

Symbolic violence, academic capital and reflexivity: A case-study of post-apartheid curriculum change for teacher education using Bourdieu

Wayne Peter Dirk

Department of Sociology

University of South Africa

E-mail: dirk.w@dhet.gov.za

Abstract

This paper provides an account of a failed attempt to transform the teacher education curriculum in the Faculty of Education at a historically white university in South Africa. Based on a larger study, the paper argues that academics in the Faculty were strongly allied to the apartheid-tainted education philosophy of Fundamental Pedagogics (FP) that caused them to resist curriculum transformation. Using their dominant positions, the senior academics undermined the transformation process by deceiving the administrative structures of the university. Using Bourdieu's signature concepts of field, habitus, capital and hysteresis (a condition in which the habitus is no longer in synch with a field that is undergoing fundamental change), this paper argues that the practices of the senior academics were acts of symbolic violence because they arbitrarily chose to continue the established culture of FP that was targeted for transformation by the university. The institutional power of the senior Professors that enabled their practice of symbolic violence is explained with the concept of academic capital. Bourdieu's theory of reflexivity is discussed as a practical intervention that has the potential to assist academics and university managers to limit the effects of symbolic violence in curriculum production. In closing, the paper briefly touches on the recent student protests at South African universities and argues for the extension of Bourdieu's conceptualisation of symbolic domination to include the relationship between symbolic and physical violence, which is a neglected area of higher education studies, particularly in societies with a history of colonialism and racialised social inequality.

Keywords: Pierre Bourdieu, Curriculum Change, Higher Education Transformation, Fundamental Pedagogics, Symbolic Violence.

Résumé

Cet article rend compte d'une tentative ratée de transformer le programme de formation des enseignants à la Faculté d'éducation d'une université historiquement blanche en Afrique du Sud. Sur la base d'une étude plus large, le document soutient que les universitaires de la Faculté étaient fortement liés à la philosophie de l'éducation entachée d'apartheid de la pédagogie fondamentale (PF) qui les a amenés à résister à la transformation des programmes. Utilisant leurs positions dominantes, les universitaires chevronnés ont sapé le processus de transformation en trompant les structures administratives de l'université. En utilisant les concepts caractéristiques de Bourdieu de champ, d'habitus, de capital et d'hystérésis (une condition dans laquelle l'habitus n'est plus synchronisé avec un champ qui subit un changement fondamental), cet article soutient que les pratiques des universitaires chevronnés étaient des actes de violence symbolique parce que ils ont arbitrairement choisi de maintenir la culture établie de la PF qui était destinée à être transformée par l'université. Le pouvoir institutionnel des professeurs seniors qui a permis leur pratique de la violence symbolique est expliqué avec le concept de capital académique. La théorie de la réflexivité de Bourdieu est discutée comme une intervention pratique qui a le potentiel d'aider les universitaires et les directeurs d'université à limiter les effets de la violence symbolique dans la production des programmes. En conclusion, l'article aborde brièvement les récentes manifestations étudiantes dans les universités sud-africaines et plaide pour l'extension de la conceptualisation de Bourdieu de la domination symbolique pour inclure la relation entre la violence symbolique et physique, qui est un domaine négligé des études supérieures, en particulier dans les sociétés. avec une histoire de colonialisme et d'inégalités sociales racialisées.

Mots clés: Pierre Bourdieu, Changement de curriculum, Transformation de l'enseignement supérieur, Pédagogie fondamentale, Violence symbolique.

Introduction

This paper reports on a case-study of post-apartheid curriculum change for teacher education at a historically white, Afrikaans-language university. Although this study is based on a period of profound political change in South Africa, it is not completely unique as other countries around the world also grapple with curriculum transformation. For example, Young (2008:32) argues that the “sociality” of the curriculum creates conflict during attempts to change it because, as a form of cultural transmission, it tends to be arbitrary and violent. Apple (2013:195) argues similarly that social tensions arise around curriculum change because “differential power intrudes into the very heart of the curriculum.” These arguments summarise the focus of this paper which is based on a failed attempt at curriculum change due to the resistance of senior Professors.

Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, capital, and symbolic violence were used because of their sensitivity toward systems of domination and social inequality. These concepts were particularly effective due to their ability to reveal the historical links between social context and the embodied intellectual dispositions that influenced the practices of the conservative academics. Since the key finding of this paper is that symbolic violence led to transformation failure, it is argued that Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity offers the potential, albeit within limits, for policy-makers and academics to reduce such negative outcomes. In closing, this paper briefly touches on the student protests in South Africa during 2015 and 2016 against the lingering symbolic violence of apartheid and colonialism that often led to physical violence, suggesting a link between them. It is argued that Bourdieu's theory of symbolic domination should be extended to include the relationship between symbolic and physical violence which is under-researched in higher education studies.

The policy context for curriculum transformation

The requirement for curriculum change was driven by legislation that came into effect in South African higher education after 1994. The 1996 report of the *National Commission on Higher Education* (NCHE) and the policy position of government outlined in *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (Department of Education: 1997) set the agenda for post-apartheid higher education change. Its central aim was to provide the broad policy directives of government for the transition to a post-apartheid higher education sector in which "all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era" (Department of higher education 1997:7). This policy made it mandatory for all public universities to change the gender and racial profile of staff, improve access for black students and to develop academic programmes that stimulate reflexivity and a "willingness" to revise and challenge the past through critical engagement (Department of Education 1997: p7).

Although there have been many achievements after 25 years of democracy, the process of transformation has been painfully slow. For example, in 2008, a Ministerial Committee set up to investigate social cohesion in higher education found that discrimination, with respect to racism and sexism, was "pervasive" at South African universities (Department of Education 2008: 13). As recently as 2015 and 2016, protests by the *#FeesMustFall* and *#RhodesMustFall* student movements around issues such as racism, sexuality, cultural dominance and the nature of the curriculum, again provided evidence that transformation has been incremental after apartheid. While it is important to note that the slow progress can be ascribed to the enormous social objective set by the new government and the abstract nature of the founding documents that resulted in misunderstandings about the

meaning of transformation (Oloyede 2009; Department of Education 2008), this paper argues that beyond this lack of policy integration at institutional level; it is also resistance to change, and the manipulation of institutional structures that had a determining effect on the rate at which universities were able to effect real change.

