



# Should Sociologists Be Reflexive?: A Reflexive Critique on Bourdieu's Reflexive Sociology and a Suggestion of the Bridging Institutions\*

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*The article explores the problem of reflexivity by critically examining Bourdieu's reflexive sociology. The distinctiveness of his reflexive sociology lies in the relationships between reflexivity and scientificity. I am interested in how reflexive sociology makes sociology scientific and objective. First, I present the relationships among autonomy, objectivity and symbolic power by summarizing his sociology of science. Second, while presenting his reflexive sociology, I argue that it cannot contribute to sociologists' attaining symbolic power even if it might help the sociological field to be autonomous; he dismisses the fact that autonomy and symbolic power are different matters. Third, I attempt to shift the focus from the epistemic strategy to the social one for symbolically powerful sociology. Bridging institutions have two functions: making sociology authoritative by showing the problem-solving ability to the public and autonomous by screening external interventions.*

**Keywords:** reflexivity, reflexive sociology, autonomy, symbolic power, bridging institutions, the Socratic Method

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## INTRODUCTION

The article raises a reflexive question about reflexivity<sup>1</sup> accepted as a good imperative: Is reflexivity necessary for sociologists to produce scientific knowledge? I explore the problem of reflexivity with the question by critically examining Bourdieu's reflexive sociology.<sup>2</sup> His attempt is distinctive among others as he deals with the relations between reflexivity and scientificity; he tries to make the traditionally incompatible concepts compatible.

I briefly present why reflexivity and scientificity were regarded as incompatible in advance of discussing Bourdieu's reflexive sociology. The problem of reflexivity went back to Weber in the history of the modern social science. He argued "[i]t is true that personal views constantly enter into scientific argument and blunt it, arbitrarily varying the weight of scientific arguments" (Weber [1904] 2004: 362). Such an awareness of the impossibility of value-neutral science resulted from the self-reflection and the realization that he himself was a mere historical subject. He attempted to seek a way to hold the objectivity in social science based on such reflexive self-awareness. More than half a century later, when positivists dominated the field of social sciences, Gouldner (1970) discussed on the subjective nature of sociological analyses and took reflexivity up to the surface. Friedrichs (1970) also attempted a sociological analysis on sociology (i.e. a reflexive analysis on sociology itself) in the same year. Many social scientists in the various disciplines – particularly in sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) and anthropology – have brought up reflexivity as a central issue since then: Bloor ([1976] 1991) and Woolgar (1988) in SSK and Scholte (1972), Clifford and Marcus (1986), Marcus and Fischer (1986), and Rosaldo ([1989] 1993) in anthropology. With their attempts, social scientists faced with the fact that their knowledge is not pure, but contaminated by their own existential conditions if they looked upon themselves. "Reflexivity therefore arises as a radical concern, and as a radical threat to the traditional canon of impersonal, value-free, and dispassionate inquiry" (Pels 2000: 2). Consequently, reflexivity highlighted the contextuality of truth; thus no one could deny the existence of multiple realities. When social scientists made a claim about their value-neutrality, they could not avoid the self-exceptionalism.

Bourdieu criticizes the existing reflexive attempts for such relativistic implications of reflexivity. According to him, such relativism originates from the wrong-headed reflexivity –

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<sup>1</sup> The adjectival form of reflexivity, *reflexive*, refers to "1a: directed or turned on itself . . . b: marked by or capable of reflection" (*Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* 2009). The meaning of reflexivity is therefore related to being capable of reflecting on oneself.

<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu started his career at College de France with a reflexive lecture (1990a), and put a period with another reflexive work, *Sketch for a Self-Analysis* (2008). The title is same as the last chapter of his last lecture at Collège de France, *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004: 94–114). They are attempts of 'participant objectivation' or 'objectification objectified': that is, the exemplars of reflexive sociology. These show us that his life-long project is 'reflexive sociology'.

namely “narcissistic reflexivity” (Bourdieu 1990b, 2003, 2004). He argues scientific reflexivity manages to solve the problem and make social scientific knowledge – particularly, sociological knowledge – more objective. In other words, he attempts to solve the problem of relativism caused by the reflexive attitude by means of *scientific reflexivity itself* unlike his antecedent social scientists. It is clear in the following.

This critical reflexion on the limits of theoretical understanding is not intended to discredit theoretical knowledge ... but rather to give it a solid basis by freeing it from the distortions arising from the epistemological and social conditions of its production (Bourdieu 1990b: 27).

Bourdieu’s claim seems to emancipate sociologists from the relativist pitfalls of reflexivity. I share the goal – to make sociological knowledge accepted as more objective and authoritative – with him. However, I doubt how reflexivity, which has been regarded as opposed to such an aim, can accomplish the mission.

The existing studies on Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology do not raise a question as to its scientific effects (see Lewandowski 1999; Adkins 2002; Fowler 2006; Maton 2003; Kenway and McLeod 2004; Pels 2000; Schirato and Webb 2003). The goals of the articles are to develop reflexivity as an essential and necessary concept for sociology by constructively criticizing Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology within the intellectual tradition of reflexivity. It is partly because he is obscure on how scientific reflexivity affects symbolic power and the objectivity of sociological knowledge. However, Bourdieu’s vantage point lies in his scientific ambition – *the ambition of monopolizing the truth of the social*, not in reflexivity itself. Therefore, I intend to shift the focus from reflexivity itself and its viciousness or virtuousness to its relations with the symbolic power of sociological knowledge, its objectivity.

