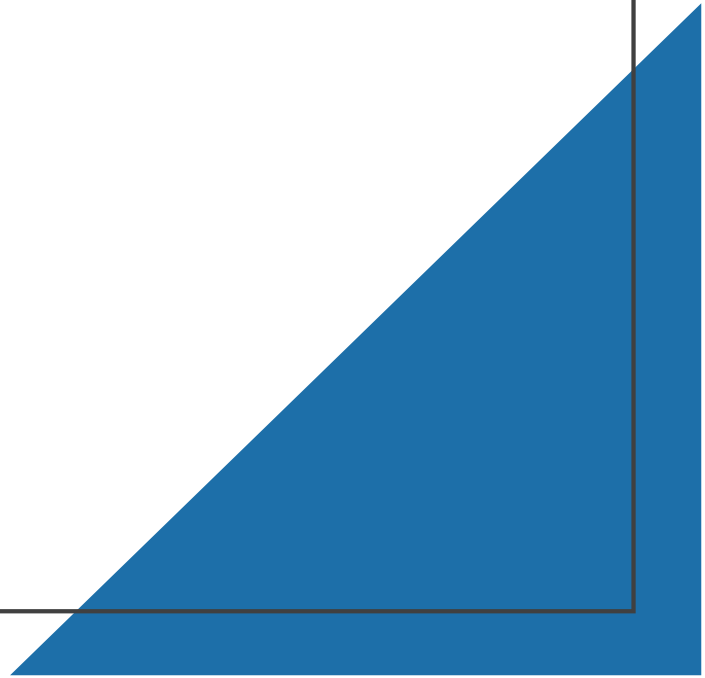


SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Social constructionism

Agency-structure integration

WINTER TERM 2023



timeline – sociology as multiparadigmatic science

beginning of the XXth century

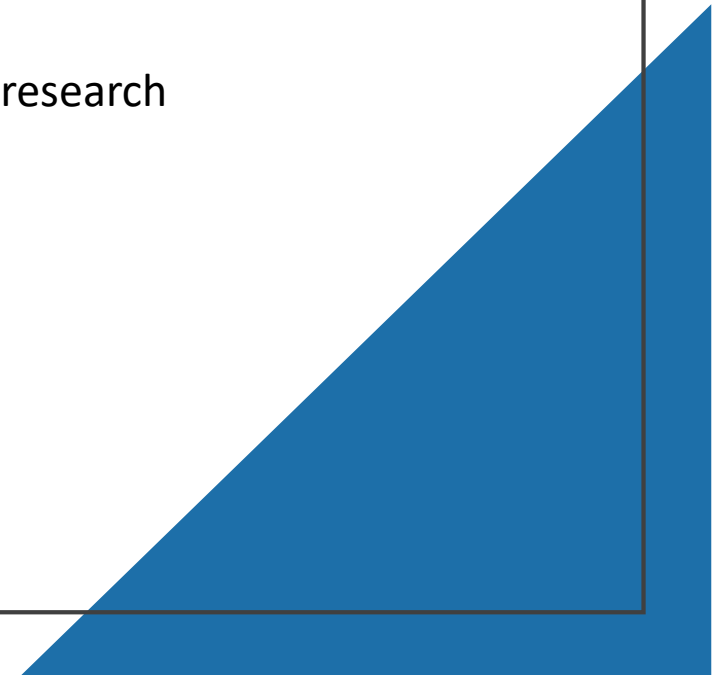
2023



Symbolic interactionism – beginning of the XXth century till today

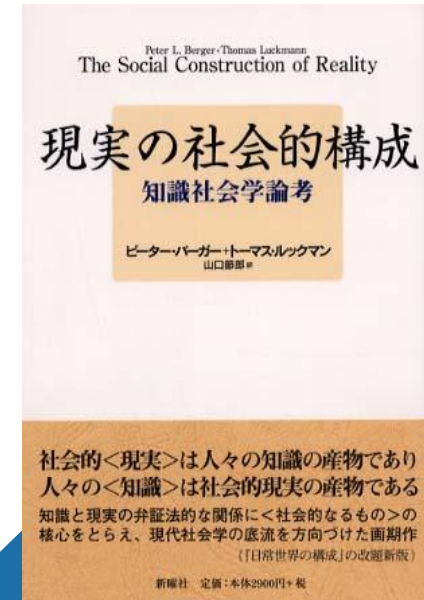
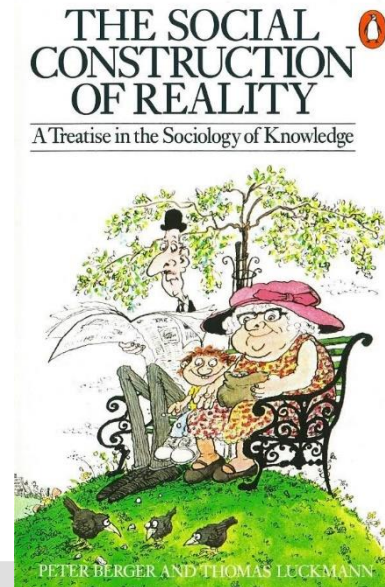
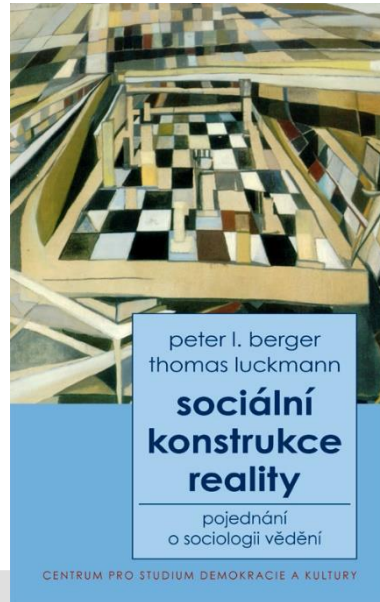
Structural functionalism – after the WW2 till 1970s; mostly in USA; quantitative research

