

# Topicality of *Reproduction*, by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron: 50 years of an academic and political legacy\*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper discusses the book by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction. Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*, released in 1970 in France. Starting with a location of the work in its origin context and main theoretical premises, subsequently, findings derived from empirical research carried out with articles published in 2020 that referred to this text. Located on the Google Scholar platform, 51 papers were analyzed and treated using the content analysis. Papers demonstrated that even after 50 years from the book publishing, its content is still topical and unavoidable to observe the education system. Concepts and notions of the manuscript were used in various themes and problems related to the Brazilian educational field, such as relationship between school performance and students' social origin; cultural capital as a heritage stimulated and transmitted by the family, able to generate impact on definition of a successful or unsuccessful school path; the role played by the school on reproduction of symbolic capital; and the fact that pedagogical actions are not neutral, but examples of symbolic violence. The text is concluded indicating that readings of the Bourdieu's work in Brazil experienced a significant change over the last few years. From the examination of scientific production studied was possible notice out another framework appropriation logic developed by the sociologist, used as theoretical-methodological instrument in multidisciplinary and multi-methodological research.

## Keywords

Reproduction – 50 years – Bourdieu and Passeron – Scientific production – Brazilian educational field.

\* English version by Elita Medeiros.

**1-** The entire dataset supporting the results of this study is available in the "Supplementary Materials" section.

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*D'excellentes intentions peuvent produire des effets qui ne sont pas du tout ceux qu'on a souhaités et qui exercent, pour de jeunes esprits, des effets de clôture. Donc je voudrais libérer, en quelque sorte, autant qu'il est possible, de cet effet de clôture que peut exercer une œuvre reçue dans certaines conditions. De même que Marx disait qu'il n'était pas marxiste, je dirais que je ne suis ni bourdieusien ni bourdivin.<sup>3</sup>*  
Pierre Bourdieu

This text discusses the legacy from the book by Pierre Bourdieu e Jean-Claude Passeron, *A reprodução: elementos para uma teoria do sistema de Ensino* [Brazilian Portuguese version, and *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* in its English translation, published by SAGE Publishing in New York in 1977]. The initiative came from the release celebration of the French work, dated 1970. Thereunto, the paper is divided into three parts. The first one approaches the book reception in its origin country and in Brazil and recovers significant theoretical premises which reveal the character of the work and the relevance of its message as well. The second part discusses, from the analysis of papers published in journals, the book's heritage for Brazilian readers and how they used the manuscript to address their research problems. The paper is concluded indicating a new format of appropriation of the authors' theoretical-methodological framework, mainly regarding Bourdieu and how this appropriation is present and paramount to analyze the issues of the Brazilian educational field.

## **Reproduction in France and in Brazil**

In 1970, Pierre Bourdieu, in partnership with Jean-Claude Passeron, published the book *La Reproduction: éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*, translated into Portuguese as *A reprodução: elementos para uma teoria do sistema de ensino* and released in Brazil by the *Livraria Francisco Alves* in 1975.

The book *A reprodução* is considered by many commentators as a theoretical synthesis of *Les héritiers: les étudiants et la culture*, of 1964 (*Os herdeiros: os estudantes e a cultura*, released in Brazil by the *Editores da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* in 2014). It might be understood when verifying that further empirical data, the authors used notions designed to explain and clarify the observed reality, such as the notion of cultural capital associated with the notions of linguistic capital or linguistic competence. These discussions appear in many parts of the text, once the authors consider the teaching system as a communication one. They broaden the concept definition and its implications as cultural goods, which are transmitted by different family pedagogical actions and whose value, as cultural capital, occurs by the distance or proximity function between the cultural arbitrariness imposed by dominant pedagogical action, and cultural arbitrariness instilled by the family pedagogical action in different social groups. It is important highlight, as Champagne and Christin (2004) point, that first analyzes of the education system show the notion of cultural capital had not have the complexity that it acquired in

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**3-** Excellent intentions may produce effects which are not at all those desired and which exert, for young minds, effects of closure. So, I would like to set free, in a way, as much as possible, from this effect of closure that a work received under certain conditions can exert. Just as Marx said he was not a Marxist, I would say that I am neither bourdieusien nor bourdivin (BOURDIEU, 2005, p. 326, our translation).

the sequence, but its genesis is in these works, posteriorly deepen the concept in research on the social functions of cultural practices.