I have two goals in this respect. First, I try to clarify Bourdieu’s foggy argumentations on the scientific effects of reflexive sociology; he is ambiguous as to how reflexive sociology increases the autonomy of the sociological field and provides the field with symbolic power. Second, I attempt to induce sociologists to be disenchanted with the faith in reflexivity and propose the notion of *bridging institutions* as an alternative for enhancing the authority of sociological knowledge. I attempt to achieve the goals by raising a question as follows: Can his reflexive sociology make sociology objective and authoritative?

I organize the article as follows. (a) First, I present Bourdieu’s sociology of science, which is the theoretical and epistemological framework of his reflexive sociology. It explains why scientificity or objectivity means symbolic power and why the autonomy of the field is the most crucial condition for scientists’ attaining and preserving symbolic power. (b) Second, I present what Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology is and clarify its effects in increasing the autonomy of the sociological field and enhancing the symbolic power of sociological

knowledge. His reflexive sociology contributes to increasing the degree of autonomy of the sociological field, but it does not provide the field with symbolic power as the Socratic Method can achieve only ironicization. (c) In the final section, I argue that sociologists' epistemic authority is endowed by their social conditions, not by epistemic ones. I suggest the foundation of bridging institutions as a complementary alternative through which sociologists can gain symbolic power beyond the sociological field.

### THE BACKGROUND OF REFLEXIVE SOCIOLOGY: WHAT MAKES SCIENCE OBJECTIVE?

What makes Bourdieu's reflexive sociology original is his sociology of science. It is the theoretical and epistemological background of his reflexive sociology. I find his ideal of sociology and the reason why reflexive sociology is necessary for sociology to be scientific in his sociology of science. He argues scientific or objective means that knowledge is accepted as objective and authoritative; in turn, the high degree of autonomy of the scientific field protects such symbolic power of the scientific knowledge. He arrives at this conclusion through his field analyses on science. Therefore, it is not an accident that he finishes *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004) with a suggestion of reflexive sociology.

Bourdieu (1975, 1991b, 2004) identifies the scientific field as the space where the most objective knowledge is produced and analyzes where the objectivity of science comes from. He argues "[s]cientific truth does not impose itself by itself, by the sheer force of its argumentative reason (not even in the scientific field)" (Bourdieu 2004: 88). Such an attempt to prove the objectivity of scientific knowledge by means of argumentation is possible only if scientific knowledge could correspond to the external reality. Bourdieu, however, rejects the correspondence theory of truth following Bachelard (Wacquant 2006 4–5). Scientists do not transparently represent the reality of the nature that is totally independent from them; but they have to construct the reality of the nature. Then, where does objectivity come from? The scientific knowledge is objective because it is accepted as objective in the contemporary society and scientists are allowed to *monopolize the production of truth* (Bourdieu 2004: 87). In other words, scientists possess *symbolic power*, which makes "the imposition of the form" (Bourdieu 1991a) possible, in relationships with lay agents in the contemporary society.<sup>3</sup>

Scientists are able to exert symbolic power thanks to the high degree of autonomy of the scientific field (Bourdieu 1975, 1991b, 2004). Bourdieu criticizes other sociologists of science,

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, Bourdieu does not apply his notion of symbolic power to the scientific field for its political nuance. He does not clearly explicate what he means by objectivity. I, therefore, try to clarify it, and interpret its meaning as symbolic power. Nevertheless, I do not insist every meaning of his objectivity is symbolic power; in fact, he frequently uses objectivity from the realist perspective without any justification. However, conceiving of objectivity as symbolic power is not only consistent with his rejection of the correspondence theory of truth, but also justifiable in the hermeneutical sense.

particularly, the practitioners of strong programme for their ignorance of “the relative autonomy of the field” (Bourdieu 2004: 19).<sup>4</sup> He defines the autonomy of the field as follows:

To say that the field is relatively autonomous with respect to the encompassing social universe is to say that the system of forces that are constitutive of the structure of the field (tension) is relatively independent of the forces exerted on the field (pressure). It has, as it were, the ‘freedom’ it needs to develop its own necessity, its own logic, its own *nomos*. (Bourdieu 2004: 47; Emphases in original)

Scientists, therefore, free themselves from constraints and obligations imposed from without due to the autonomy of the scientific field; they only have to mind the constraints and obligations existing within the scientific field. It allows them to develop their own interests, questions, methods and even language that are rational only within the scientific field.

Autonomy is not the given, but the historically achieved through struggles for monopolizing the truth of natural phenomena. In the process of *struggles* for attaining autonomy, the foremost step was *institutionalization* of science. Bourdieu regards the Royal Society founded in 1660 as the beginning of the modern science (Bourdieu 2004: 47–48). There had been several competing ways of explaining the physical phenomena among the natural philosophers, and the aim of science had not been fixed (Daele 1977: 38; Shapin and Schaffer 1985). The Royal Society gave an official approval of the exclusive right for exploring the truth of the nature to some natural philosophers who followed Bacon’s idea; thus, they attained symbolic power in the game of seeking the truth of the nature. In addition, the Royal Society provided them with economic supports while it isolated them from all external social and political matters (Ben-David 1991; Daele 1977: 30–32; The Royal Society 2008). As a result, “the establishment of science as a distinct intellectual activity, to be controlled only by its own norms” was accomplished (Ben-David 1991: 339; Bourdieu 2004: 47–48). It meant that scientists insulated themselves from the external social values by this moment; they created their own market; thus “production-for-producers” (Bourdieu 1993: 46) became possible in the independent market; they were to define *what counts as stake* in unveiling the secrets of the nature.