Sources, methodology and Bourdieusian analysis

This paper is based on my Doctoral thesis and largely draws on interviews because access to documentary evidence was restricted by the university. I conducted interviews with 31 staff members using the purposeful sampling method (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:370). I have protected the identities of all interviewees by using pseudonyms. I mainly focused on academics who were actively involved in the curriculum restructuring process. The sample included African, Coloured¹, Indian, and White men and women aged between 40 and 70 who held positions ranging from Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Full Professor, Dean, and Deputy Dean. The majority of the respondents were white and Afrikaans-speaking, had taught at white Afrikaans-language schools and graduated from UX or other Afrikaans-language universities which, for many, became a marker of their intellectual approach to curriculum transformation. I used Bourdieu's "theory as method" approach (Grenfell & James 1988:177) for data analysis that requires the researcher to use theory and method in tandem when constructing and analysing the research object. I also followed Bourdieu's three-level approach in which the research object is constructed using the concepts of field, habitus and capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:105). Due to limited space I have not shown it in full here but it is discussed in detail in the main study (Dirk 2013). This study is not the first to use Bourdieu in South African higher education studies, other scholars, (Moore 2003; Naidoo 2004; Kloot 2011; Langa 2012) have conducted similar research. Although research on structure and agency in South African higher education is strongly influenced by the work of Margaret Archer and Roy Bhaskar, I have chosen Bourdieu because his theory of symbolic domination is best suited for addressing unequal relations of power and issues of social justice in university settings. It is also important to note that my focus in this study is not directly concerned with how philosophical traditions in teacher education adapt, change, and transform in South Africa as exemplified in the important work of Muller & Hoadley (2018). My main purpose is to investigate the effect that symbolic violence had on the process of curriculum change at a particular university in the context of post-apartheid transformation.

1 All references to "race" are unavoidable given that people were racially classified in South Africa in accordance with the Population Registration Act of 1950. It is important to note that unlike its use in other countries, for example, the United States of America (USA), the term Coloured does not refer to black people in general. It was created under apartheid (although its use predates this period) to separate those classified as Coloured from other black people.

Decolonising higher education: Appropriating Bourdieu

During the student protests of 2015 and 2016 in South Africa, the decolonisation of the curriculum was one of the demands made by student organisations. Appropriating the work of a French sociologist for my study about curriculum change thus requires some justification. In my view, Bourdieu's sociology does not need extensive decolonisation because he was an early contributor to anti-colonial research and, according to Go (2016: 93), he "did not repress colonialism analytically." Burawoy & von Holdt (2012:78) argue that Bourdieu's early work on Algeria and Fanon's views in *The Wretched of the Earth*, were the first to set the tone for research that recognised colonialism as a racialised system of domination. Bourdieu believed that his work had universal meaning, but he was aware, having developed the field concept, that local fields would always resist external cultural domination. For example, he notes that after Algerian independence, Francophone writers like Kateb Yacine, were pressurised into becoming Arabic writers in an attempt to decolonise local literature (Bourdieu interview in Glen 2010:46). Bourdieu never consciously imposed his ideas on other countries and the application of his sociology in this paper follows the argument by Hilgers & Mangez (2015:270); that the strength his work must be interpreted in "methodological, theoretical and interpretative terms" and not simply be dismissed by researchers because of his location in the global North.

Field, habitus and capital

Bourdieu referred to his work as *genetic structuralism*, which is "condensed" in the "fundamental concepts" of habitus, field and capital (Bourdieu 1998, vii). Originally created by other scholars, these concepts combine the historical analysis of objective structures and subjective mental structures to explain agent practices (Bourdieu 1990:14). Bourdieu wanted to show that the dichotomy between *objectivism* and *subjectivism* was "artificial" and failed to account for the dialectical relationship between social structure and agency (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:3). For Bourdieu, the tendency to ignore the dialectical relationship between social phenomena in social science became the driving impulse behind his relational sociology. Below I briefly discuss his theoretical toolkit.

a) Field

Bourdieu conceptualised social space (society) as consisting of several relatively autonomous objective structures that he referred to as social fields. Among the fields he identified are: housing, education, politics, art, sport, law, family organisation and economics. According to Bourdieu, fields have many "properties" that can be used by researchers to determine their internal dynamics and external influences. The property

that I focused on in this paper is that a field is a tension-filled, hierarchically structured network of objective relations between positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:97). Bourdieu deepens the understanding of this property by likening a field to a game in which players abide by and respect the game's "*illusio*" (the specific interests or stakes inherent in the game). Players can only play if they submit to the game's "*doxa*" (its unquestioned rules and philosophy). Conflict is caused by competition over the most dominant field positions and the authority to control the game. With this game-metaphor, Bourdieu wanted to show that a field is occupied by people who make such deep investments in its future that they are "ready to die" to defend or gain control over the field from their opponents (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:98; Bourdieu 1998:78). As will be shown in this paper, the process of transformation was made particularly difficult by the conservative senior academics who used their dominant positions to protect their interests in the field.

