* they were Inheritors, Fallen Nobles, Parvenus's, and so on. This also implies that we need to take subjects' constructions, and thus their values, seriously rather than to dismiss it as a part of 'tinkering' or simple power games. This means granting the existence of a common stock of disciplinary norms of which various groups within the field have different and contrasting interpretations for which they then struggle with the allowed methods.

Relations between Fields

If the major results of this study hold true, then of course it also has implications for the questions posed in the introduction, and by heterodox Economists and

critical observers of academic Economics alike. We might now reformulate them into Bourdieusian terms: What is the relationship of academic Economists to their own intellectual products? What relations do exist between the Economic academic field and other fields like Politics or the economic field, and why?

With the anti-intellectualism inherent in Economism, it seems barely surprising that the intellectual products of many Economists attract the approval and support of those fractions of the dominant class that “[...] expect their artists, their writers, their critics, like their couturiers, jewellers or interior designers, to provide emblems of distinction which are at the same time means of denying social reality.” (Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 293). But they do so in and through their good faith in the *objectivity* of what they are doing. It is this belief in objectivity - the specifically formalised form of objectivity which they ‘intrinsically’ believe in - that prepares them to fulfil conservative functions in society. If the analysis above is adequate, then this means that these Economists are not stupid and not cynical. They are, mostly *convinced* of their ways, and that conviction is a social product, to be investigated sociologically. What they perceive as neutral tool of seeing and judging the world becomes a tool of domination in other fields, against trade unions or against the state and its respective agents. Now, beside the functions of delivering scientific justifications for the rule of the market over the whole of society, Economists peculiarly seem to partake also in other aspects or forms of domination, namely in the political field. For example, it is known that academic Economists have played quite a role in the setup of the new rightwing party politics and movements in Germany during the last years - both directly, by helping to found parties such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and lending their symbolic weight to it, but also, indirectly, by an attraction exerted to at least some of the voting groups of these parties through their intellectual products. My sample gives evidence that this may be particularly true for the Fallen Nobles. How may this be accounted for? Here, too, I believe one can make sense of this with Bourdieusian tools.

For example, one could forward the hypothesis that there is a *homology* of position and of trajectory between the two groups. It is known that it tends to be the *declining petite bourgeoisie* that is most attracted to various forms of conservatism (see for the recent case of Pegida protests in Germany: Daphi et al. 2015: 9-13, who show that the supporters of this movement are disproportionately male and self-employed; Vorländer, Herold, and Schäller 2015: 43-49, who in addition find above-average earnings but below-average education of these protesters ; and of course Bourdieu 1984[1979]: 346-51). Ultraliberalism as it is discussed here must appear as a highly attractive option to these social groups and their political leaders. This is because it gives prestige and rationalised foundation to a good part of their own living conditions and private grievances, their perceived attack by new regulations and lack of support by the state. Ultraliberalism's radical individualism, its seemingly radical critique of the state, of bureaucracy (and the oppression and power that is executed within these arrangements), its view of the world that may border on conspiracy theories (the political elite trying consciously to control the rest of society) are part and parcel of that attractiveness. Hence it seems no accident that it was Economists, including some influential Ultraliberals (i.e. Austrian Economists and Ordoliberal), that helped to launch the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany party in 2013, in which they were successively marginalised by more and more outspokenly right-wing (and particularly racist) forces.¹⁴⁷ In the same vein, it is not so astonishing to hear from Anton (27) that when a libertarian friend of his tried to open up a libertarian discussion group: 'those right-wing people came along pretty damn quick'. Sentences like these point towards a peculiar, and ill-understood, 'dynamics of fields', here between the academic field and the political field. On the other hand, this potential demand, and the resources and power and recognition attached to it, likely also serves as a temptation in itself. Hence it is no surprise to see the German Hayek-Society rocked by fissures between more 'liberal' and more 'conservative' forces (Plickert 2015), or that American libertarians' links to the alt-right are sometimes exposed (Ganz 2017). This may be explained by the very ambiguous character these agents are

¹⁴⁷ This is not to say that Economists of a different category - such as Inheritors - can't be tempted to involuntarily help to bring about the birth of such a right-wing party. But their way and reasons, and causes, to this are presumably different from those of the Ultraliberal Fallen Nobles.