With the institutionalization of science, Bourdieu observes the other significant step of

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<sup>4</sup> His critique on the other sociologists of science has the same structure of his critique on objectivism and subjectivism. Mertonian sociology of science and strong programme are on the objectivist plane. He criticizes Mertonian sociology of science for their dismissing the scientists’ strategic aspects, scientists’ *habitus*. Strong programme was wrong for their relating the external socio-political conditions directly to the problem of determining scientific knowledge. On the subjectivist side, there are interactionists (in Bourdieu’s term) such as Latour and Woolgar (1986), Gilbert and Mulkay (1988), Knorr-Cetina (1981), and Lynch (1993). They forgot the historical and structural aspects of scientific practice – the field effect. His critique on both sides converges onto their ignorance of the autonomous field of science and its relation to *habitus*. For more detailed explanations, see Bourdieu (2004: 4–84) and Kim (2009).

autonomization: *mathematization*. It is a strategy for professionalization as well as isolation. By mathematization and professionalization, “the requirements for entry tend to become so elevated that producers have their rivals as their only possible consumers” (Bourdieu 1991b: 15). The “price of entry” is not only “competence, scientific capital ... incorporated into a ‘sense of the game’” but also “the *illusio*, the belief not only in the stakes but also in the game itself” (Bourdieu 2004: 51; Emphases in original). By the statement, Bourdieu points out two difficulties of lay agents’ participation in the debates on the scientific truth. First, lay agents do not embody the *illusio*, which the scientific field imposes on its members. They do not think that scientific games are worth playing. It is because they live on different *illusios* as they belong to different fields; they live on the different conditions of existence. Second, even if they believed that the scientific game is worth playing, they totally lack scientific competence. They do not possess any scientific capital counted as the most elementary and important symbolic capital in the scientific field (e.g. knowledge of mathematics). Furthermore, they cannot recognize why they ask such questions; to put it in another way, they lack *feel for the scientific game*. As a consequence, their words must be out of context even though they could get a chance to participate in scientific debates.

Institutionalization and professionalization were a sequence of struggles inside and outside of the scientific field. Such struggles have allowed scientists to monopolize two domains: what are proper questions about physical phenomena and how to find answers to those questions – appropriate questions and correct methodologies. They have dominated the truth of the nature due to the monopoly of the rational questions and methods; their words attain *symbolic power*.

To sum up, Bourdieu argues “objectivity is a social product of the field which depends on the presuppositions accepted in the field, particularly as regards the legitimate way of settling conflicts” (Bourdieu 2004: 71). In addition, objectivity beyond the field is symbolic power as far as the correspondence theory of truth is not proved; the scientific knowledge produced in the scientific field does not possess any authority as the truth outside of the scientific field if the scientific field were not autonomous. No autonomous field, no symbolic power or objectivity.

## CAN REFLEXIVE SOCIOLOGY EMPOWER SOCIOLOGISTS’ VOICES?

Sociological knowledge relatively lacks symbolic power.<sup>5</sup> It is because the sociological field “is particularly exposed to heteronomy” (Bourdieu 2004: 87).<sup>6</sup> As I present in the preceding

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<sup>5</sup> The weak symbolic power of sociological knowledge is found when lay agents resist the sociologists’ analyses (see Bourdieu 1999: 615–17) while physicians who have the strong symbolic power need not go through such a resistance from their patients.

<sup>6</sup> He refers to three closely related causes of the low autonomy of the sociological field. (Bourdieu 2004: 86–88)

section, autonomy is the precondition of producing objective and symbolically powerful knowledge. What sociologists should do is, therefore, to make the sociological field as autonomous as the scientific field. To make the sociological field autonomous and “to carry out the scientific project ..., a further step is needed” (Bourdieu 2004: 86). It is “to objectivate the subject of the objectivation” (Bourdieu 2004: 86): reflexive sociology conducted by participant objectivation or objectification objectified. How can reflexive sociology contribute to escalating the degree of autonomy of the sociological field? If the autonomy of the field is increased, is the symbolic power of sociological knowledge also guaranteed? I argue that autonomy and symbolic power are different matters, and Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology contributes only to increasing the autonomy of the field.

### Reflexive Sociology and Autonomy

I discuss how reflexive sociology increases the degree of autonomy. I approach Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology by examining his critiques of objectivism and subjectivism. Bourdieu problematizes the notorious dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism because “both equally opposed to the practical mode of knowledge which is the basis of ordinary experience of the social world” (Bourdieu 1990b: 25). On the one hand, subjectivists such as Sartre and rational action theorists create a world of “rational actors ... without inertia” (Bourdieu 1990b: 46). They imagine that rational actors consciously calculate all probabilities from scratch. All material and structural constraints are excluded in the subjectivist model. Instead, the lay actors’ subjective experiences are the basis of sociological understanding. It means that subjectivists do not objectify the agents’ subjective experiences; thus subjectivism is unscientific. On the other hand, objectivists explain every action is passively determined and organized by the rules and norms supposed to be given. In this model, agents become “cultural dope ... who produces the stable features of the society by acting in compliance with preestablished and legitimate alternatives of action that the common culture provides” (Garfinkel [1967] 2004: 68). However, lay agents voluntarily and rationally organize their actions with their own strategies in reality. Not to be biased, a sociologist must analyze agents’ *habitus*, which is imposed by the objective conditions accompanied by their positions in the field to which they belong.<sup>7</sup>

Bourdieu may be misinterpreted as a sociologist who intends to retrieve agents’ native

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The first is the problem of their object; the objects of sociology are too important and too controversial among people; thus they feel entitled to participate in the sociological discourse. Second, the field of sociology is always exposed to the external power and pressure – e. g. some sociologists make advantage of the fame from the public to occupy the higher position in the sociological field, and such a strategy works. Third, sociologists should make a break from the lay agents’ social construction, but they hardly can make it.