b) Habitus

While the field concept defines objective social structure, habitus conceptualises subjective social structure and captures the relationship between them. Bourdieu argues that an agent's habitus comprises a set of dispositions that embed long-lasting ways of being, seeing, and acting. These dispositions are the schemes of perception and appreciation that orientate action within a field (Bourdieu 2005b:43-44). For Bourdieu, habitus is the "social embodied" because people's bodies are "inhabited" by the objective social structures they have internalised leading him to argue that "the body is in the social world but the social world is also in the body" (Bourdieu 2007: 64, Bourdieu 1990:190). It is through this dialectical or "ontological" relationship between field and habitus that Bourdieu accounts for agency. He argues that this relationship is historically constructed because history is inscribed in things (fields) and incorporated into the body in the form of habitus (Wacquant 1989:45). Bourdieu therefore argues that agency is influenced by the past such that when agents encounter a field, it is this historical relationship that triggers their action within it. Most people are unaware of their practices because their habitus functions beneath the level of consciousness (Bourdieu 1984:466). Bourdieu demonstrates how the dialectical relationship between field and habitus functions with the concepts of *hysteresis of habitus* (hysteresis) and *habitus clivé* (cleft/split habitus). *Hysteresis* describes the crisis that an agent's habitus experiences when the relationship between field and habitus is out of synch due to a radical change in the field. A time-lag follows before the two are re-aligned. During the time-lag, some agents may resist transformation of the field because their habitus was particularly well-adjusted to the previous field. The action of agents during this period of adjustment is referred to as the *hysteresis effect* (Bourdieu 1977:78). With the

concept of *habitus divé*, Bourdieu attempts to show that the habitus can adjust to a field but within certain limits or degrees of integration. For some agents, certain fields may exert tensions that can split the habitus engendering a “de-stabilised habitus torn by contradiction and internal division, generating suffering” (Bourdieu 2000:160). An example of a split habitus cited by Bourdieu is the guilt that often accompanies upward mobility because people feel that they have betrayed their loyalty to their class origins (Bourdieu 2007:100). For Bourdieu, the ontological relationship between field and habitus is central to understanding agency that either transforms or preserves the logic of practice of a field.

c) Capital

Bourdieu argues that cultural capital is equivalent to monetary wealth or high value economic products that are used as currency in markets where the objective is to maximise profits (Swartz 1997: 75). Cultural/informational capital primarily refers to education or knowledge that equips an agent with an appreciation for and the ability to decipher cultural relations and cultural artefacts (Johnson 1993:7). There are two other types of capital identified by Bourdieu, namely, economic capital and social capital. Economic capital may be directly converted into money while social capital describes the capital that agents derive from social networks on the basis of affiliation. Cultural capital exists in three states: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalised state. In the embodied state, it is incorporated into the habitus, in the objectified state, it exists in the form of books and works of art while institutionalised cultural capital refers to educational qualifications conferred by institutions (Bourdieu 1997:47-51). Bourdieu argues that if accumulated in sufficient volumes, cultural capital grants significant power to its holders in certain fields. He considered the university and the intellectual fields as examples of social spaces that grant agents with the most cultural capital the power to glorify and legitimise their capital while discrediting the capital of their opponents with negative “position-takings” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:99).

In summary, the purpose of this radically reduced account of Bourdieu’s theoretical framework is to explain how the two-way relationship between field and habitus, the competition for capital, and the ongoing tension within fields, enabled this paper to argue that the underlying social structures and historical context of the South African university field produced the legacy of Fundamental Pedagogics (discussed in more detail later on) and the resistant habitus of the conservative Professors.

Symbolic Violence and higher education

Since this paper argues that the resistance that occurred in the Faculty was a form of symbolic violence, it is important to explain that Bourdieu essentially used the concept to account for the tacit, albeit unconscious, acceptance of domination by the dominated. He developed symbolic violence as a substitute for the concept of ideology which he felt had very limited explanatory power (Bourdieu 1992:112). It is not easy to define the concept as Bourdieu adjusted it to suit different research endeavours. In this paper the emphasis falls on symbolic violence as an imposed power driven by the conditioning of the habitus of the dominant more so than its misrecognition and tacit acceptance by the dominated. The resistance of the senior academics are considered as the imposition of a cultural arbitrary in which “power valorises culture” (Moore 2004: 448). This paper therefore argues that it was the deliberate and deceitful use of power in the form of “cultural transmission” (Young 2008:32) by the senior Professors that provides the grounds for the designation of their practices as symbolic violence. I have, however, also drawn on the definitions provided in *Masculine Domination, Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* and *Homo Academicus* to provide conceptual coherence and to avoid a one-dimensional rendering of how symbolic violence can be operationalised as a research method in higher education.

In *Masculine Domination*, symbolic violence is defined as the “paradoxical submission” to a gentle violence that is, “imperceptible” and “invisible” even to its victims. Bourdieu emphasises that this submission stems from the *misrecognition* of a concealed form of domination (Bourdieu 2001:1-2). For Bourdieu, misrecognition occurs because the dominated accept the power of the dominant as legitimate causing them to unwittingly participate in their own oppression (Bourdieu 1998:121). In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Bourdieu & Passeron use the concept of the *cultural arbitrary* to argue that misrecognition is caused by family culture and school education that are complicit in leading the dominated to believe that the values of the dominant are normal or natural rather than historically constructed cultural relations arbitrarily imposed on them (Bourdieu & Passeron:1970). The socially constructed nature of misrecognition is further enhanced with the concepts of *symbolic capital* and *symbolic power* that Bourdieu uses to explain that power in society always needs some form of legitimation. He argues that symbolic power is a “world-making” power that imposes social classifications “upon other minds” and operates like a credit that gains acceptance from the dominated over a particular period of time (Bourdieu 1989:23). To wield symbolic power, agents must first obtain high volumes of symbolic capital, which refers to any form of capital that is perceived as prestigious in a field. Put differently, the holders of symbolic power must possess legitimate symbolic capital that, like the “brand power” of a popular consumer good, is trusted and internalised by the dominated as socially acceptable (Bourdieu

2005a:195). Symbolic violence is therefore only successful because the socially conditioned habitus of the dominated unconsciously misrecognises the cultural values of the dominant as legitimate.

With specific reference to higher education, Bourdieu argues in *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, that French universities and colleges engaged in symbolic violence because the state, which holds the monopoly over both physical and symbolic violence, is able to use education to shape the habitus of students and academics (Bourdieu 1996). In *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu argues that the university field, “like any other field”, is a site of competition between agents for dominance and legitimacy which gives the victors a monopoly over symbolic power and the right to impose their symbolic capital as legitimate (Bourdieu 1988:11). In Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic domination, therefore, universities are prime sites for the practice of symbolic violence through the imposition of dominant culture because they are institutions in which agents with high volumes of symbolic power can cause the worldviews of the dominant to be misrecognised as legitimate, particularly in areas of knowledge and curriculum production.