forced to take with regards to ‘the masses’ due to their position in social space, which predisposes them towards a symbolic revolution (for which they must mobilise support), but one that retains the distance to these very masses they need to bring about a revolution in their favour. It goes without saying that the fact that these ultraliberal Fallen Nobles help to bring about socially conservative and repressive politics (that may justify racism even in everyday life such as described by Smith 2016) *does not make them identical* with those who stand to gain most for these politics in the very same way that the fact that Heidegger helped to justify Nazism philosophically does not make him simply a Nazi functionary like any other (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 151f.). Again, the fact that someone like Hayek *believes* that he is ‘not a conservative’ (Hayek 2006[1960]) does play an important role in helping him to do what he does. It prepares him to retain his innocence in regards to the origin of his intellectual products, and his objective function as an ideological battering ram of social forces (see Stone 1965 for another analogical, historical example) which he does not consciously support, but which helps to bring about the realisation of the ‘essence of Neoliberalism’ (Bourdieu 1998) as “[a] programme for destroying collective structures which may impede the pure market logic.” (ibid.). Such a programme Hayek, of course, salutes, but he does not see that that effects the essential concentration of power in fewer hands, the exact opposite of what he had intended. This, obviously, also shows the inadequacy of his original view of how society works or should work.

Might there perhaps be a way, through a Realpolitik of reason and executed by politically and socially progressive forces, to specifically target students with this background, offering them material and ideological support (perhaps by offering studentships for challenging received ideas, something long done by conservative forces), in order to win over to a more progressive cause agents that are inclined above all to symbolic revolutions, who quite naturally and rather easily are able to mobilise support and create public attention, and therefore bind them towards this more progressive cause? The socially produced inclinations towards partial symbolic revolution, towards radical stances, may thus be put to much better use for the common good than in the current arrangement. Indeed, once one takes this into

account, it is much easier to agree with Norbert Elias' recommendation that "Perhaps it would sometimes be less costly for a society to build bridges to these people who have no way out." (Elias 1996[1989]: 227). Surely this is the case already, the question then remains *who* (that is, what social groups with what interests) offer ways out, and *where* they lead to within the socially caused limits of perception and cognition.

Moreover, if one thinks about the close connections of Economics and Economists to external fields and demands *in general* - and heterodox Economics, in its close ties to certain left-leaning and well-educated social groups (Eversberg 2015) seems no exception in this regard - one is led to ask, from a Bourdieusian perspective, questions of how this relationship of interests is balanced, how it works in practice, and under which attitudes and perceptions by its executors. Eventually, one might be able to reconstruct if, and how, these 'flirtations' with outside needs and demands may compromise the (probably frail) disciplinary autonomy of academic Economics.

One may pose, for now, that Economists tend to provide symbolic weapons to specific, and often privileged, groups in other fields - above all the economic elite. How can this (dis-)function of supplier of symbolic justifications of the domination of already dominant groups be altered? What role can Sociology play in remedying it?

The Task of Sociology

If this perspective of the social and historical embeddedness of study selections is adequate, Sociologists must include themselves in it as well. They could venture into exploring their historically grown dispositions, the social characteristics of the discipline's Inheritors as well as Sociology's position both within academic space and in relation to outside forces.

The hypothesis developed in this work is that Economics tends to require and reward male students that possess a specific form of cultural capital that might be called technical. It is associated with specific 'technical' professions such as Engineers, Medium-level teachers in natural scientific topics, but also technicians and IT administrators. But what about Sociology, or other Social Sciences, for that matter? We know already that they are quite different in terms of the degree of feminisation compared to Economics, at least in Germany (and elsewhere too probably). But what about other social characteristics? One would have to create a sample of 'recognised' students in various disciplines to compare their precise social origin. Are there less 'recognised' students with this relative preponderance of technical cultural capital in other disciplines? What is their precise combination of social characteristics of Inheritors relative to that of other disciplines? Which factors are the most decisive ones, and how, in each case, do they tend to transform, in the course of studies, the habitus to that of a convinced insider of academic field-specific truths. To do this one would have to devise indicators both for disciplinary recognition for each discipline, as well as obtain precise data on the social origin of the students - for example by making the question on social origins an open one, supplemented with the invitation to briefly describe the tasks of their parents, as it was done by Bourdieu and his team in *Distinction*. So far, this kind of data for recognised students does not exist yet. A similar check may be made with the comparison of recognised students within a discipline. If I am correct, there will be a statistically discernible concentration of Inheritors in Economics in 'orthodox' specialisms like Macro- and Microeconomics as well as Economic Theory, while Fallen Nobles should be over-represented in Economic Policy and Economic History and Parvenus in Statistics and Econometrics.