<sup>7</sup> To explain *habitus* as an alternative concept for objectivism and subjectivism, how *habitus* grasp the complicity between subjective reasons and objective causes should be explicated. However, the aim of the article does not lie in explaining *habitus*; thus I will not explain it in detail. For this, see Bourdieu (1990b).

practice and subjective belief since he emphasizes the danger of sociologists' distorting the reality in his critiques of objectivism and subjectivism as you see in the preceding paragraph. However, such a position is close to the subjectivist position; his position is opposite. It becomes clear when he argues that those who conduct participant observation cannot objectify (in an objectivist sense) or rehabilitate (in a subjectivist sense) the agents' practice (Bourdieu 1990b: 34). Bourdieu awakes the social scientists from the mystic belief of empathy – a sort of emotional telepathy by participation.

One cannot really *live* the belief associated with profoundly different conditions of existence, that is, with other games and other stakes, still less give others the means of reliving it by the sheer power of discourse. ... Those who want to believe with the beliefs of others grasp neither the objective truth nor subjective experience of belief. (Bourdieu 1990b: 68; Emphases in original)

It is, therefore, impossible to live and convey the subjective belief of those who belong to other worlds. Subjectivists' error lies here; subjectivism is unscientific as it fails to make a first break with agents' subjective experience. He makes a claim that "social science must ... break with native experience and the native representation of that experience" (Bourdieu 1990b: 27). For example, Bourdieu did not attempt to become a Kabylia, but to understand Kabylia's practice in the scientific way in his fieldwork in Kabyle. Then, he seems to be skewed to an objectivist position which makes a first break with unreflexive subjective experience (i.e. *doxic* experiences of lay agents).

However, he immediately goes further by asserting "[s]ocial science must ..., by a second break, call into question the presuppositions inherent in the position of the 'objective' observer" (Bourdieu 1990b: 27). Objectivism is not enough to be scientific because objectivists cannot make a second break with their own *doxic* experiences. They cannot observe their own perspective constructed on their objective conditions; thus, they mistake themselves as the impartial observers. It is the source of "scholastic fallacy" (Bourdieu 1988, 1990b, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2008); intellectuals construct an incorrect model of reality and mistake it as the reality because they cannot objectify themselves. To avoid the scholastic fallacy, sociologists must conduct the objectivation of the subjects of objectivation. That is why he declares the necessity of reflexive sociology.

Bourdieu argues that his reflexive sociology is different from the traditional reflexivity, (to use Bourdieu's terminology) *narcissistic reflexivity* performed by ethnographers including anthropologists. According to him, they keep a mere diary of their own research activities (Bourdieu 2003: 282). Rosaldo (1993), for example, conducted a reflexive self-analysis in his study on Ilongots. He raised an issue of a "positioned subject" (Rosaldo 1993: 7–8); he as a positioned observer could not transparently understand why Ilongots had irrational and cruel

culture, namely, headhunting. He could not understand them until he experienced his wife's accidental death. From this traumatic experience, he felt grief and anger; he confessed that he was desperately eager to go headhunting and that his own culture had not been right or absolute at all (Rosaldo 1993: 11). From this moment, he began to emotionally understand why Ilongots did headhunting. However, his self-reflection and understanding of natives' practice were based on his own experiences; such experiences were an amalgamation of the event – his wife's death – and his own perspective. Of course, he mentioned his own ethnic, national, cultural background (28–29), but it was also based on his own experiences. Such a subjective self-reflection based on *doxic* experiences excluded the possibility of self-awareness of the conditions of his gaze and its constructiveness – the foundation of his experiences. That is why his reflexivity remained self-complacent. Such an attempt of narcissistic reflexivity falls into relativism as its meanings can be changed in accordance with each writer's experiences.

Bourdieu argues social scientists conduct narcissistic reflexivity “because they do not know how to break with the unthought presuppositions of thinking thought, in other words to rid themselves of their inbred *scholastic bias*” (Bourdieu 2003: 288; Emphases in original). In order not to fall into the relativistic pitfall of narcissistic reflexivity, sociologists must adopt participant objectivation. It includes (a) a field analysis of a researcher's historical trajectory which consists of fields through which he or she went and his or her position in the society, (b) a topological analysis of the specific field to which the researcher belongs and an identification of his or her position in the field, and (c) an analysis of the academic field as a whole (Bourdieu 2004: 94). Therefore, it is not a self-confession of individual lived experiences. Sociologists become capable of debunking the objective conditions of their own experiences by conducting the participant objectivation; thus they can find out the objective causes of scholastic fallacies and get chances to correct the errors. That is why Bourdieu opens *Sketch for a Self-Analysis* (2008) with a catchphrase, “This is not an autobiography”.

Another sociologist can criticize Bourdieu's result of participant objectivation with another result of conducting participant objectivation. However, Bourdieu was aware that such a critique on his reflexive analysis would be produced. What he hoped was such active mutual criticisms. He notes, “I am also aware of handing over to others instruments which they can turn against me to subject me to objectivation – but in so doing, they show that I am right” (Bourdieu 2004: 115). Such mutual critiques are, in turn, make the mutual corrections of scholastic fallacies possible (Bourdieu 2004: 89). Therefore, efforts to make the more accurate reflexive analyses go along with producing the more objective analyses on the social world by continuous corrections of scholastic fallacies. According to Bourdieu, sociologists can gradually remove scholastic fallacies and go closer to the objective knowledge in such a series of reflexive analyses. However, it is controversial whether it is really so and whether the sociological knowledge can be immediately accepted as more objective to lay agents by conducting reflexive sociology. I argue on this issue in the following subsection. Now, I

confine myself to how reflexive sociology can increase the autonomy of the field.