Further the capital cultural notion, Bourdieu and Passeron (2008) approached the symbolic violence notion and affirm that every pedagogical action is objectively safe violence as imposition, by an arbitrary power, of a cultural arbitrary. Therefore, pedagogical action – exercised by pedagogical authority and effected by pedagogical communication, not in the informative sense, but in the sense that teacher's discourse has an institutionalized authority – appears as a legitimation instance of power relations within the social space, also legitimizing the social hierarchy which rest in the cultural arbitrary, contributing for bases of cultural and social reproduction. This school cultural arbitrary became an instrument of symbolic domination by a certain social use of culture as symbolic capital is an example of symbolic violence at the time of its acquisition, not only by imposing the legitimacy conferred by the dominant group, but by the cultural conversion necessary for its assimilation as well.

The authors also referred to the habitus concept as an internalization product of a cultural arbitrary principles, able to perpetuate itself after the pedagogical action cessation, then preserving in practice the principles of internalized arbitrariness. They also detached the concept as a system of perception schemes, thought, appreciation and action, unifying and practice-generating principle used to understand durability and transference of such practices.

According to the authors, education from institutionalized practices should be considered as fundamental instrument of historical continuity. As responsible for the process through which the reproduction of cultural arbitrary takes place through the mediation of the habitus production and the practices producer, in accordance with the cultural arbitrariness, educational system would be equivalent, at the cultural level, to what happens in the transmission of genetic capital at the biological level. In some parts of *A reprodução*, most of the elements necessary to understand the habitus concept is perceived. Obviously, such elements were systematized and deepened throughout Pierre Bourdieu's work.

The relevance of using the habitus concept as a key for the analysis interpretation lies on the fact that the university was not able, with the entry of individuals with heterogeneous habitus in its interior, to solve the pedagogical problems that this public change has caused that would be the exact nature of the crisis in the French university system since the 1960s, which has an impact to this day. Social reproduction derived from the higher-level school institution then took place, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (2008), due to the inefficiency and weakening of information operated in the communication between teachers and students.

The authors noticed that pedagogical communication is perpetuated in a certain format and that information transmitted by this communication tends to cancel itself out for some students excluded from the possibility of dealing with the university language. Pedagogical communication, with its rhythm, its rite, its little-known or unknown words which appear stereotyped and its system of visible and invisible engagement in the social space, constitutes the pedagogical action as an imposition and inculcation action. Students

who can exchange the signs of recognition of language and culture, which match their cultivated habitus with demands of the institution have an advantage over those who do not agree and who still suffer from the lack of questioning on the form taken by pedagogical communication by teachers.

It is a whole logic of the school institution founded on a pedagogical work of a traditional type and that guarantees the infallibility of teacher and recognition of his/her authority. Bourdieu and Passeron (2008) recalled that the education system, in order to fulfill its social function of legitimizing the dominant culture, also proceeds with the selection and elimination processes. The exam (assessment) has characteristics and internal functions in education system and dominates university life not only in the representations and practices of agents, but in the institution organization and functioning.

It is not just the most literal expression of school values implicit in education system, in a sense of imposing as worthy of university sanction a social definition of knowledge and the way to manifest it, but when offering one of the most effective instruments for undertaking the inculcation of the dominant culture and its value. Different types of school exams are regulated and institutionalized models of communication and provide the prototype of pedagogical message, very effective instruments that rank and certify. They are even able to carry out an early elimination, when by elimination proportions, individuals measure the chances of approval and probabilities of success, or even the objective probabilities and subjective hopes in education system.