But what are the distributions of specialisations to different Ideal-types in *other* disciplines? Are these Ideal-types useful there anyways? That is of course an open, empirical question. If something like a group of Inheritors could be identified, on a bigger scale, in Economics and in Sociology, one might compare their attitudes towards study selection on the basis of their very similar *relationship* of their habitus to their respective discipline's requirements (namely, initial fit) - even if

there are differences in the social characteristics, in that resource endowment that the word Inheritor means in these disciplines. From another analytical angle, one might furthermore *trace* and compare specific original class origins (say, Fallen Nobles) and the habitus transformations happening through studying various disciplines - this may help to highlight the specific effect of different 'disciplinary socialisations' with a particular habitus. Quite logically, then, one would then work towards a new grouping of disciplines - not anymore according to substantial, 'obvious' lines - Sociology with Cultural Sciences, Economics with Business Administration, and so on - but rather according to a sociologically constructed field perspective, based on relationships between elite students and their subject but also on the relationship of the subjects among themselves.

This all sounds very objectivist, I know. But once this objective dimension of underlying structures, and the habitus that are embedded in them, are constructed it might foster a better mutual understanding of scientists across disciplinary boundaries, and their experience dimensions when selecting 'their' disciplines. After all, is the Economist's aim for 'tangibility and precision' really so much different to the Sociologist's striving for 'myth-busting and reflexivity'? Is not reflexivity, in its own way, bound with tangibility, as precision is with busting myths? Surely, it is not the goals themselves that diverge, but the ways to achieve them, the differing *meanings* attached to them. What to do with these meanings? How to evaluate them? How to draw lessons from them? What I am proposing here is a stronger, more concerted effort of *self-objectification*, to link meanings to dispositions of habitus, and to structures that made this habitus. Rather than writing more 'critical' treatises about this or that variant of neoliberal Economics and its shortcomings, why not, as Sociologists, reaching out to those Economists willing to submit their expertise and experience to sociological scrutiny? Why not attempting to build up a trans-disciplinary, perhaps even trans-national, forum of Social Scientists which aims at scientifically singling out and understanding differing disciplinary approaches? This might be done not in an effort to define or to exalt the 'true reflexivity' or 'true tangibility' of social scientific procedures and theories, but in order to remove obstacles - social obstacles - that lie in the way of

achieving perhaps more *autonomous* versions of these meanings - practically and collectively.

In other words, the sociology of Neoliberalism should take more seriously those intellectuals that promote Neoliberalism. It should distinguish them both from non-intellectual neo-liberals as well as from each other. This distinction, in my view, is needed for a more thorough and precise understanding of just how this social system we live in now works, which is an indispensable precondition for efficient political action to change it. And even more: Sociologists should put into greater focus the relationships of these neo-liberal intellectuals with those intellectuals that usually struggle against them in the political and/or scientific arena. This is a demanding task for Sociologists, especially those on the left, who have many reasons, and inclination, to more or less openly follow activists who just lump together all symbolic support for Neoliberalism under one label (see exemplarily Klein 2007). Their criticism should be more effective once they complement a close textual critique with complex and reflexive social scientific insights of these very texts and their authors. As with any other obstacle to progress, it helps to describe and to understand it as completely as possible in order to help to overcome it.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent Form Interviews



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Consent Form

Title of Project: German Economics Students' academic trajectory and economic attitudes

Name of Researcher: Tim Winzler

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that:
 - written summaries of the results will be made available for me if requested at the end of the research period in July 2017, and that I can request a copy of the final thesis, once this is completed, from the researcher.
 - I will be referred to by pseudonym only in any publications arising from the research, and that any relevant personal detail shall be properly de-identified.
 - anonymised data from this research might be made available to other researchers to foster the advancement of scientific knowledge
 - the research data arising from this research will be archived for up to 10 years.

4. By signing this consent form I also waive copy rights to the data arising from this research.
5. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.
6. I consent that the above mentioned researcher can retain personal data of mine (Email- Address, Mobile Number) for up to 5 years in order to do follow-up interviews. By ticking the box below, I also consent that I may be contacted for another interview within the upcoming 5 years.

(please tick this box if you agree to be contacted for a potential follow-up interview)

<i>Name of Participant</i> Tim Winzler	<i>Date</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<i>Researcher</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Signature</i>

1 for subject; 1 for researcher

Appendix 2: Interview Guideline

Interview Themes with students at Leipzig University/other German

Universities: (re: point 3.3a)

1. Choice of Subject:

- Why do/did you study Economics? How did you come to it?
- What else do/did you study with it? Did you change your subjects during your studies, or do you plan to? Why is/that?
- Is there anyone in your family or environment who advised you to take Econ, or who recommended it to you?
- What do you think one needs to successfully complete Economics studies?
- Do you have any siblings? What do/did they do?