Social constructionism – since 1967 till today; a breakthrough in sociology



social constructionism (a sociological theory of knowledge)

- 1967 – *The Social Construction of Reality* Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann
- a new paradigm in sociology and sociology of knowledge
- social reality is social construct, everything in society is socially constructed



social constructionism (a sociological theory of knowledge)

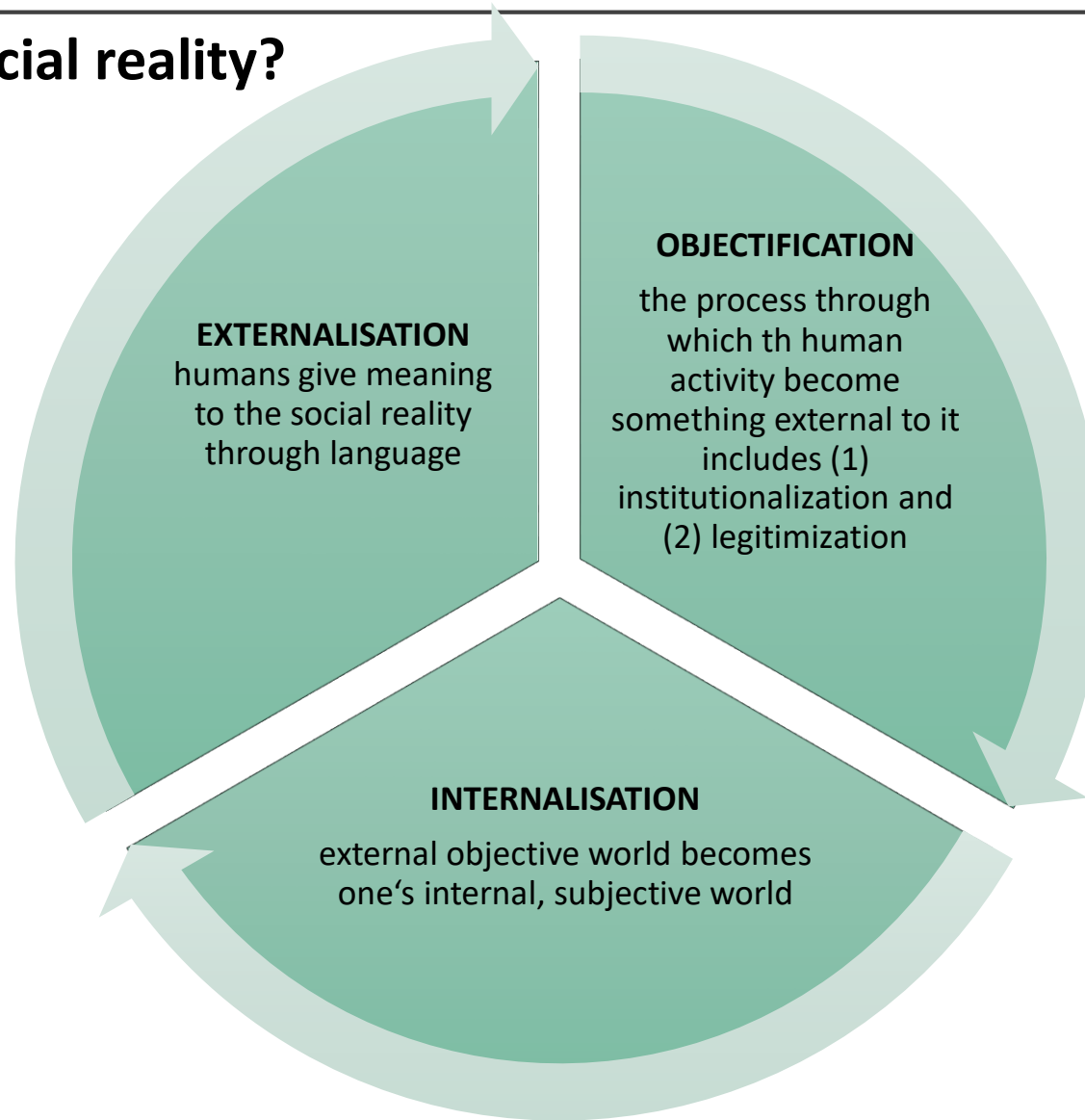
THE SOCIAL REALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

