

DOES THE WORKING CLASS EXIST? BURAWOY MEETS BOURDIEU

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Third Conversation with Pierre
Bourdieu, Havens Center, April 8, 2008

OVERVIEW

- Summary of Conversation II
- The Question of False Consciousness
- Manufacturing Consent (Gramsci)
- The Double Truth of Labor (Bourdieu)
- State Socialism
- Habitus in its Place
- Methodological Implications
- Conclusion: Adjudications

I: SUMMARY

	Bourdieu	Gramsci
	Symbolic Violence	Hegemony
Organic Intellectual	Mythological -- Working Class has only bad sense	Elaborates Good Sense of working class
Traditional Intellectual	Carriers of Reason and Universality under certain conditions	Reproduces domination of capitalist class
Institutions of Power	Field of Power separate from dominated	State and civil society as terrain of domination and struggle embedding working class
University	Potentially universalizes access to universality – bring the dominated into the university	Reproduces domination through the reproduction of dominant ideology – bring the university to the dominated.

II: FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

The doxic submission of the dominated to the objective structures of a social order of which their cognitive structures are the product ... is thus clarified. In the notion of 'false consciousness' which some Marxists invoke to explain the effect of symbolic domination, it is the word 'consciousness' which is excessive; and to speak of 'ideology' is to place in the order of *representations*, capable of being transformed by intellectual conversion that is called 'the awakening of consciousness', what belongs to the order of beliefs, that is, at the deepest level of bodily dispositions. (Bourdieu, PM, p.177)

BOURDIEU



FALSE

MISRECOGNITION

GRAMSCI



CONSCIOUSNESS

CONSENT

III.MANUFACTURING CONSENT

Why do workers work as hard as they do?

Gramsci: Hegemony is born in the factory

Advanced Capitalism: Despotism no longer possible

MANUFACTURING CONSENT

Internal State

MANUFACTURING CONSENT

Internal State

Internal Labor
Market

MANUFACTURING CONSENT

Internal State

Internal Labor
Market

Work as a Game

MANUFACTURING CONSENT

Internal State

Internal Labor
Market

Work as a Game

Obscuring and
Securing of surplus

MANUFACTURING CONSENT

Internal State

Internal Labor
Market

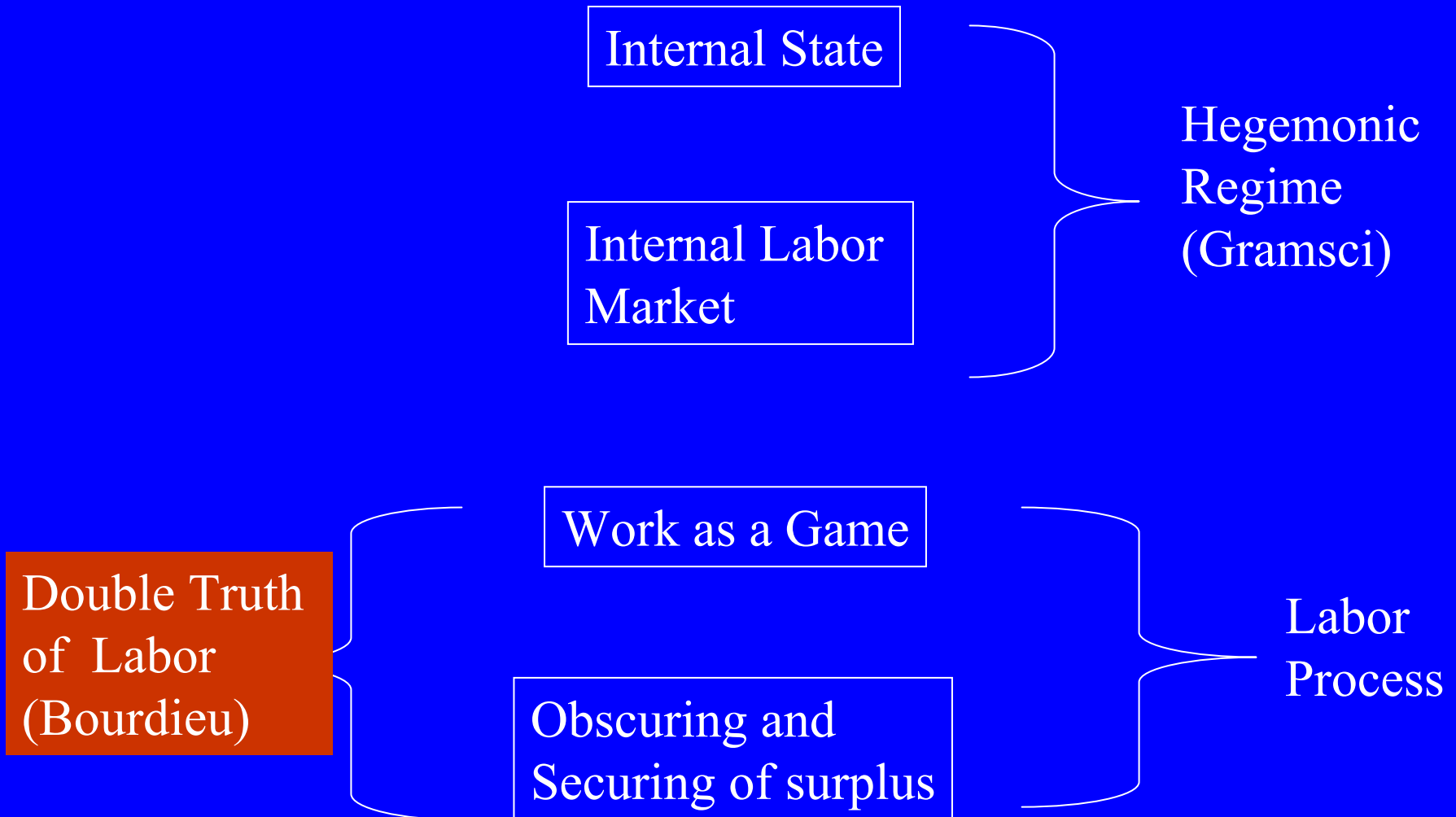
Hegemonic
Regime
(Gramsci)