I intend to clarify how reflexive sociology increases the degree of autonomy based on the argument above since Bourdieu is so ambiguous about it. The fact that every sociologist in the field criticizes other sociologists' reflexive analyses means that they compete with one another for monopolizing the true analysis of the academic field. If every sociologist participates in such struggles, what is at stake in the sociological field becomes what is the most accurate analysis of the academic field. The struggles are political since they compete with one another for accumulating symbolic capital which is at stake in the sociological field and occupying higher positions in the field. At the same time, those are epistemic as the objects of the political struggles – symbolic capital – are the production of objective knowledge; in turn, a piece of knowledge is objective because peer sociologists recognize it as objective (Bourdieu 1975; Kim 2009). Such congruence between the political and the epistemic means that the sociological field follows its own logic of practice which is independent from all other fields; thus the sociological field becomes autonomous. Moreover, in the course of mutual criticisms and corrections by using a highly sophisticated method (like Bourdieu's participant objectivation), sociologists increase the price of entry. In other words, conducting scientific and reformist reflexivity in a collective way brings an effect similar to mathematization in natural science. In conclusion, his reflexive sociology operates positively upon the autonomization of the sociological field.

### **The Limits of Reflexive Sociology as a Socratic Method**

Bourdieu argues the autonomy of the field guarantees the symbolic power of knowledge as you read in the section of his sociology of science. However, it is correct only when a field has already attained symbolic power in relationships with the social space. An autonomous field without symbolic power is nothing more than a cult. Let me suppose that there exists a secret group of alchemists in the contemporary society. The alchemists have constructed their own theories and methods in a unique way. As a result, their knowledge about alchemy is so sophisticated that no one outside of the group can understand what they discuss; this group demands the high price of entry, and it must be highly autonomous. However, most people would not regard them as professionals; no one perceives their knowledge as objective; such a community tends to be recognized as a cult. Is Bourdieu's reflexive sociology effective for sociological knowledge not to be like an alchemists' cult? Can scientific reflexivity conducted by reflexive sociology guarantee sociologists' symbolic power?

Lay agents can resist sociologists' analyses as Bourdieu (2003: 615–17) notes. Natural scientists are relatively free from such resistances partly because lay agents easily think that natural and physical phenomena are out of their business unless it is not a matter of survival. On the other hand, social affairs are always hot issues among lay agents as well as sociologists. They are not only crucial matters to lay agents, but also constructed by their own hands while

the nature is the given. Therefore, “everyone feels entitled to have their say in sociology and to enter into the struggle over the legitimate view of the social world” (Bourdieu 2004: 87). Lay agents also have their own analyses on certain social problems which are closely related to them. If a sociologist’s analysis is different from theirs, they can resist it. Supposing an ideal situation, they are likely to demand the reason why a sociologist’s argument is better than theirs. It is a question about the epistemological superiority of sociology. I examine the validity of Bourdieu’s answer by analogizing his reflexive sociology to the Socratic Method.<sup>8</sup>

The Socratic Method or the Socratic *elenchus*<sup>9</sup> is “a form of cross-examination or refutation” (Robinson 1996: 9) through a dialogue. Socrates could not tell the final truth. Socrates was aware of it. He did ironicize and relativize the belief that his interlocutor had taken for granted by putting it another context. As a consequence, His interlocutor got to realize how he or she had been narrow-minded and ignorant. Socrates achieved falsifying and rejecting his interlocutor’s claims not by proving the transcendental validity of his words, but by relativizing his interlocutor’s words; the interlocutor’s acceptance of his or her error is the very Socratic Effect.

Bourdieu is not satisfied with the mere Socratic Effect – relativization and falsification of his interviewees’ accounts. He goes further and asserts his scientific privilege; he resolutely declares “[s]ocial agents do not innately possess a science of what they are and what they do” (Bourdieu 1999: 620). So, he apparently wants lay agents to substitute his scientific knowledge for agents’ unscientific understanding. For it to be possible, his sociological knowledge should possess authority, symbolic power.

To make sociological knowledge symbolically powerful, he tries to provide sociologists with the epistemological privilege. Such an epistemological privilege comes from the second break in Bourdieu’s model; it is *the break from the subjective experiences of objectifying subjects*. He argues that sociologists can realize the objective conditions of their analyses and find out the limits of their perspective through this objectification; thus, they can gain the more universal perspective.

Even though Bourdieu applied participant objectivation, lay agents can deny their

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<sup>8</sup> In the course of writing the article, I found Lane (2006: 149–55) to use the similar analogy to mine; she understands Bourdieu et al. (1999) a series of Socratic dialogues. However, her question is different from mine. Unlike my concern, she does not ask what the ground of Bourdieu’s superiority to lay agents is; thus she does not raise a question about whether or not reflexive self-knowledge can give Bourdieu the epistemologically privileged position – the function of reflexivity as the ground of the epistemological privilege. Instead, she asks how such a Socratic model is compatible with the other significant aim of Bourdieu’s theory – opening up the space of democratic dialogue. She concludes that there must be “the potential contradiction between the exclusivity of the autonomous intellectual’s claim to universal truth and Bourdieu’s evident desire to open up the sphere of democratic debate” (Lane 2006: 154).