At the end of the book, Bourdieu and Passeron (2008) indicated that education system acts from a relative autonomy which allows it to serve external demands more effectively, under a pretense independence and neutrality, disguising social functions of maintaining the social order established. It was precisely this view of relative autonomy that made the authors, based on the look at the university universe and the social characteristics of its audience, flee from common sense analyzes which tend to dichotomize their conclusions between condemning the school system, presumably the single culprit for all the inequalities it produces, and denunciation of a social system held responsible for inequalities, thus exoneration of the school system. The effect of the relative autonomy is to enable the education system to make a specific contribution to social reproduction, then ensuring the hereditary transmission of cultural capital and its ideological function of this function dissimulation and believing in the illusion of its absolute autonomy. The authors close the work with the affirmation that, in a society in which the attainment of social privileges depends on the school titles possession. The school's function is to ensure the discreet succession of the rights of the bourgeoisie, which would no longer knows transmit it direct and declaredly. In addition to granting the privileged the supreme privilege of not appearing as privileged, it also manages to convince disinherited ones that they owe their educational and social destiny more to their deficiency of gifts or merits than to their deficit of cultural capital. Therefore, absolute dispossession excludes awareness of dispossession.

When discussing the reception of *Os herdeiros* and *A reprodução*, Bourdieu (2002b, p. 73) evaluates the first book, despite saying nothing extraordinary, once the facts were known to the scientific community, that it was like a “thunder in the political sky”, when

revealing mechanisms that supported what was empirically observed. The authors were not content to say the education system eliminates students from underprivileged classes, but sought to explain why this occurs, making evident the contribution of educators in the social divisions reproduction.

About the second book, the author affirms the term “reproduction” has had a catastrophic effect because the term has circulated, despite not everyone has read the book. If on the one hand it became a paradigm according to which the contribution of school system to the reproduction of social structure was identified, showing a reality that shakes mental structures and which can change the vision of the world, on the other hand, it blocked the text reading. On this matter, he commented that “[...] history of literature shows very well what is common to the intellectual life of an epoch is most often not the content of books, but their titles” (BOURDIEU, 2002b, p. 75). Therefore, according to the author, there was a “sanitary cord” to cancel, or at least neutralize the message effects which showed that the education system had conservative effects, whereas previously it was considered a system that provided the universal culture learning. Even today, 50 years after the publication of *A reprodução*, the school system defense remains ready, forgetting or not wanting to remember that “[...] because the laws of reproduction are known, there is a small chance of minimizing the reproductive action of the school institution” (BORDIEU, 2002b, p. 77).

Controversy surrounding the two publications is understandable for two reasons, according to Bourdieu (2002a). The first one is that readers of sociology work tend to read such texts in a normative perspective. The second reason would be the interests and investment in the school system made especially by the so-called “miraculous”, that is, the lucky few, coming from the popular circles, who managed to achieve some academic success and who, instead of questioning the fact that they are exceptions and trying to discover what distinguishes them from the majority of students, looking at the factual data of the objective probabilities of school success according to social origin, would have more difficulty in accepting such an anti-demagogic discourse and based on sociological analysis. When discussing these individuals, the author highlights that

[...] those that school has liberated are those who, more than others, are inclined to believe in the liberating school. Alienated by their liberation, they have faith in the liberating school at the service of the conservative school which owes to the myth of the liberating school a part of its power of conservation. (BOURDIEU, 2002a, p. 49).

Baudelot (2004), who claims to have had the extraordinary chance to witness the collective elaboration by Bourdieu and Passeron of *Os herdeiros*, comments that reading the book provided him with an “ontological shock” composed by two moments. The first one would have been the discovery of the social inequality consequences within the school, a fact that no one at the time, according to the author, really assumed an amplitude and as causes. It was then realized that the causes were less economic than cultural, and that the school, far from being innocent, contributed to this.