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The section below comprises the case study in which the above theoretical framework is operationalised.

South African higher Education as a field

Bourdieu’s research methodology commences with the construction of the social field. The researcher starts by locating the field in the *field of power* which consists of the state and other powerful forces in society that, like a ruling class, compete to have power over all the fields (Bourdieu 1996:264-265). For Bourdieu, a field consists of agents, groups or institutions and is structured in accordance with two “differentiation principles”, namely, the “dominant principle of hierarchisation” and the “second principle of hierarchisation” (Bourdieu 1996:270). All fields have this dominant/dominated structure which is determined by the internal distribution of economic and cultural capital. In most fields, economic capital is more valuable than cultural capital (the second principle of hierarchisation). Agents rich in economic and cultural capital control the field and define its dominant principles of hierarchisation and determine the extent to which its specific capitals (reinterpretations of cultural and economic capital) are influenced externally by the field of power. Bourdieu argues that if the heteronomous principle of hierarchisation which favours *external* political and economic influences is dominant,

then the specific capitals of that field will be strongly affected by the field of power. On the other hand, if the autonomous principle of hierarchisation is dominant, then the field imposes its own norms and sanctions *internally* and is not overly influenced by the field of power (Bourdieu 1993:40). Using the field of education as an example, Bourdieu argues that when the autonomous principle of hierarchisation is dominant, the field is primarily concerned with cultural issues generated by the field itself as opposed to economic prosperity and competitiveness which are influences that come from the field of power (Hilgers & Mangez: 9). In principle; all fields are relatively autonomous to the field of power, and their degree of autonomy depends on which principle of hierarchisation is dominant (Maton 2005:690).

When applying this model to the South African university field, the work of Naidoo (2004:461) was very resourceful. Naidoo, who had used Bourdieu to construct the university field under apartheid, argues that during this period, South African universities were separated into autonomous and heteronomous sectors. She argues that white, English and Afrikaans-language institutions were divided in their support for the apartheid state and therefore had different relationships with the field of power. According to Naidoo, white Afrikaans-language universities supported the state, while white English-language universities were considered “liberal” because of their anti-apartheid politics. Some have argued that this was only a public stance because liberal universities also practised forms of race-based discrimination.

Due to their support for the apartheid state, white Afrikaans-language universities were considered as heteronomous institutions by Naidoo. As heteronomous institutions, their specific capitals, in accordance with Bourdieu’s theorisation, were *externally* influenced and refracted or recontextualised in accordance with the political and cultural values that were dominant in the field of power (Maton 2005: 690). The specific capitals referred to here are: *academic capital* (institutional power in the form of control over appointments, funding, etc.) and *scholastic capital* (intellectual/ scientific prestige and intellectual renown) that are unique to the university field (Maton 2005: *ibid*). Although much has changed in South African higher education after apartheid, I focused on the pre-democracy period because it was this phase in the history of universities in the heteronomous sector of the field that shaped the resistant intellectual habitus of the academics in the Faculty. Below, I continue the discussion of the heteronomous institutional history of UX in more detail in preparation for the discussion of the unfolding of the curriculum transformation process.

History of UX and the transformation of the curriculum

UX started as a white, English-language university-college in the early twentieth century. It became a white, Afrikaans-language only university during the 1930's through an alignment with the ideology of Afrikaner Nationalism. Scholars associate this cultural exclusivity with the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer or South African War (1899-1902). Giliomee (2003:6-7) argues that Britain "crushed" the two Boer republics and introduced English as the sole official language. For Gilliomee, this "aggressive" British cultural domination resulted in the Afrikaans language becoming a galvanising symbol for the cause of Afrikaner Nationalism. During this period, universities that were bilingual experienced "Afrikanerisation" which was a strategy used to promote Afrikaner nationalism on university campuses. For example, (Grundlingh 1990:7) argues that the University-College of the Orange Free State was Afrikanerised through an appeal to cultural and political sentiments while the University of Pretoria (UP) became a *Voortrekkers Universiteit* (University of the Pioneers) (Afrikaners who trekked inland to escape British rule) Mouton (2007:27). According to Moguerane (2007:44), the Afrikanerisation of UP led to rewards for political loyalty to the cause of Afrikaner Nationalism that "determined appointments, curriculum content and the composition of the student body." UX was also Afrikanerised and established strong ties to the National Party (NP) that eventually became the apartheid government in 1948. A secret society known as the Afrikaner Broederbond ("Bond") that was established in 1918, assumed a "vanguard" role within Afrikaner Nationalism and had a strong presence at UX. Many of the Bond's members held powerful positions at other Afrikaans-language universities and its core membership included the Rector of "every" Afrikaans university and teacher training college that gave it considerable power over the curriculum and staff appointments at these institutions (O'Meara 1996:45). Due to its alliance with the Bond and close relationship with the politics of the NP, UX cemented its place as a heteronomous university in the field of power. It was this institutional relationship with Afrikaner Nationalism that led to its Faculty of Education becoming one of the pioneers of Fundamental Pedagogics in South Africa.