- **intersubjective world of everyday experience** - objectification of subjective processes – thanks to a symbolic language
- **the social reality is objectified in advance** - some objects existed in the social world before us
- is embedded & being created in everyday interactions

where is the social reality?

- Durkheim: social reality and social facts are outside the individual – social reality is objective and may be studied empirically as such
- Weber: there are only individual interpretations of subjective experience of the social world - social reality is subjective

where is the social reality?



...it is in the process of ongoing construction of social reality

socialisation (according to Berger & Luckmann)

SOCIALISATION – the process of learning and becoming a member of a society

PRIMARY – takes place within a narrow circle of significant others

SECONDARY – takes place within various social institutions – schools, religious communities, nations, subculture groups, etc. (generalised others)

KEY NOTION: the transition from the primary to secondary phase -> to understand the complexity of social world, social norms and social roles

Where is
society?

US SOCIOLOGY: MICRO-
MACRO INTEGRATION

EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGY:
AGENCY STRUCTURE-
INTEGRATION



Sir Anthony Giddens (1938-)

- British sociologist
- profesor at London School of Economics
- author of the political program of the Labour Party (a close person to Tony Blair, a British MP)
- one of the most influential sociologist, well-know also outside the academia



structuration theory



The Constitution of Society (1984)



„The basic domain of the study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices ordered across time and space“ (Giddens 1984: 2)



structuration theory

~~SOCIAL ACTORS
individual perspective~~

~~SOCIAL STRUCTURES
holistic perspective~~

SOCIAL PRACTICES

structuration theory

STRUCTURE

does not exist in time and space

social phenomena have the capacity to be structured

exists thanks to rules and resources

it is not a framework (not like in Durkheim's theory)