According to Champagne and Christin (2004), these data are no longer new to anyone and have even become part of a commonplace interpretation, but until the 1960s they were disguised under the ideology of the gift. The explanation that inequalities in school success reside in the existence of “cultural handicaps” had a long recognition process, actively confronting the naturalistic ideology of the gift to produce and reproduce them in their daily lives. It was then realized that those responsible were not only in the ministry of education and in the government: they were in the daily pedagogical practices by teachers of all schooling levels, in the unconscious family behaviors that penalized the most disadvantaged ones with the abyss between school culture and family culture, and energized others through the osmotic transmission of the most profitable moral and cultural codes and attitudes at school. Each one was implicated by these discoveries.

On this matter, Baudelot (2006), when he comments on the importance of Bourdieu and Passeron’s writings, highlights that this analysis of the school provided the opportunity to build a totally new concept that considerably enriched social analyzes: cultural capital notion. Before Bourdieu, until the mid-1960s, the creation which used class relationships was marked by a Marxist bias that implied little the individuals.

The concept that supported the look at these relationships was the exploitation one, and the essential problem was on the economic matter. Thereby, Bourdieu “[...] imposes a much more complex conception of class relations. Enriching class relations with their cultural and symbolic, moral, psychological and bodily dimensions, he reintroduced individuals and everyday life into class analysis at once (BAUDELLOT, 2006, p. 169).

Chapoulie (2005) highlighted that *A reprodução*, and *Os herdeiros* as well, exerted a lasting influence far beyond the domain of research in the Sociology of Education, mainly through the contribution of these works to transform and consolidate Sociology as a discipline in France. In 1970, Sociology was established in wide exercise in the academy, being taught in several universities, with its own diplomas, students, academic careers, publications and researchers freed from the philosophical enterprise and from its criteria of belonging and verification.

When discussing on *A reprodução*, Passeron (2003) affirmed that the book, apart from its syntax – since many times the authors were charged for the text complexity –, is not bad, not even in the ethical sense, for the supposed “coup” given, according to some critics, to school and teachers, nor for the flame of student protest that ignited; neither in the scientific sense, even if there have been interpretations of the work as a rancid Marxist text or with characteristics of a mistaken functionalism. Passeron also commented that writing in partnership with Bourdieu was for him the first entry into a type of epistemological research conducted on texts and/or research data produced and examined as they appeared. He also remembered the joint writing challenges, as a privileged way of practicing “cross-control” (PASSERON, 2003, p. 83), in which the construction of sentences was based on the articulation of historical arguments and data processing, in a collective work.

According to Pestaña (2017, 2020), the scientific collaboration between the two authors was interrupted in 1972, with a bifurcation of institutional paths and epistemological orientations of each one. Such distance, anchored mainly in the difference of opinions

on the possibility of unifying sociological theories, in Passeron's case culminated with the publication of *Sociological Reasoning* (1991), in which he develops perspectives on the research processes in Sociology. For Passeron, there are and there always will be epistemological marks which would make difficult to compare different theories due to the lack of a trans contextual and trans historical paradigm capable of saying what should be researched and how it should be. Therefore, the book was written in the alternatives that his work in partnership with Bourdieu would open, that is, written with Bourdieu and against Bourdieu.

In Brazil, reception of *A reprodução* has marked a fragmented appropriation of the sociologist's work. According to Catani, A., Catani, D. and Pereira (2001), Pierre Bourdieu's early texts published in Brazil are two papers which appeared in collections of 1968, and the author would begin to be more widely read in the mid-1970s, first with the articles of his authorship compiled by Sérgio Miceli, and later with *A reprodução* first Brazilian edition. Because there are no other publications translated into Portuguese prior to this work, especially the articles on Education written by the French sociologist, it is also symptomatic of an appropriation form of his theoretical-methodological framework, in a field of knowledge production. In the same previous time mentioned, three other articles would be translated and published in Brazilian collections. However,

If in that decade Bourdieu would have a certain impact, although restricted, on university sociological and anthropological production, he would however go relatively unnoticed in Brazilian educational field, which would not respond with greater enthusiasm to the arrival of a sociologist who, even in France and Europe, was considered difficult and did not offer many weapons for the academic struggles of that time, generally focused on political militancy. (CATANI, A.; CATANI, D.; PEREIRA, 2002, p. 9).