2. Attitudes towards the Discipline:

- How did/do you like your subject? What did/do you like about it? What not? Can you say why?
- What do you specialise in and why did it come this way? Do you already have an idea what you would like to know more about, in mean in terms of topics/fields?
- Do you have any scientific heroes? If so, who would that be, and what do you like about them?
- How would you actually define your discipline, say, also as against other Social Sciences such as Sociology, Anthropology or Political Sciences?
- So far, do you have any favourite Economics books which you really liked reading during your study time? That can be any book related to Economics. Which subject is for you the 'natural' complement/ally to Economics? Why?

- Are you organised in events outside the classroom that are, in one way or the other, about Economics or Economic topics? What would that be (student associations, political parties, NGO's, other voluntary work, internship with companies)?
- What else do you like to do in your free time?

3. Plans for the Future:

- Do you have any idea what you will do after you graduate/in the next couple of years? What kind of field are you interested in, and why?

4. Opinions on current topics:

- What's your stance on the Greek debt crisis/the Euro crisis?
- How would you fix the national (British) deficit problem and why do you think this is?
- The field of Economics and the profession of Economists have come under attack after the 2007 crash --- do you think the critique is justified? Why or why not?



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Plain Language Statement PLS Students/Participants in Observation:

(Please note that all participants will be presented with a German version of this statement to ensure maximum understanding)

Plain Language Statement (or Participant Information Sheet)

Study title and Researcher Details

German Economics Students' academic trajectory and economic attitudes

You are being invited to take part in a research study on Economics students' economic attitudes. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thanks a lot for reading this.

Tim Winzler

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What is the purpose of the study?

To make a contribution to explain and to understand why the science of Economics is the way it really is and not otherwise, by looking at those who study it at various stages of their university education. This will help to dismantle prejudices that people have about Economics teaching and research by showing the perspective and standpoint of those involved in it.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you study Economics in one form or another and because you are thus relatively interested in economic questions and everything that surrounds it. As a future or contemporary economist you 'embody' your discipline in a certain way, but you also have your own ideas what makes the Economy work the way it does and if/how you would change that. I am interested in how you see the Economy, and how you would manage and organise it.

Do I have to take part?

Of course, I am not forcing anyone to take part in this research. Just let me know that you don't want to have your comments and thoughts used in my research and I

will respect that. None of your comments, assertions or opinions shall then be published or recorded, and I will not ask you any questions regarding your view on the subject. And even if you take part, you can withdraw at any stage, just let me know. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

What will happen to me if I take part?

I will attend the meetings of your student society regularly and simply take notes on what happens there, in terms of what is said and discussed. I might also ask you to take part in an interview about your personal background and your way into your Economics. If you want, I might offer to organise a reading group for getting your concrete opinion of various pieces of Economics literature. I would like to record both the reading group sessions and the personal interview if this is ok with you. At the end of the process I might distribute a small questionnaire regarding your attitudes towards various topics and your social background. This is basically it, there is nothing else involved.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your contact data, notes of your views and from my research as well as any audio recordings will be kept safely in accordance with the very strict rules of data storage and management that are enforced by the College of Social Sciences Ethics rules as well as those recommended by the British Sociological Association (BSA). I will also anonymise sufficiently any quotes that I will submit/publish for my Sociology peers so that nothing can be traced back to particular persons.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will inform the main empirical stage of my research project that will deal with Economics students within the German context. They might also be included in the final version that will be submitted as my PhD and eventually might appear in Sociology journals and periodicals, as well as in academically minded public journals. I will archive the data from this research in a secure location. I will, with your consent, retain your personal contact data (Email, Mobile Number) for up to 5 years in order to use them to do follow-up interviews. I might make the fully anonymised research data available to other Social Scientists to further the advancement of scientific knowledge. Again, any comment you make will be properly anonymised in order to protect your privacy and identity.

Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

The research is funded partly by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and partly by the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences (CoSS).

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the College of Social Sciences of the University of Glasgow.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns or complaints on how I carry out my research that you find objectionable and don't want to raise with me personally, you can always contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Muir Houston Via Email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk Or Via Phone: 0141-330-4699

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Participant Observation Pro Forma Form:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Event:

Observations: e.g.

- Number of people present, gender and age distribution, type of event

- Assertions on economic attitudes

- Presentations and discussions of certain schools of economic thought

- Arguments exchanged for and against different theories/standpoints in Economics

- General atmosphere of the meeting and (if appl.) informal pub session afterwards

- Statements on personal trajectory of the person outside and inside of Economics

- Expression of values/intentions behind studying Economics/pursuing a career in it

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