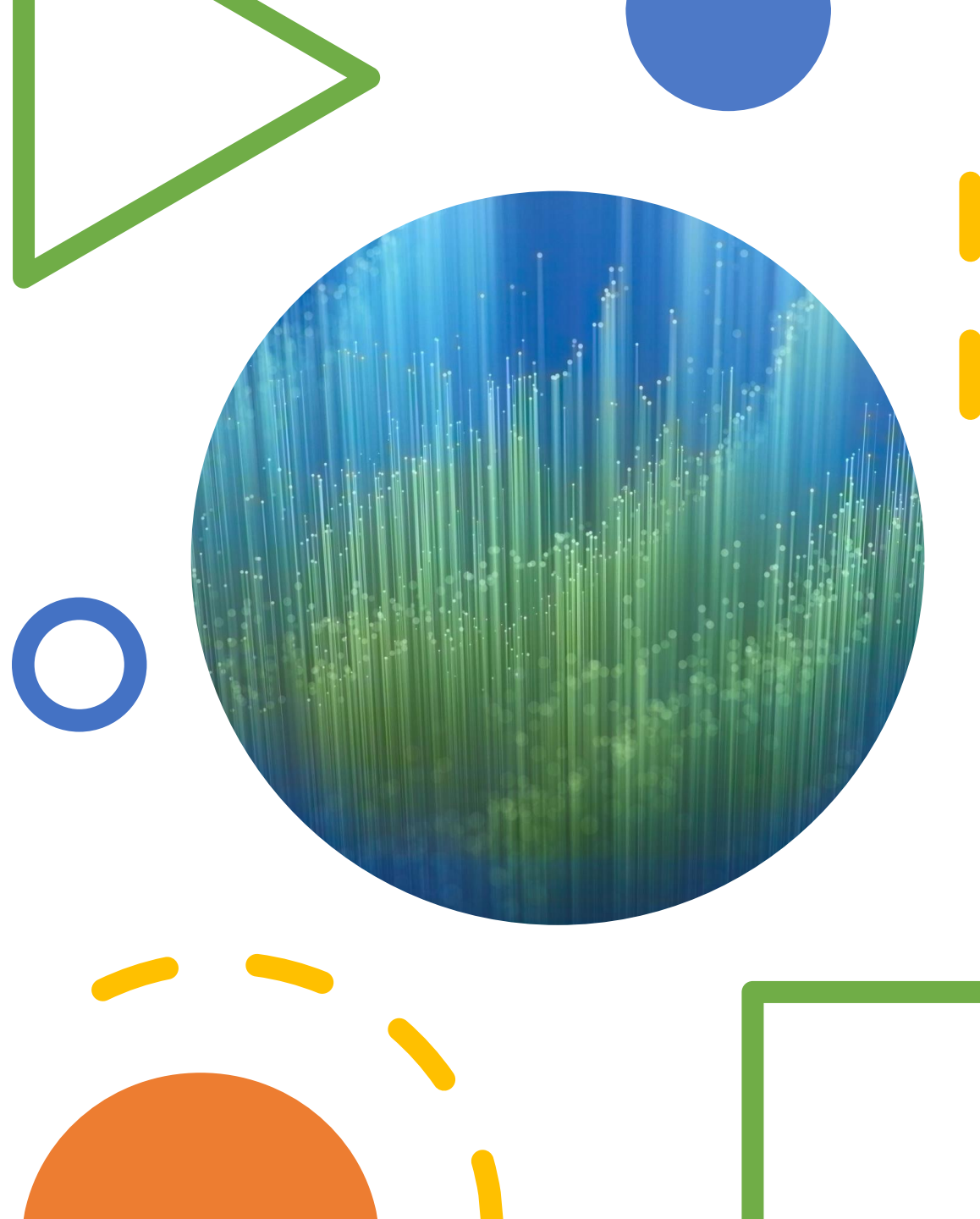
it is always both constraining and enabling



structuration theory

SOCIAL SYSTEMS

reproduced relations between actors or collectivities organised as regular social practices...



structuration theory

STRUCTURATION

agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but they are a duality – they are both medium and outcome...