For the authors, the idea that his sociological approach did not provide weapons for political militancy and was considered critical and denunciatory but not dialectical, might be understood considering the parameter of the author's lacunar readings and disregarding the foundations of his Sociology, whose objective has always been to unveil the forms of domination and power, and the instilled dispositions that could contribute to social and cultural reproduction as well. Catani, A., Catani, D. and Pereira (2002) also detached superficial appropriation of his first works on Education, such as to the letter reading of *A reprodução*, work that was taken, in an act of epistemological disqualification, as a general discourse valid for all societies, also imprisoned in the dichotomy reproduction versus transformation, so fought by Bourdieu. This dichotomy would be transmuted in the passage from the 1980s to the 1990s, in the dichotomy reproduction versus resistance, still as a reflection of the reading of *A reprodução* without the broader scientific frameworks that gave it meaning. Therefore, the work became the object of political controversies in the Brazilian educational field, identifying even a collection of political assumptions in Pierre Bourdieu's work from a type of reading that moved away from understanding the purposes and logic of the texts production context, what conditioned an appropriation form in Brazilian educational field.

It is possibly understanding the reading of Bourdieu's work at that time from comments by some authors who reported political circumstances in the time that *A reprodução* was published in Brazil, and how it was received by students and professors, as indicated at the beginning of this section. According to Silva (1996), there was a petrification of Pierre Bourdieu's ideas for educational analysis, considered an only book author, *A reprodução*. As a result of the sparse readings of the book, in part due to its difficult theoretical apprehension, he was labeled as proclaimer of a pedagogy that highlighted only the reproductive dimension of the school, which inevitably seemed to constitute an obstacle to the action and modification of the reproductive cycle in this social space.

For this commentator, with the theoretical rejection of the work, important readings for understanding the Sociology of Education developed by Bourdieu were distanced. Only with decline in the prestige of optimistic educational metanarratives that Bourdieu becomes recognized as a social theorist who has an important and indispensable contribution to educational analysis and theory. Appropriation of Bourdieu's work in the 1970s is also discussed by Loyola (2002), who described his students' reaction in the *Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo* when reading *A reprodução*, who considered as a Conservative and anti-revolutionary text, in an academic context marked by two different schools: the great Marxist-inspired essays and the theoretical and economic policy proposals prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in addition to partial empirical research (*surveys*) of the functionalist American Sociology.

Conducting an analysis of the situation, Loyola (2002) related some facts from the military dictatorship period, such as closure of political parties, censorship of the press and other types of publication, as well as social movements, especially the student movement, which found in the school and university environment a favorable space to exercise political militancy and whose watchwords were "change" and "revolution". According to Loyola (2002), when denouncing complicity – even involuntary one – by professors in reproduction of inequalities, Bourdieu, as it were, disenchanting the political project of these movements and by intellectuals of the time, guided basically by the ECLAC and Marxist utopia: overcoming underdevelopment, implantation of socialism and of a classless society in the country. Above all, he disenchanting the heroic perception that intellectuals had of themselves and of their role in this revolutionary project, as the vanguard of the working class.

In addition to the political moment the country was going through, the uncommented readings of Bourdieu's work, that is, without explanations or analogies that would help the perception of the contributions of his sociological analysis to the Brazilian context, as well as the limited number of other works translations, they contributed to understand the author and the movement of his thought. This stands out as a fundamental point, even today, for the lacunar appropriations of the sociologist's work, remaining a decisive factor for the alteration of the appropriation and understanding of his sociological legacy. For Catani, A., Catani, D. and Pereira (2001), these observations on the context of appropriation of Bourdieu's work might be added, in the 1970s and 1980s, the description of the peculiarities of the Brazilian educational field. In that period, scientific production was oriented towards solving problems of that field and with a more prescriptive sense,

instead of trying to distinguish functioning specificities of the space in which education took place and in which the right to impose a certain speech considered legitimate about it. Therefore, they proceeded:

It is not possible consider there was a systematic incorporation of the French author's way of research among us in the 1970s: it might only be recognized that his work potentiated some studies in Brazilian educational field, and such studies appropriated concepts and fertile analytical results to understand Brazilian educational reality, which already at the time seemed increasingly exclusionary. (CATANI, A.; CATANI, D.; PEREIRA, 2001, p. 136).

