

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Space and Habitus and its Application to the Precariat

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Abstract: This paper explores Pierre Bourdieu's theory of space and habitus and its relevance to the analysis of the contemporary phenomenon of the precariat. Habitus, understood as a system of internalized dispositions and schemes of perception, offers insight into the behavior and adaptive responses of precarious individuals. According to Bourdieu, the spatial structure of society results in the unequal distribution of symbolic and social capital, placing the precariat in a particularly vulnerable position. The paper highlights the analytical power of Bourdieu's concepts in understanding social instability, insecurity, and labor market fragmentation.

Keywords: Pierre Bourdieu, habitus, social space, precariat, symbolic capital, inequality.

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The precariat, due to its heterogeneity, seemed to lack a clear idea of what these means were and where to look for them. Its pillar thinkers included Pierre Bourdieu, who proposed the concept of the precariat as an unstable, insecure social stratum. Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist and philosopher, introduced innovative concepts that enriched the theory of social stratification. Bourdieu's research focused on key concepts: habitus as the principle of action of agents, field as the space of fundamental social struggle, capital as a resource in the social field, symbolic race as the main mechanism for establishing power. All these concepts introduced and developed by Bourdieu are widely used in sociology and social anthropology. Using the concepts of "space" and "habitus", Bourdieu explains the complex content of social stratification. Although his theory goes beyond Marxist class identification, he explains how the structure of social status creates deep inequalities and dependencies. "Space" is a social field where people struggle to accumulate and consolidate social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital. There are different fields - academic, cultural, political, economic, etc. Each has its own rules, forms of competition and types of capital. Society can be characterized as a multidimensional space built on the principles of differentiation and distribution, formed from the sum of the active properties of the social world under consideration, that is, properties capable of giving their owner power and strength in this world. People and groups of people are determined by their relative position in the social structure of society or within this social space. Each of them is in a position close to each other (i.e. in a certain area of a certain space) and in the positions of a certain class, and it is practically impossible, even if it is mentally possible, to

occupy two opposite areas in space. Insofar as the characteristics chosen to construct a space are its active characteristics, this space can be described as a field of forces, or more precisely as a set of objective relations of forces imposed on all those who enter this field and which are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or their immediate interaction. P. Bourdieu explains the various aspects of social space from geographical space. The following law is manifested in social space: the closer subjects, groups or institutions are located, the more they have in common, and vice versa. Theoretically, the degree of distance in space corresponds to social distances. In fact, this is a relative concept. It is true that subjects occupying close positions in social space also come closer in physical space - by choice or necessity. At the same time, subjects occupying distant positions in social space can still interact in physical space, albeit briefly and continuously. The "material" interactions that can be observed and recorded and that, according to the subjects, have empirical significance, conceal the structures in which they are realized. This is one of those cases in which the visible, the immediately given, conceals the invisible that determines it. It can illustrate the difference between structure and interaction, and between structuralism and interactionism in all its forms. By appealing to it, subjects occupying high positions in the objective hierarchy of social space symbolically deny the existence of social distances, which, of course, does not eliminate the latter.

The origins of the concept of habitus can be found in the scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas, who translated Aristotle's term "hexis" with this word. In the philosophical tradition, "habitus" denotes the sum of individual bodily skills - gait, gestures, manners - a holistic embodiment of a particular person's experience in bodily consciousness. Habitus is one of the main concepts in the theory of Pierre Bourdieu, which is interpreted as "a system of acquired schemes that act in practice as categories of perception and evaluation or as a principle of distribution by classes, at the same time as an organizational principle of action." According to his concept, subjects acquire stable principles of social action through various processes of socialization, primarily primary socialization. The principles reflect the objective structures of the social world in which the agent finds himself. In the process of assimilation, the principles are transformed into stable and changing relationships ("adaptations"). "Habitus" is a system of internal views, ideas and values of a person that forms an understanding of the human world. According to Bourdieu, the relationship between habitus and space is a set of dispositions that are formed in social conditions, and these dispositions interact with specific fields and determine human behavior.

A person, by virtue of his habits and the capital he has, is located in a certain part of society, and this determines his relations with other people, his attitude to those specific types of knowledge, culture and appearance that are valued and considered useful in society. These discursive spaces, linked to social ranks and lifestyles, restore the equilibrium of social stratification in a partly equitable way.

Such theoretical frameworks are valuable for understanding the precariat. Representatives of the precariat layer are practically deprived of the opportunity to accumulate relatively stable capital. They have little economic capital (low wages, lack of work, financial employment); their social capital (social ties) is weakened by chronic unemployment and displacement; their cultural capital (education, knowledge) is unequally valued in the labor market; and their symbolic capital (status, influence) is not important in the social matrix accepted by dominant groups.

Thus, the precariat often suffers from inconsistent, overlapping and contradictory habituses. They cannot "play" perfectly in different social spaces, since their habitus is secondary to the rules of the field. In modern market society, members of the precariat are cut off from the norms recognized by society, which gives rise to feelings of social alienation, loneliness, dissatisfaction, nostalgia and anxiety.

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