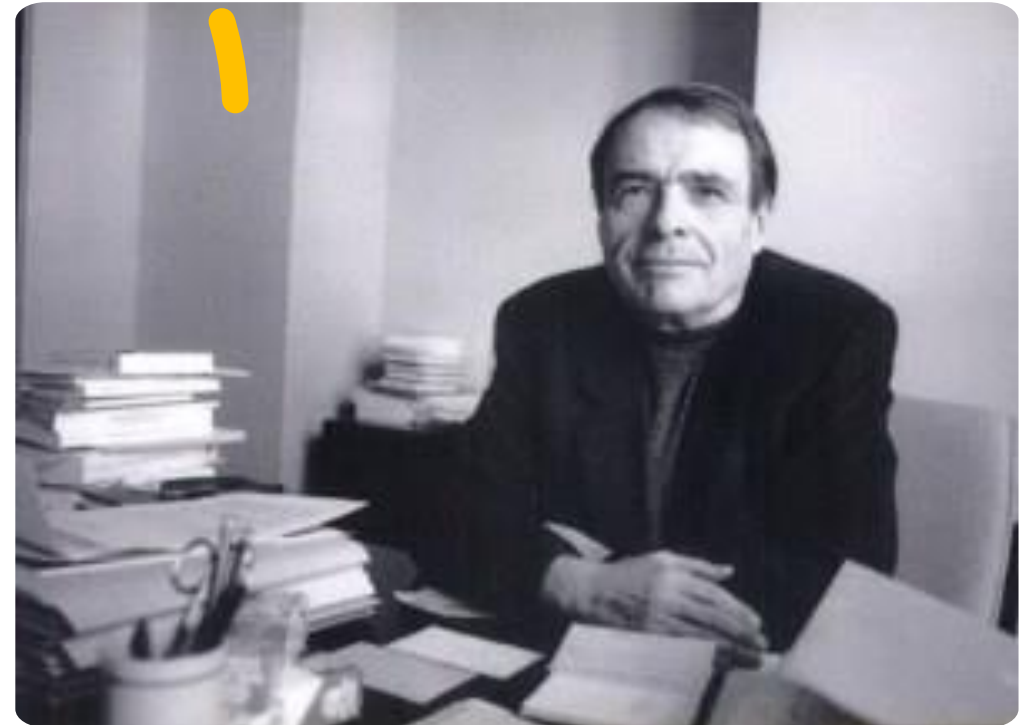
they cannot exist without each other...

time & space, face-to-face interactions



Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

- French sociologist
- profesor at Collège de France
- public intellectual
- critic of the French society



constructivist structuralism

- no opposition between subjectivism and objectivism
- dialectic between social structure and the way people construct social reality



habitus



mental or cognitive structures through which people deal with the social world



a product of collective history



it constrains thought and choice, but does not determine them

capitals



Economic



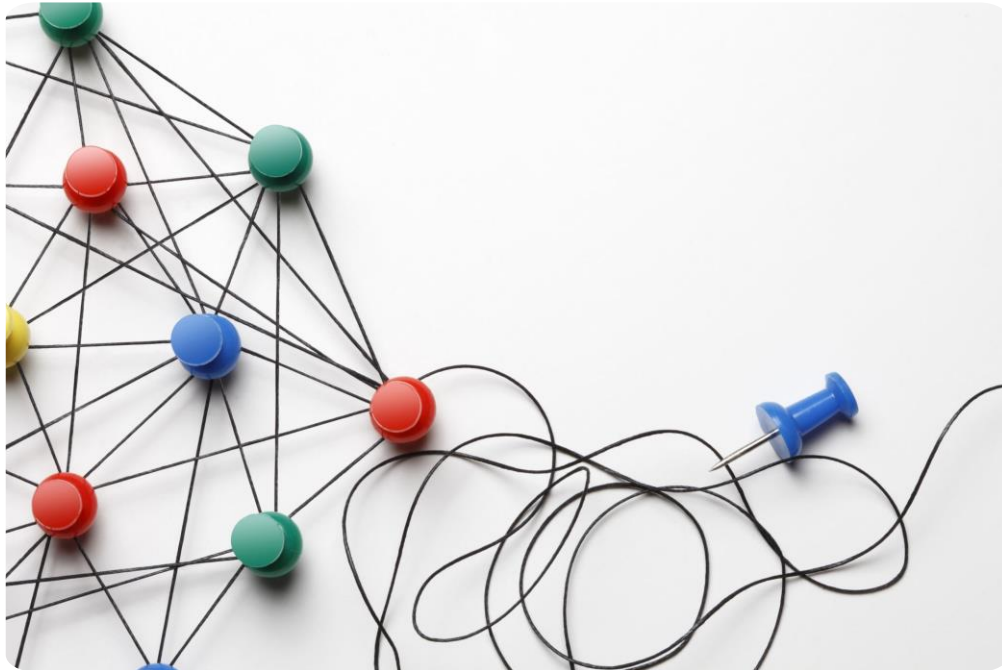
Cultural – various kinds of legitimate knowledge