Work as a Game

Obscuring and
Securing of surplus

Labor
Process

IV. BOURDIEU: DOUBLE TRUTH OF LABOR



Double Truth of Labor

The objectification that was necessary to constitute wage labour in its objective truth has masked the fact which, as Marx himself indicates, only becomes the objective truth in certain exceptional labour situations: the investment in labour, and therefore *miscognition* of the objective truth of labour as exploitation, which leads people to find an intrinsic profit in labour, irreducible to simple monetary income, is part of the real conditions of the performance of labour, and of exploitation. (Bourdieu, PM, p.202)

The Game – All Absorbing

“It is in the relationship between habitus and field, between the feel for the game and the game itself, that the stakes of the game are generated and ends are constituted which are not posited as such, objective potentialities which, although they do not exist outside that relationship, impose themselves, within it, with absolute necessity and self-evidence. The game presents itself to someone caught up in it, absorbed in it, as a transcendent universe, imposing its own ends and norms unconditionally. There is nothing sacred except to the sense of the sacred, but this sense encounters the sacred as a full transcendence, and the *illusio* is an illusion or ‘diversion’ only for someone who perceives the game from the outside, from the scholastic standpoint of an ‘impartial spectator’.”
[Bourdieu, PM, p.151]

The Game -- Compulsory Character

“It is in the actions the actions and reactions of the agents: they have no choice but to struggle to maintain or improve their position, that is, to conserve or increase the specific capital which is only generated in this field; and so they help to bring to bear on all the others the constraints, often experienced as unbearable, which arise from the competition (unless, of course, they exclude themselves from the game, in a heroic renunciation which, from the point of view of the *illusio*, is social death and therefore an unthinkable option). In short, no one can benefit from the game, not even those who dominate it, without taking part in the game and being taken in by the game. Hence there would be no game without players’ (visceral, corporeal) commitment to the game without the interest taken in the game as such which is the source of the different, even opposite, interests of the various players, the wills and ambitions which drive them and which, being produced by the game, depend on the positions they occupy within it.” (Bourdieu, PM, p.153).

BOURDIEU vs. BURAWOY

Internal State

Internal Labor
Market

Work as a Game

Obscuring and
Securing of surplus

Hegemonic
Regime
(Consent)

based on

Mystification

Symbolic
Domination
based on

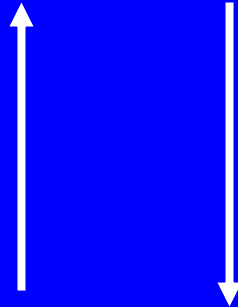
Misrecognition
rooted in
Habitus

Misrecognition vs. Mystification

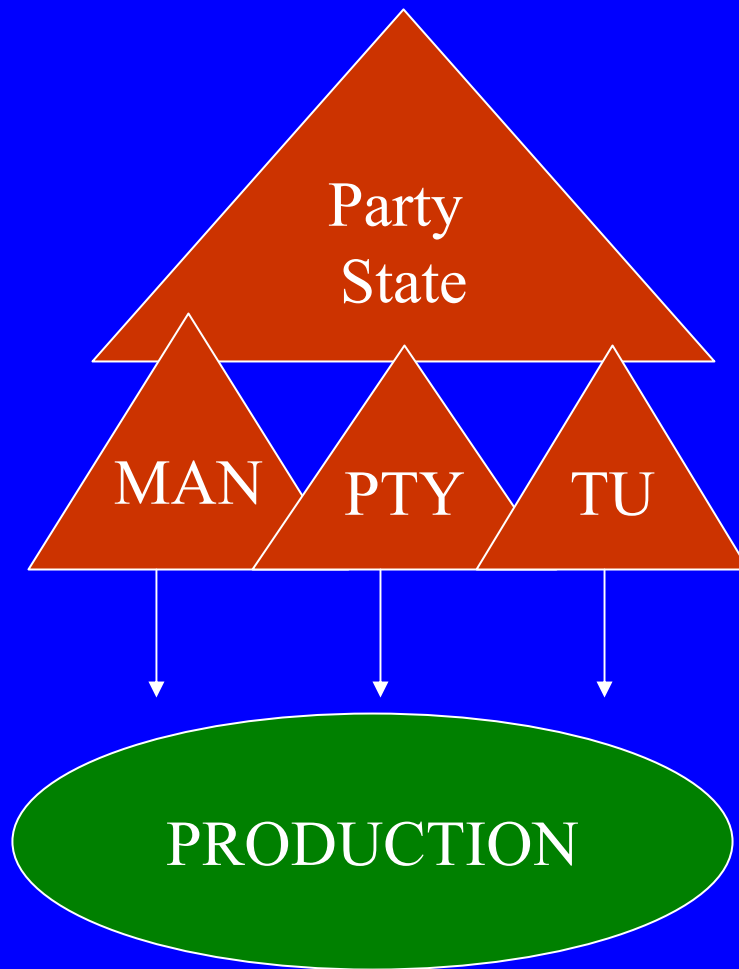
- State Socialism
 - a. Different regime of production
 - b. Totalizing structures → Deeper doxic submission