The legacy of Fundamental Pedagogics in the Faculty of Education

By the early 1980's the NP was losing its grip on state power and ideological legitimacy. White Afrikaans-language universities attempted to increase the level of diversity among their students and staff. The Faculty of Education at UX was slow to change until a new Dean, a black South African, was appointed in 2000. The new Dean, known for his critical scholarly work and public stances against apartheid education, was mandated by the university to transform the Faculty. To promote change, "allies" of

the Dean were appointed to assist with transformation (Interview A). From this group, Associate Professor Duncan, a white South African, whose work experience, academic publications and research interests indicate that his intellectual habitus was shaped by his opposition to apartheid, was appointed to co-ordinate the transformation of the education major - a module that was taught to all students as part of the undergraduate curriculum (Interview B). The transformation process lasted for a period of four years from 2003 to 2007. As he began his work, he discovered that the curriculum was still grounded in the philosophy of FP. This was not surprising since, as noted above, the Faculty had played a leading role in the establishment of FP which was brought to South Africa from Holland via C J Langeveld's *Beknopte Theoretische Pedagogiek* in 1944. It was taught mainly at the University of South Africa and UP. FP forms part of "Pedagogics" (theory of education) and is the epistemological grounding for its part-disciplines, for example, psycho-pedagogics and socio-pedagogics (Enslin 1984:141). Critics argue that the values of Christian National Education (CNE) were reproduced by generations of teachers educated at Afrikaans-language universities, teacher education colleges and historically black universities. Enslin (ibid:145) argues that although FP stresses that education as a science should not be ideological, it was, in reality, an "ideological practice masquerading as theoretical practice". Academics working at white, English-language universities largely opposed FP and embraced the curriculum studies approach that fostered critical thinking by using liberal and Marxist perspectives (Le Grange 2008:400 & 405). Professor Duncan, given his intellectual habitus, wanted to remove FP and shift the curriculum towards a more critical approach grounded in the humanities and the social sciences because he felt that FP was limiting critical thinking and preventing students from becoming socially conscious educators (Interview B).

Curriculum change and resistance by the Senior Professors

When Professor Duncan embarked on the curriculum change process, he was determined to establish a co-ordinated approach because of the "whimsical ways" in which his colleagues thought about transformation. In his view, each lecturer believed that his or her approach was transformative (Interview B). As noted in the introduction, the university placed enormous pressure on academics to transform the curriculum without developing a framework to establish a common understanding of the new policy environment. Professor Duncan attempted to provide a coherent understanding of the curriculum revision process by drafting a concept document that emphasised critical thinking and a significant shift away from FP which is reflected in the extract below (Interview B):

These are the possible themes; they should be taught in non-conventional ways, and not as lecture-delivery being the main mode of teaching. They should be based on a completely new set of foundational texts. And yet they should recognise where these students come from, and carefully take them to a different place.

Although meetings were held with all senior staff, the transformation of the content and pedagogy of the education module did not initially include them. In fact, most of Professor Duncan's colleagues were not aware of this new philosophical direction. The Dean, who had sight of his progress, commented favourably and encouraged him not to "hold back" on removing FP (Interview B). When he presented his concept document to his colleagues, it had 12 modules with themes such as the critical history of South African education, how knowledge is organised, perspectives on transformatory pedagogy, education and diversity, education markets and globalisation, and childhood and education in South Africa (Interview B). These themes surprisingly, did not receive angry objections from the supporters of FP. The backlash, however, came much later from senior Professors who used their superior academic capital and field positions to defend FP.

To track the reasons for their resistance, I interviewed 7 HOD's (Head of Department), many of whom felt that Professor Duncan exceeded his authority. The clearest opposition came from two senior Professors, who I will refer to as Professor Smith and Professor Cloete. Both were long-standing Professors and HOD's and were strongly opposed to the new curriculum. Professor Smith felt that Professor Duncan's appointment was a "serious mistake." He believed that the Dean set Professor Duncan up against his colleagues because "one man can't be expected to transform 12 modules without consultation" (Interview C). Professor Cloete also opposed the appointment and only went along with the concept document to avoid being considered as "anti-transformation" (Interview D). Another Professor, in a "polite gesture of advice and guidance from an older mentor", told Professor Duncan "that his colleagues were fed up with him because he lacked a solid foundation in the study of education" and that he was "a historian while his colleagues were curriculum experts with PhD's in education" (Interview E). As a clear demonstration of his resistance, Professor Cloete attempted to force through changes to the "thrust" of the framework openly undermining the authority of Professor Duncan (Interview B). Since Professor Smith and Professor Cloete were the most senior academics in the Faculty that resisted, I considered it important to provide further background on their intellectual and academic capital: professional achievements, research publications and academic positions. I discuss this below.

As senior Professors and HOD's, both Professor Smith and Professor Cloete had developed significant volumes of academic capital in the Faculty. Both had also accumulated substantial intellectual capital for their expertise in FP. For example, Professor Cloete was the HOD of the Department responsible for teaching FP for

about 15 years and he was extremely disappointed when it was shut down. For him, curriculum change was very distressing because he felt that it harmed his academic career. He was strongly opposed to the new curriculum and expressed himself as follows (Interview C):

We had problems with the content, for example, in the old FP curriculum we taught students things that sound good to hear, we wanted to give them contemporary, popular themes, like street kids, drug problems, and crime problems and then bring it in line with education. We felt that this would be pleasant to hear and interesting for students to listen to. When Professor Duncan came with the new curriculum these things were removed...at first year level in the new curriculum there was something called historical dimensions and what was the role of apartheid and how it impacted on people's lives...our experience was that some of the white students were not emotionally ready as they had just left school...the black students were better prepared because of their background. I received an avalanche of complaints, in the end I removed about two modules because of all the complaints that they caused... Professor Duncan's critical pedagogy which he understood well caused many people and students to feel uncomfortable. For academics trained in the pedagogics tradition the new neo-Marxist theory that Professor Duncan was introducing into the curriculum was an opposing approach and they defended their old approach which they felt was justified.