### **The legacy topicality: scientific productions analyses**

To investigate the legacy of *A reprodução*, the choose was mapping articles that featured the work by Bourdieu and Passeron, seeking to understand the intention of this use, as well as usefulness of the theoretical-methodological assumptions contained in the book. The intention was analyzing how the work appears in papers published in Brazilian journals in the year 2020, that is, 50 years after its publication in France.

Database chosen was Google Scholar, accessed on October 14th, 2020, using the describer "*A reprodução Bourdieu*", limiting the search to the year 2020. Applying the filter "by relevance" – Google Scholar detaches relevance by number of citations, that is, the more cited the research, the more relevant/expressive the material for the academic community –, there was 2.460 results, among different documents. It is important highlight that because of the date (October 14th, 2020), it might have changes from the search.

An advanced search was then carried out using the full title of the book. There were 146 results. As inclusion criteria, adopted parameter were Education area; references in the work; paper; free access national Journals; Portuguese as language. As exclusion criteria, materials other than papers were not allowed (theses, dissertations, books, e-books, conference proceedings, newsletters, blogs, among others) and which did not have the work in their references, even if they dealt with the notion of "*A reprodução*" in the text. From the 146 results, 51 were selected for treatment, organized into two frames: the first contained the title of paper, the journal with the details of reference in which they appeared, and a last column with the author(s); the second one repeated the title, including three columns which contained the theme, findings discussed from the book *A reprodução* and a list of concepts/categories from the work which were used.

This final corpus was treated using the content analysis, according to Laurence Bardin (2006), as a set of communication analysis techniques that proposes describing the content of messages and carry out the inference of knowledge regarding the conditions of production/reception of messages, revealing trends, essentially by categorizing and classifying activities to perform a reasoned interpretation.

In an inductive-constructivist approach, taking the data as a starting point, a pre-analysis was carried out to systematize the initial ideas and lead to a scheme to develop the operations that followed. Floating reading was carried out, and the documents (papers) were chosen, from which indicators of analysis or categorical analysis were elaborated, dividing the texts as the references were found, as a classification and regrouping exercise.

Thereunto, thematic categories were established with productivity criteria, aiming at making the production of results fruitful to explore how the book *A reprodução* had been addressed in the papers studied.

A first highlight is on the papers' authorship. Among the authors, there are from high school students and basic education teachers to post-doctoral academics and university professors, which demonstrates the incredible insertion of the work among Brazilian scholars.

First classification was regarding the papers' topics. Among the subjects found is possible mention: teachers education, aspects of identity construction and teachers working conditions, gender issues at school, racism issues at school, editorial path of a university press, teachers meetings, educational reforms, profile of graduates from higher education, school performance, school dropout, teaching-learning process, education system, relationships between school practices and school performance, school contents, curriculum proposals, symbolic violence at school, educational public policies, school management, high school reform, health education, National High School Exam (ENEM in its Portuguese acronym), among others.

These seem to be privileged research topics in the Brazilian educational field. According to Tura (2003), there is a concern to investigate the school-teacher-student triad, which derives from an attempt to understand the various factors involved in the macro-sociological analysis of educational action. Such concern led researchers to approach the school environment, a space for interaction between teachers and students, and with the concrete conditions to carry out teaching and learning. Schools and classrooms came to be seen as complex micro-communities, valuing the happenings of social life and the analysis from the agents' viewpoint. There is a growing interest in knowing the range of meanings contained in the daily encounters that occur at school space between the agents, and which give their real content to educational processes, also comprising the existence of multiple mediations that lead to representations of historical and social significance.

Regarding concepts and notions that appear in the work, the main used were cultural capital, linguistic capital, cultural heritage, symbolic violence, pedagogical action as symbolic violence, school culture, pedagogical authority legitimation, cultural arbitrary, assessment, habitus, reproduction and gift ideology.