<sup>9</sup> What Socrates really did is obscure because he did not leave any writing. We only guess what he did through his pupils’ writings, especially Plato’s. For this reason, the problems like what Socrates did, what Socratic Method and Effect really were, etc. are controversial. It is so called Socratic Problem (Ross 1996: 26). However, I use a general definition of the concept because the purpose is not clarification of Socratic Method and Effect. They are only analogies for Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology in order to clarify what it really is.

inferiority to sociologists. At best, they accept the fact that they are wrong; it is the Socratic Effect. Such a self-confession does not guarantee sociologists' epistemological superiority to lay agents. Lay agents also reflect on their practice. If they were not capable of being reflection on themselves, no interview is possible. The interviews in Bourdieu et al. (1999) present how excellently the interviewees take account of their own activities. From Bourdieu's perspective, such ordinary reflexivity is subjective and unscientific as they cannot make use of the scientific method of reflexivity bestowed by Bourdieu himself. However, lay agents also raise a question about the objective and scientific status of Bourdieu's scientific reflexivity even if they accepted subjectivity and unscientificity of their own reflexive methods. Bourdieu should *demonstrate* the ground of the privileged status of his reflexive sociology.

What is the ground of objectivity of his scientific reflexivity? As you read in the former subsection, the method of his reflexive sociology is his field analysis. At this point, he commits an error. The aim of reflexive sociology is to make sociological knowledge including his field analysis objective. However, the method of his reflexive sociology is same as his field analysis. It means that reflexive sociology is objective because it is objective or that field analysis is objective because it is objective; he commits a tautology. Not to fall in such a fallacy, he should demonstrate the objectivity of reflexive sociology or field analysis based on the source external to the circulation. He only argues why the notion of the field is objective as follows:

The scientific virtue ... of the notion of the field resides no doubt in the fact that this notion tends to exclude those partial and unilateral objectifications of the unconscious of other people .... (Bourdieu 1996: xvi)

Then, lay agents can ask him a question: Why is the notion of the field impartial and non-unilateral? To put it in another way, they raise a question about the criteria of the partiality and unilaterality. Even if he satisfies them by giving those criteria, agents can ask another question: Why should the impartiality and non-unilaterality become the criteria of scientificity? To give them his reasons, he cannot refer to the given reality as there is no such reality; we cannot directly know it even if it exists. He therefore fails to find the solid epistemological ground; thus, such a dialogue results in an infinite regress. What stops such a series of questions and answers is nothing but the symbolic power of the sociological field. His justification is reasonable, justifiable, and thus objective only to those who share the same belief with him. In conclusion, his reflexive sociology can appeal its objectivity, scientificity, and thus its privilege only to those who are under the symbolic power of the sociological field in advance.

This point is where Bourdieu slips into a self-contradiction. The following Wittgenstein's aphorism, which Bourdieu himself quotes as a catchphrase of *The Logic of Practice* (1990b), shows it clearly.

How am I able to follow a rule? – if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following a rule in the way I do. If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: ‘This is simply what I do.’ (*PI*: § 217; Bourdieu 1990b: 25)

Bourdieu confesses that he has no ground of objectivity except the field and its symbolic power; his reflexive sociology is not an exception. It means that sociologists cannot attain symbolic power only by reflexive sociology. Rather, the symbolic power of sociologists is the precondition of the objectivity of reflexive sociology. The effects of reflexive sociology are limited to refuting the lay agents’ interpretations of the social world as the Socratic Method could do nothing beyond ironization.

Bourdieu seems to recognize the limit of reflexivity when he argues “[i]t should not be thought that, simply by virtue of reflexivity, the sociologist can ever completely control the multiple and complex effects of the interview relationship” (Bourdieu 1999: 615). However, he does not have any other strategies to overcome the limit of reflexive sociology. What he only did was political interventions in his last years (Lane 2006). It was for enhancing the symbolic power of the field. While attempting political interventions, he continuously rejected lay agents’ own accounts – namely, official accounts – as unscientific (Bourdieu 1999). Such political interventions and denials of agents’ accounts may be a way of enhancing the symbolic power of the sociologists, but these cannot guarantee it. In conclusion, he leaves the symbolic power of sociological knowledge to the hands of contingency.

## BRIDGING INSTITUTIONS: A COMPLEMENTARY ALTERNATIVE

I have argued that Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology is unsuccessful for sociologists’ attaining symbolic power over lay agents while it contributes to increasing the autonomy of the field. He suggests two important factors which contribute to the autonomization of the scientific field: institutionalization and professionalization. However, he mistakes the autonomy of the field as the sufficient condition of exerting symbolic power, and thus his reflexive sociology is skewed to autonomization through professionalization – a epistemic strategy. In fact, institutionalization contributes to both increasing autonomy and enhancing symbolic power, but professionalization contributes only to the autonomization of the field; the autonomy of a field enhances the symbolic power of the field only when the field possesses symbolic power endowed by institutionalization. It is worth noting that “[h]istorically it was the *institutionalization of science* which put an end to the cognitive contest between the various programs.” (Daele 1977: 40; Emphases in original)