Professor Smith shared the above view because he was also a long-standing member of the Faculty having held the position of HOD for more than 10 years. He was a strong supporter of FP and obtained his PhD, that was based on the FP approach, from an Afrikaans-language university. Professor Smith's public comments, academic publications, organisational membership, and student supervision indicate that he was deeply invested in FP. He expressed his opposition to Professor Duncan's proposal in the following way (Interview D):

He did not consult...He came with a very strong transformation agenda. He did not consider how the curriculum had to be structured in terms of first, second and third year...He worked from the position of critical pedagogy which is an approach that says the rich are enjoying life and the poor are struggling. Critical Pedagogy implies that there is a societal problem that must be corrected, and teachers must play a role. I do not think that this is a very successful module...you must not use education for this political purpose. In my approach, the student is the client and we

must offer our students what they are expected to teach in the classroom and prepare them for that. Education must not be used for political agendas. I don't believe that that is the best way to educate teachers. That is why later on, in another round of reworking we threw out his main themes, like the sociology, history and philosophy of education. If I had a choice, I would have used my own approach that I think is an acceptable model for teaching students how to be teachers which would enable them to deal with the practical problems of teaching.

When the above views of the two Professors are contrasted with the goals set for curriculum change by Professor Duncan and the Dean (cited below), then it becomes clear why their academic habitus was brought into conflict throughout the process:

I explained to the Dean that we needed to re-orientate the curriculum in ways that incorporated the fundamental disciplines into the undergraduate curriculum. Thus I felt that instead of tinkering with the curriculum, we needed to change the way our graduates think, and for me I believe that for young South Africans to claim to be educated and supposed to be teachers, they must be able to think critically about the world they live in...to be able to reflect on that world and change it. For me...being a very great believer in basic liberal critical education...I believe that in order to make citizens of that order, they needed to know a bit of history, they needed to think philosophically, they needed to think anthropologically, they needed to think politically most of all... (Interview B)

In the main, the above interview extracts demonstrate the central causes of resistance by the senior Professors. Based on the interview with Professor Duncan, the senior Professors were correct that they were not informed of the removal of FP from the curriculum. It was not poor communication, however, that angered them the most. In their view, Professor Duncan was not an education expert which was why his "themed" approach ignored that teachers should be skilled in the methodology of teaching and teaching practice. For them, the curriculum had to be structured hierarchically (first, second and third year) and not according to themes that did not prepare students for the teaching profession. Both Professors held the view that this was the norm for teacher education internationally and their resistance in this regard is understandable, although it can be argued that the rules for structuring a teaching qualification is regulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Professor Duncan's approach would therefore not have been able to fundamentally alter the qualification structure for the professional training of teachers. The Professors also raised objections to the "incoherent" and "illogical" reading material that "did not provide students with a

final statement” of what they needed to understand. A concern was also raised that the “loosely arranged” academic readings created many problems because students were accustomed to learning materials that focused on what they needed to know instead of having to search for direction from multiple sources, particularly when they were already disorientated by the “radical” content since they were young, “classically conservative” white Afrikaans students (Interview C). In this last criticism the real battle lines start to emerge. By insisting on exposing students to what he referred to as “original texts” and “critical studies” rather than rote learning the methodology of teaching, Professor Duncan was directly challenging the culture of FP in the Faculty so deeply embodied in the academic habitus of the senior Professors. This is clear from the action that they took to scupper the transformation process revealing that their resistance was essentially about protecting their investments in FP.

Failure of the curriculum transformation process

The process to change the curriculum started in 2003 and by 2006, the university management wanted a measurable outcome to indicate to government that the university was transforming. In the light of this development, all Faculties were placed under enormous pressure to provide evidence of curriculum change. Professor Duncan’s concept document “suddenly” became the “transformed curriculum” in the rush to satisfy senior management (Interview B). This was a pivotal moment in the process because it shifted control to the HOD’s including the two Professors who opposed the new content. Due to the power structure in the Faculty, the HOD’s controlled the authorisation of curriculum content, teaching and pedagogy. It was thus left to them to finalise the intellectual focus of the curriculum and to officially sign off the report on the extent to which it was transformed. The HOD’s did not, however, revise Professor Duncan’s themed approach and new transformation content into a curriculum that met international standards for teacher qualifications as they argued above. According to Professor Duncan, the HODs excluded him from the process and simply continued “to offer the old FP content and pedagogy but with his proposed themes to give the impression of transformation “in order to keep the bureaucrats in the university happy” (Interview B). The senior Professors thus managed to retain the old curriculum through a combination of institutional power and intellectual deceit. Professor Duncan felt that this resulted in a “disastrous” and “very bureaucratic” approach to curriculum change. It is important to emphasise at this point that Professor Duncan was not a senior Professor and had no “real institutional power” because he was placed in his position as a member of the new Dean’s “gilded cohort” (Interview B). He was therefore unable to stop the process as the Dean who had appointed him was on long-term leave. He raised the matter with the Acting Dean but the “new curriculum” ended up being approved in accordance

with the inputs from the HOD's. Having failed to transform the curriculum, Professor Duncan attempted to continue the transformation process with a team of "junior" staff using what he referred to as "subaltern agency by working beneath the structures of authority of the Faculty". This initiative was also defeated because the HOD's were too powerful. He later conceded that attempting to transform the curriculum "from below" was impossible and that he failed because of the "way in which ideas move in universities" (Interview B).

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In the section below I discuss the resistance of the senior Professors and the failed curriculum process and its significance in the context of South African higher education transformation using Bourdieu's framework as outlined in the introductory section of this paper.

Discussion

In this paper I have argued that this case study of curriculum change, albeit at one institution, demonstrates the efficacy of Bourdieu's concepts for understanding how power and domination create the conditions for the practice of symbolic violence in universities. I began by arguing that Bourdieu's sociology offers a practical way of capturing the relationship between structure and agency by objectifying the historical conditioning of field and habitus. In my view, the field concept has shown, in this paper, that the culture and history of Fundamental Pedagogics was a product of the heteronomous section of the South African university field. While I am not suggesting a positivistic, causal and timeless link between the history of the field and the habitus of its agents, it would be difficult to argue that the senior Professors resistance to the revised curriculum and the symbolic violence in their agency was not inspired by the social conditioning of the field. I have also attempted to show that the field concept strips away the misrecognition of the operation of power in universities. Emirbayer & Johnson (2008) have argued extensively for Bourdieu's field-theoretic approach to be fully exploited by "organizational studies" because it is so effective for demonstrating empirically and theoretically how power functions in individual and collective institutions. I share their view as the application of Bourdieu's field concept was especially useful for demonstrating the relationship between the field of power and the university field. In this case it was also well-suited for the intra-institutional analysis of the practice of symbolic violence. When applied intra-institutionally, Bourdieu's field concept objectifies the "university as a field", that, like all fields, consists of a hierarchically structured network of objective relations between positions (Bourdieu 2005a: 69 -70). For example, when conceptualised as a