They were approached in this paper first part, and it is the quality of interpretation keys bequeathed by the authors is clear, and posteriorly developed by Bourdieu. They are concepts and notions permanently present in sociologist's work and they are tools for thinking, proving the application fecundity of such tools to carry out the reading and interpretation of the social world.

For a more punctual description of reasons why the authors of the articles used the work, the justification found in the scientific productions concerned some assumptions. Most papers (43) showed the reason why or for what purpose of using the book is because *A reprodução*, in its writings, converges with the Brazilian reality by discussing several situations. Some examples are access to the most privileged positions in the education system; relationship between school performance and students' social origin; cultural capital as heritage stimulated and transmitted by the family, able to generate impact on

definition of a successful or unsuccessful school path; other ways to perpetuate the less fortunate' exclusion in the school system, whether in access or within the institution, despite the democratization of education, which should not be confused with formal equality of opportunity; role played by the school in reproducing the symbolic capital and because pedagogical actions are not neutral ones; culture as central in domination process; cultural arbitrary imposed by a dominant group arbitrary power; school continuing to reproduce, but currently based on new practices; reproduction mechanisms; social inequality reproduction fostered by curriculum; choices of higher education courses and careers not as a free choice product, but linked to the individual's social belonging; and meanings of assessment and examination in the exclusion or self-exclusion of individuals from the school.

In 24 papers, *A reprodução* is the only cited work by Bourdieu. In some of them, the work is cited to situate the debate on the Sociology of Education or in Brazilian educational thought, demonstrating the importance of Bourdieu in this field. In others, the work appears to describe the role played by school in Brazilian contemporary society. Therefore, even if there is only mention of the book, it does not seem that it is only a topical reading of the work. On the opposite, it shows that the perspective by Bourdieu has a very important adherence in the field, and the idea that school processes contribute to some extent, to the reproduction of social inequalities, is practically consensual among Brazilian researchers. This consensus is also pointed by Champagne and Christin (2004) in French reality.

The reference to *A reprodução* had a critical tone in only five papers, with arguments that sought counteract the tendency of inequality reproduction in schools and the need for a reinterpretation of determinisms. It demonstrates that a superficial appropriation of the work, as pointed by Catani, A., Catani, D. and Pereira (2001) remains yet, but in very small numbers.

Finally, the activation of the work *A reprodução* to highlight different concepts, such as cultural capital, habitus, symbolic violence, self-elimination, pedagogical action, pedagogical authority and cultural heritage, together other works by the author (it occurred in 26 papers), enabled a denser analysis in the studied papers. This fact demonstrates a greater maturity of Brazilian researchers and an appropriation of the author's way of working in their analyses, as indicated by Catani, A., Catani, D. and Pereira (2001).

In a paper commenting the 40 years since the launch of *A reprodução* in Portugal, Abrantes (2011) discusses the theoretical debate on reproduction theory and its impact on European sociology, even highlighting the criticisms of different scientific and political quarters. Abrantes (2011) also highlighted several aspects that corroborate considerations by Bourdieu and Passeron, even 40 years later (and now it is possible to say that this is also observed 50 years later). The author detached:

- (1) there are no studies that report considerable changes in the tendentially reproductive principle on which the relationship between social structure and education system continues to be based, despite political forces, economic dynamics and educational ideologies varying in space-time (next topic);
- (2) there are several logics and social forces observable at the micro level, but they

inevitably confront a macro principle of double reproduction (structural and cultural), and in many cases, they cannot resist it; and (3) aforementioned “fatalistic readings” of the reproduction theory are part of a specifically school process (deconstructed by Bourdieu and Passeron) of “neutralization of knowledge”, submitting it to the institution’s logic and thus mitigating its disruptive potential. When elaborating an explanatory theory about a social regularity, so strong and persistent in modern societies, the authors do not deny the possibility of its transformation, but they avoid blaming particular actors – professors, students, families, government, labor unions – as it is so often heard in public debates, denouncing a system of relationships in which these actors are integrated, and on which its legitimacy and individual affirmation depend. (ABRANTES, 2011, p. 268).