Social – valued social relations



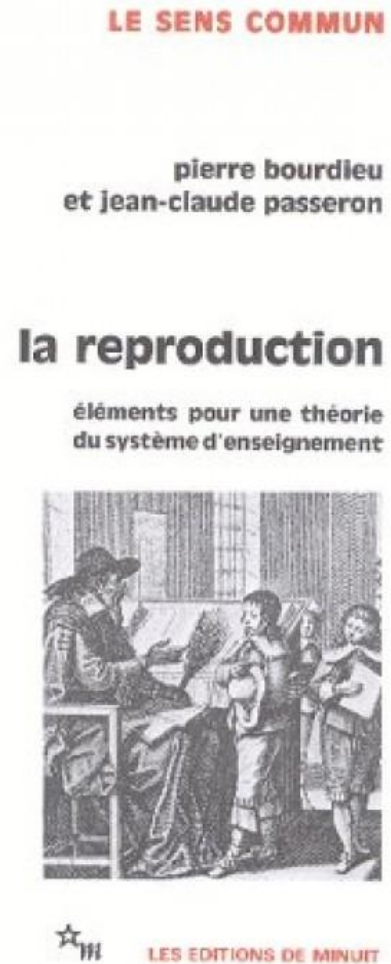
Symbolic – one's honor and prestige



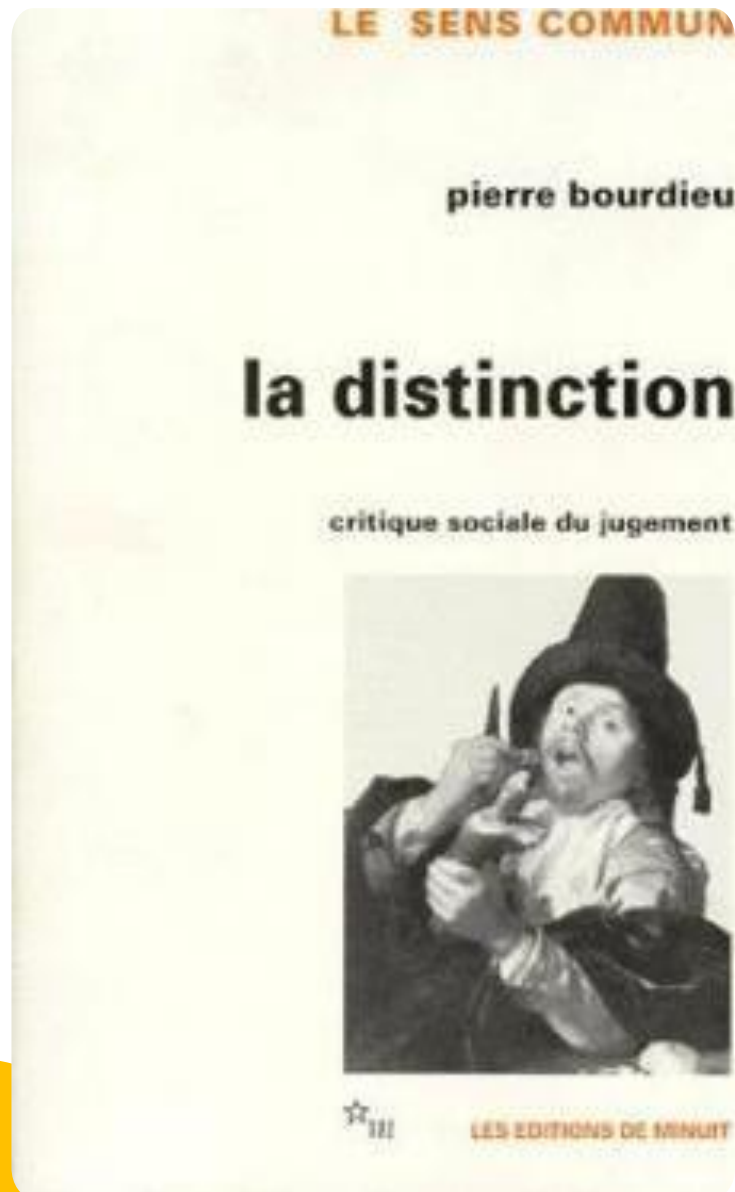
field

- network of relations among the objective positions within it
- this is also a field of struggle (Marx)
- the field is a competitive marketplace with various forms of capital: economic, social, cultural and symbolic

Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (1970), with Jean-Claude Passeron



The system of education is the system of class and power reproduction; major institution through which the symbolic violence is practiced on people...



Distinction (1979)

- Aesthetic preferences in society
- Taste-class relationship: art, food, sport, hairstyle...
- Definition of culture as an object of scientific study – from anthropology („low” and „high” culture)