field, the various university structures (Faculties, Departments, Faculty Boards, Senate, Senior Management (Deans and HOD's), represent field positions that distinguish their occupants from each other in accordance with their endowment of capital relevant to the university field. For Bourdieu, it is therefore "meaningless" for researchers to focus only on decision-making in the form of "discourse and interactions" as an expression of power without considering the dispositions and interests of the agents who occupy such field positions and the "strengths" (capital) that they possess to realise their aims within the field (Bourdieu 2005a:70).

This "university as a field" approach proved very effective in this study because by using the concept of academic capital in tandem with habitus, it was possible to show objectively how the senior Professors used their positions to promote their dispositionally-generated interests in the Faculty. By forcefully imposing their interests, they practiced symbolic violence in the form of a cultural arbitrary. For example, not only did they continue the imposition of FP, both Professors removed modules that caused cultural/ideological offence because they traumatised the "classically conservative" white students, parents and staff (interview C). These practices were made possible because of their dominant academic capital and ties in well with Bourdieu's argument that the university field, "is like any other field" (Bourdieu 1988:11); prone to the practice of symbolic violence because agents compete to control its logic of practice in order to impose their views as legitimate.

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the relationship between academic capital and institutional control is significant for research practice and policy-development in higher education, particularly in South Africa where universities are highly bureaucratised. For policy-makers it is important to understand that dominant agents with very high levels of academic capital, as in the case of the senior Professors, can protect their interests by concealing their action from the broader university community thus depriving them of an opportunity for agency. For example, as noted in the main study, the Faculty Board, a decision-making structure of the Faculty of Education with a high volume of academic capital, grants seniority to HOD's and simply confirms the latter's decisions leaving very little opportunity for debate and contestation. The former Dean of the Faculty, noted similarly, that the university was overly bureaucratic because the Senate, a structure with the highest volume of academic capital with respect to the academic mission of the university, rarely debated curriculum change and tended to "operate like the main arteries of the university...whatever the Senate decides is true"(Interview F). At a university like UX, in which most Faculties functioned separately from each other and where decision-making processes and outcomes were concealed, it is unlikely that cases of resistance and symbolic violence would be known to the broader university community. This paper therefore argues that bureaucratic control and the lack of transparency over decision-making at universities also accounts for the effective operation of symbolic violence and the slow pace of curriculum transformation.

With the concept of habitus, it was possible to demonstrate that transformation policy gets refracted and recontextualised at the site of the university because, as Bourdieu argues, “texts circulate without their contexts” (Bourdieu 1999:221) and agents in the receiving field tend to apprehend or interpret policy in accordance with their habitus and their interest in the stakes in the field. Bourdieu’s concept of habitus was therefore particularly useful for demonstrating the complex process of policy reception and interpretation at the site of the university. In this case, the senior Professors were able to manipulate government policy to suit their own strategies, interests and position-takings. When the analysis of the subversive agency of the senior Professors and other academics was nuanced with the concept of habitus, it was clear that their action was generated by the embodiment of Fundamental Pedagogics as an intellectual habitus. In my view, the concepts of “hysteresis of habitus” and “split habitus”, assisted to demonstrate Bourdieu’s argument that habitus is the force through which symbolic violence derives its “mysterious efficacy” (Bourdieu 2000: 169). For example, with respect to hysteresis, it is clear that due to the loss of their heteronomous symbolic power and symbolic capital, the habitus of the senior Professors experienced sudden change. As a result, they used their academic capital to refract transformation policy, by sleight of hand, to continue the logic of practice of the previous field. This action by the Professors amounts to what Bourdieu refers to as the “hysteresis effect” that causes agency that is out of synch with fundamental changes to a field. Such acts of symbolic violence, if not uncovered by researchers, tend to go unnoticed by others in the university community, particularly students who unconsciously accept the legitimacy of universities due to the social conditioning of their habitus. In my view, this example shows that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is particularly useful for demonstrating that universities are prime sites for habitus-generated symbolic violence.

The concept of habitus *clivé* or split habitus was also useful for demonstrating the practice of symbolic violence because of the emotionally destabilising effect of a profound change in the ontological relationship between the habitus and a field. Bourdieu used this concept to refer to the traumatising guilt that people feel when they are expected to demonstrate allegiance to a recently changed field while still feeling a strong emotional/intellectual bond with the previous field. In this case, the rapid breakdown of the entrenched ontological relationship between field and habitus gave rise to divided loyalties on the part of some academics who experienced a habitus that was torn by contradiction, tension and internal division. While I am not able to show it fully here, the main study has examples of lecturers who did not want to teach the new content because it conflicted with their cultural and political beliefs. In one such case, a lecturer was deeply disturbed by the Marxist content of the new curriculum as she felt that by teaching it, she was betraying her social origins because “Afrikaners are a religious people” (Interview F). This splitting of the habitus, that clearly resulted in a form of suffering, was caused by the fracturing of the long habituation and alignment

of the habitus of teachers with Afrikaner ethnicity in the heteronomous section of the university field. As a result of this tension in the habitus, many lecturers simply refused to teach the new content or pretended to do so while secretly continuing with the old curriculum in the lecture-room. In this case, the split habitus concept has shown how academics, in order to settle their divided habitus and to protect it from breakdown, engaged in symbolic violence by avoiding the transformation material while quietly continuing to impose a discarded curriculum because it appealed to them ideologically/emotionally. The above examples, in my view, have provided sufficient grounds for the argument in this paper that the concept of habitus is an important tool for researching the operation of symbolic domination in universities. In the section below, I briefly discuss Bourdieu's strategies for the reduction of symbolic violence.

Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity, which he conceptualised as the process through which sociology turns its critical weapons on itself, has the potential to reduce symbolic violence in universities. At face-value, this seems like a standard methodological approach in the social sciences. Maton (2003:58), however, considers Bourdieu's conceptualisation unique because it opposes sociologically reductive, individualistic, and narcissistic forms of reflexivity. Grenfell & James (1998:176), are of the view that Bourdieu's approach is different to others because it permanently implicates the researcher in the process of knowledge production about the research object. Carmen & Gale (2007:443) argue similarly that Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity forces academics to engage in self-analysis by questioning their own intellectual position in relation to those they conduct their research upon. These arguments reflect the core of Bourdieu's theory of reflexivity which is underpinned by his view that sociology is a form of *socio-analysis* 'where the sociologist is to the "social unconscious" of society what the psychoanalyst is to the patient's unconscious' (Swartz 1997:10). While Bourdieu's theory of reflexivity is central to his entire oeuvre, he was aware of its limitations and thought it "quite illusory" that symbolic violence could be defeated solely with the weapons of consciousness and the will (Bourdieu 2006:180). For him, changing the habitus takes an incredible amount of self-work involving "counter-training" (Bourdieu: 2000:172). Bourdieu considered individual and collective reflexivity as achievable only with intense habitus-changing education over an extended period of time. Although Bourdieu had these reservations, he adjusted his view when he was appointed as an advisor to the French government by recommending that reflexivity be implemented as a form of *applied sociology* for teachers so that they could teach social history in ways that fostered critical thinking and cultural inclusivity (Bourdieu 2006; Kupfer 2015:38). This shows that although he argued that symbolic violence was inevitable in education, he thought that it was possible to limit its effects in practical ways with education policy.

For the conservative Professors, students and lecturers, the sea-change in the post-apartheid higher education landscape must have felt as if they were on the receiving end of symbolic violence. Replacing one form of symbolic violence with another is

therefore not transformative. In my view, Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity, although limited in many ways, offers higher education policy-makers, students and academics, a form of practical defence against the effects of symbolic violence without reproducing symbolic domination. Rousseau's (2016) work on the contested nature of the production of South African history, represents one example of reflexive research that should be included in the curriculum to limit symbolic violence in teaching and learning. Many universities may have already adopted this approach, but as this study has shown, such forms of reflexivity must be embodied as an intellectual habitus in order for universities to achieve substantive curriculum change.

In closing, this paper briefly argues for the extension of Bourdieu's work on symbolic domination to include the under-researched relationship between physical and symbolic violence in higher education. In 2015 and 2016, the protests by the *#FeesMustFall* and *#RhodesMustFall* student movements over discrimination based on racism, sexuality and issues related to the lack of curriculum change, have often led to physical violence suggesting a link between them. While this is an under-theorised area in the sociology of higher education, Karl von Holdt, using Bourdieu, has begun to explore the relationship between symbolic and physical violence through his research on community protests in South Africa. Von Holdt argues that protesters engage in violent action as a last resort because "collective violence on the part of subalterns is frequently a response to the symbolic violence that works to silence them" (Burawoy & von Holdt 2012:92). I am of the view Von Holdt's exploration of the relationship between physical and symbolic violence should also be encouraged in higher education studies. The under-theorised nature of this relationship became evident when I interviewed the Dean of Students at UX (a black South African). When the Dean proposed to replace Afrikaans with English, he was threatened with violence by a group of conservative white Afrikaans-speaking students. These students then clashed violently with a group of black students who supported the Dean's proposal (Interview F). Both groups of students resorted to physical violence because, to use Bourdieu's terms, they were victims of symbolic violence given the history of these languages in South Africa. This example and the work of von Holdt, in my view, shows that there is much to be gained from a deeper sociological understanding of the relationship between symbolic and physical violence. Methodologically, the concept of habitus will be central to such a project as Bourdieu regarded habitus as a research tool for the analysis of socially acquired "*bodily emotions*" such as timidity, anxiety, impotent rage, inner conflict, self-depreciation, shame and humiliation. These emotions are sparked by the practical (instinctive) sense that people have of their domination in certain fields. Bourdieu argues that people experience domination in society as an injury to the body in the form of emotions because they unwittingly apply the dehumanising classifications of the dominant to themselves in certain fields (Bourdieu 2001: 35-38; Bourdieu 2000:141). This practical sense of hurt in the habitus caused by the social-psychological effects of symbolic violence has been

demonstrated in the Bourdieu-inspired research of Reay (2015). In my view, such studies and that of von Holdt, show that Bourdieu's sociology should be extended to explore how rage, humiliation, and the internalisation of "silent suffering" (Bourdieu 1992: 121) caused by symbolic violence links to physical violence. Bourdieu's theory of symbolic domination, used in collaboration with the discipline of psychology and psychoanalysis (which he encouraged), in my view, will enhance socio-scientific knowledge of the relationship between symbolic and physical violence and contribute significantly to the sociology of higher education, particularly in societies with a history of colonialism and racialised social inequality.

Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to show the efficacy of Bourdieu's sociology for researching symbolic violence in the production of the higher education curriculum. I have argued that his field-theoretic approach assisted to understand how the academic capital held by senior academics enabled them to resist curriculum change. This study has also demonstrated that Bourdieu's sociology, particularly the concept of habitus, has provided a reasonably accurate account of resistance as one of many factors that hold back transformation as the dispositions of academics are slow to change. This paper has also revealed that symbolic violence tends to be invisible to government and university monitoring systems which may also slow the pace of transformation. As a counter to such resistance, this this paper has argued that Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity offers the possibility, albeit within limits, for reducing symbolic violence in curriculum construction. Finally, this paper has argued that Bourdieu's sociology offers the potential for future research into the relationship between symbolic and physical violence, which is an indispensable, yet under-theorised area of higher education studies.

Disclosure Statement

I hereby declare that I have no conflict of interest.

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