In a positive tone, Almeida (2005) searched within *A reprodução* foundations of a social transformation, and the role played by the school institution in this process, in opposition to the criticism that some give to the work and the author, calling Bourdieu as reproductive. He affirmed that apprehend Bourdieu’s theory through social reproduction bias would be ignoring the agent’s action within the field and the dialectic present in praxeological knowledge. When aware on the reproductive tendency in the teaching system, its agents would be starting to distrust, recognizing the illegitimacy of the process, which could contribute to a change in the game, that is, the possibility of moving from reproduction to transformation. For the author, the process also carries its contradictions which might develop – to the point of implying social changes. Therefore, as the school is an institution that plays a fundamental role in the reproduction of the social order, also within it the foundations could be built for questioning and transforming society.

Lastly, it is important mention that even in just one paper, *A reprodução* is cited as work analyzed in a seminar by students of the Letters faculty, not appearing, therefore, as its theoretical-methodological reference.

## **Finishing up: reunion with a heritage**

Readings of Bourdieu’s work in the educational field have undergone a significant change over the last few years. It is possible notice out, from the scientific production examination, a teaching-learning process of reading the author at a more fruitful level. This statement is based on the movement of incorporation of cognitive system schemas and appropriation continuity, especially in Graduation programs in Brazil. Many supervisees became supervisors of works that used the sociological theory by Bourdieu (MEDEIROS, 2007).

If the early researchers in the educational scientific field dedicated themselves to study the foundations of Education and educational policies using a Marxist theoretical framework, moment in which Bourdieu’s labeling operation was carried out as the theorist of reproduction, another appropriation logic started to have an impact on that field. This occurred from the moment the framework developed by the sociologist was inserted as a theoretical-methodological instrument, in order to observe the school logics and practices, their cultural and symbolic implications and the power relations in multidisciplinary and multi-methodological research, as demonstrated in the previous section.

It is possible to notice out a correspondence between the appropriation of Bourdieu in Education area in Brazil and in the United States, as detached by Calhoun (2005), which might help to illustrate how *A reprodução* has been read and used in the country. Such correspondence concerns the fragmentation of the reception of the sociologist's work and the reproduction of this fragmentation. In other words, whether an isolated fragment of the author's work caught the attention of a novice reader, he or she also tended to a fragmentary perception of the work, according to his or her competence domain and his or her interests in the intellectual.

Difficulty also seemed connected to the associations they made between Bourdieu and other author, and the fundamental difference was that Bourdieu's reproduction theory gave more importance to cultural factors (SILVA, 1996). Thereupon, the emphasis is on the concept of cultural capital. Bourdieu refused to adopt an analytical framework that presupposed a mechanical causal relationship between the broader social structure and what goes on in Education scope. Then he used cultural processes to perform connections among elements of the social structure and elements which belong to the Education sphere. Escaping from a teleological approach, Bourdieu inserted in his explanatory scheme a series of links, connecting the determiner and the determined. He thus carried out an intermediation between the structure and the structured.

Finally, it is necessary paying attention to statements such as by Nogueira (2021), who commented that have argued in favor of a review of the cultural heritage weight in the processes of producing inequalities in school performance, due to the social and sociological changes which have taken place since the creation of this concept, more than five decades ago. For the author, however, the concept must continue to be mobilized, re-signified and empirically tested, considering new forms of school distinction, new contents of what is considered school excellence, and the current situation of functioning of the education systems as well.

Even with the prospect of new forms of cultural production – mass media, multiculturalism emergence, informational and strategic assets related to the school world, for example –, for Nogueira (2021), cultural capital concept, in its broad sense, as a synonym for cultural dispositions and the relationship with cultural goods, it is still fundamental to analyze school success or failure and remains decisive to look at the incorporation of new cultural dynamics in progress, and the important contemporary parental mobilization in favor of the transmission of cultural heritage. Such indications corroborate the topicality of *A reprodução* by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, and their academic and political legacy.

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