I shift the focus from the epistemic conditions to the social ones. The epistemological

privilege comes from the social foundation, not from the epistemic foundation since the latter cannot be established as presented in the preceding section.<sup>10</sup> The most crucial element among such social conditions is institutional one. The sociological field was institutionalized as an academic discipline.<sup>11</sup> However, institutionalization as an academic field alone does not guarantee the symbolic power of sociological knowledge. What is more needed for exerting symbolic power? In fact, Bourdieu observes but dismisses it when he mentions the non-academic or quasi-academic institutions and divides scientists into two groups: pure scientists in the academic institutions and engineers in the non-academic (Bourdieu 2004: 50). Nevertheless, he does not seriously take the engineers in the secondary institutions when he suggests his alternative for making sociology get symbolic power. It is because he believes that “[w]hen an activity is constituted as a university discipline, the question of its function and the function of those who practice it no longer arises” (Bourdieu 1993: 27). However, sociologists’ lack of the secondary institutions is one of the most crucial causes of their lacking symbolic power.<sup>12</sup> To reason out why it is, (a) I contrast the roles of pure scientists and engineers at first; (b) then I present how the latter is a deterministic factor of enhancing symbolic power in general by defining institutions of engineers as the bridging institution; (c) lastly, I sketch out what kind of bridging institutions can be feasible in sociology.

Pure scientists occupy the core positions in the space of purely academic debates; they set the rules of the game and define what is at stake. Purely academic debates, however, have nothing to do with the practical world. Their objects exist not in the real world, but in the laboratories or in their own brains. They play with the *constructed* reality in which ordinary actors do not have any interest; they live in the “vicarious thought space” (Kim 2005).

Engineers occupy the marginal positions in such purely academic world. They usually work not for the laboratories at universities, but for corporations, state-run organizations, or other institutions. Such institutions are not for producing the purely scientific knowledge, but for applying it to the practical matters. In other words, what is significant for engineers is the successful application of the pure scientific knowledge to solving the problems in the real

<sup>10</sup> Although I argue the epistemic authority and objectivity come from the social, I do not mean the problem of objectivity, that is, the epistemological problem belongs to ontology. In other words, we cannot say that the more authoritative and influential, the truer. However, it is also true that every foundationalist attempt of demonstrating knowledge have been failed. Then, the remained issue is as follows: what kind of knowledge is accepted as objective, true, interesting, and so on. The question is ontological as well as epistemological. I focus on the social conditions rather than the epistemic ones in the article.

<sup>11</sup> The first academic department of history and sociology was founded at the University of Kansas in 1891, and the first department of sociology was at the University of Chicago in 1892; the first European department of sociology was at the University of Bordeaux in 1895 by Durkheim, the founder of *L'Année Sociologique* (1896); in Korea, the first department of sociology was at Seoul National University in 1946.

<sup>12</sup> I do not insist that merely founding bridging institutions enhances the symbolic power of sociological language in the society. There are numerous conditions and strategies but bridging institutions. For example, sociologists should make their endeavors to produce more appropriate knowledge for analyzing the contemporary social phenomena and to professionalize the field. However, such endeavors without bridging institutions do not guarantee the symbolic power of sociological knowledge, and vice versa.

world. For example, a research and development team in an automobile company engages in the practical problems of driving cars such as safety, comfortableness, and convenience. They intend not to produce a new theory of dynamics, but to innovate the way of applying the existing theories. Such applications are a process of translating purely theoretical language into practical language. In short, engineers put their one foot in the scientific world and the other in the practical world.

The symbolic power of the field mostly stems from these secondary institutions which consist of engineers. I name them *bridging institutions* as they play a role of the bridge between two separate worlds while giving scientists the privilege. I propose the institutionalization of *social engineering* by this concept. Turner (2001: 99) argues that “all successful sciences have engineering applications” and suggests “the development of more precise theories, the testing of such theories, and the willingness of practitioners to use theoretical ideas” as the preconditions of successful social engineering. He emphasizes building the theoretical models which are applicable to solving practical problems. However, he dismisses the fact that the more fundamental condition than such a theoretical one is the social one – the institutionalization of social engineering.

The institutions which consist of engineers have the functions of bridging institutions for enhancing the symbolic power of the sociological knowledge in two aspects. First, the translation of purely scientific language into practical language in bridging institutions is an important way of acquiring the authority as professionals from the lay agents by providing them with practicality and utility. For example, the purely theoretical dynamics in the academic field does not have the problem-solving abilities in the real world. Who solve the practical problems in ordinary life are engineers. When they solve what lay agents have felt to get improved, engineers receive authorities from the public; they gain a practical recognition as professionals in a certain range of problems from lay agents. Lay agents believe in their capacities of solving problems. Such recognitions are followed by engineers’ symbolic power; thus engineers can monopolize their own objects but also make lay agents follow their instructions. The symbolic power of the bridging institutions also enhances the symbolic power of the purely academic field. It is because engineers depend upon pure scientists as pure scientists produce the scientific theories of which some are applicable to the real world. As a result, pure scientists always receive more authority than engineers.

Second, bridging institutions protect the purely academic field from lay agents’ attacks and intrusions. They are the *screening systems*. It is engineers who talk to lay agents on practical problems. While the engineers in the bridging institutions deal with lay agents’ practical problems, the pure scientists build up the pure theories. In the case of natural science, pure scientists became to concentrate the internal and purely scientific objectives only after the ideology of pure science – ideology that science is beneficial to our life – had been diffused among the public in the nineteenth century (Daniels 1967: 1699; Mulkay 1967: 648). It was

because pure scientists did not have to persuade the eventual utility of scientific knowledge any more due to establishing such an ideology. It is sure engineers who deal with the practical problems played the most important role in establishing such an ideology. Therefore, the functions of the bridging institutions are important to isolate scientists from everyday life. Engineers also need such a situation since the more pure scientists produce theories, the more resources they can mobilize. Bridging institutions endow the scientific field with autonomy and symbolic power in this way.

I turn to the question as to what kind of institutions is feasible as bridging institutions for sociology. In fact, I conceived the psychological clinics as a role model when I got an idea of bridging institutions. The primary role of the psychological clinics is to assess clients' mental states and to treat the mental problems by applying psychological theories. I think similar bridging institutions can be established in the sociological field; the clinics for social problems and policies may be one of the viable forms of bridging institutions. No social problem, no society; the social problems must be the domain of sociology if psychological problems are the domain of psychology.<sup>13</sup>

Clinical sociologists are playing the role of showing the practical capacity of sociological knowledge by solving agents' social problems; they intervene in the social life of lay agents and help the betterment of their life (Fritz 2008). They have developed the research institutes and established the certification system (American Sociological Association 2003; see also Fritz 2008).<sup>14</sup> However, it is hard to say that sociologists have successfully founded clinics even though clinical and applied sociology has been established as an important division of sociology. The clinical sociologists work for many bridging institutions, but most of them are not defined as purely sociological. The lack of purely sociological institutions results in the low degree of social recognition of clinical sociology. In addition, the clinical sociology has not yet fully globalized (e.g. Korea has no institute for clinical sociology, no journal for it, and even no practitioner of clinical sociology.) even though the clinical sociology division of the International Sociological Association (ISA) was organized in 1982 (Fritz 2008: 31). It may be the natural consequence of the short history of the institutionalization of clinical sociology; the Clinical Sociological Association (CSA) has been founded in the United States in 1978 for the

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<sup>13</sup> In this respect, I agree to Black's strategy of pure sociology. Black (2000: 346) writes, "I was disappointed by the psychological, teleological, and ideological nature of sociology." He argues that only pure sociology can correct such errors and make sociology "a genuine science of social life". His pure sociology therefore seeks to explain social life only in terms of social structure by excluding all the psychological, teleological, and individualistic aspects of it. Likewise, I assert that sociologists should touch and treat the social problem of the society and social life; and we should develop the purely sociological theories and models. Only when we become pure sociologists, we can find and secure our position in the society as a whole.

<sup>14</sup> In the case of the U. S. clinical sociology, there are two kinds of certified clinical sociologists: Certified Sociological Practitioners (CSP) and Certified Clinical Sociologists (CCS). The Clinical Sociology Association (CSA), the forerunner of the Sociological Practice Association (SPA), developed them in 1983 (American Sociological Association 2003: 20–21).

first time (Fritz 2008: 29) while Witmer founded the first psychological clinic at the University of Pennsylvania in 1896 and the American Association of Clinical Psychology (AACP) was founded in 1917 (Reisman 1991: 38, 116). Nevertheless, I find the seed of a successful foundation of bridging institutions among clinical sociologists.

The application of abstract theories and purely scientific explanations in the academic sociology is the mission of social engineering. For social engineers to carry out such a mission, bridging institutions should be founded and the members of them should be legally approved as experts like physicians, accountants, and lawyers. In fact, many social problems and policies are occupied by the other fields. If they want to make voices on such issues, social engineers cannot avoid the competition with them.<sup>15</sup> An individual participant in such a competition without any basis of institutions has little possibility to win the competition. Even if he or she survives in the competition, such winning cannot be reproduced. That is why I demand to establish bridging institutions more strongly.

## CONCLUSION

Reflexivity is one of the inevitable concepts in the contemporary social theories as far as sociologists are located in a certain spatiotemporal context. On the other hand, sociologists cannot avoid the problems of relativism implied in reflexivity. Despite such a pessimistic consequence of reflexivity, Bourdieu gives us the hope for the objective status of sociology in the name of reflexive sociology. Such a provocative attempt fails to provide the sociological field with symbolic power while it can be accepted as an effective way to increase the degree of autonomy of the field.

I analogize his reflexive sociology to the Socratic Method to argue Bourdieu's failure. What Socratic *elenchus* can do is limited in refuting an interlocutor's belief. It cannot suggest the final truth. Likewise, Bourdieu's reflexive sociology cannot establish the solid foundation of sociologists' objectivity. Such a goal is achieved only when the sociological field can exert the symbolic power. However, his reflexive sociology aims at enhancing the symbolic power of the field. Therefore, his reflexive sociology falls into a self-contradiction.

Reflexive sociology fails because Bourdieu does not clearly divide autonomy and symbolic power; he regards the former as the sufficient condition of the latter when he suggests his reflexive sociology. Moreover, epistemological matters are solved not only by the epistemic,

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<sup>15</sup> The history of clinical psychology shows that such a competition or even war is inevitable procedure. In 1917, the Illinois legislature legally approved psychologists as experts certifying people for commitment to institutions for the retarded. Immediately, the New York Psychiatric Society expressed their disapproval of regarding psychologists as experts in a letter to the American Psychological Association. It was the beginning of a jurisdictional dispute. (Reisman 1991: 115)

but by the social; then, what sociologists should do is to construct social conditions which make knowledge accepted as objective. I coined the concept of bridging institutions in this respect. The institutions which consist of engineers not only acquiring the authority as professionals from the public but also protect the field of pure scientists from the intrusions of the public. The sociological field lacks such peripheral institutions, which allow sociologists to stop having trouble with their identity and social status.

The notion of bridging institutions has many problems and limits yet. I should fill in blanks in the notion with empirical studies on the history of social sciences from now on. In addition, bridging institutions are not the only alternative to make sociological knowledge more credential and to provide sociologists with symbolic power; many sociologists have explored such problems and suggest brilliant ideas. The one thing of which I am sure is that such sociologists' collective efforts make sociology step forward.

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