V: STATE SOCIALISM

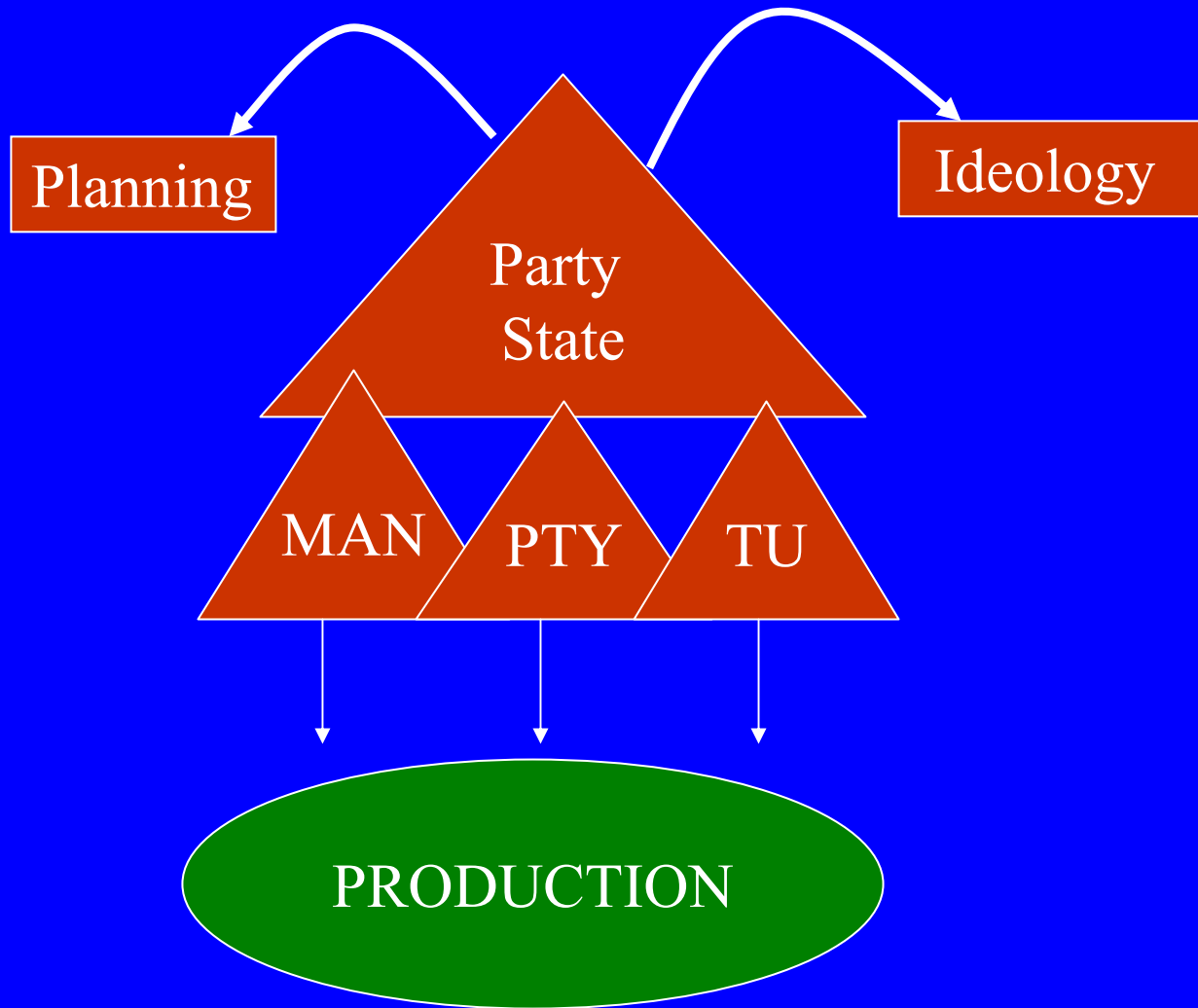
Central Appropriation
and Redistribution



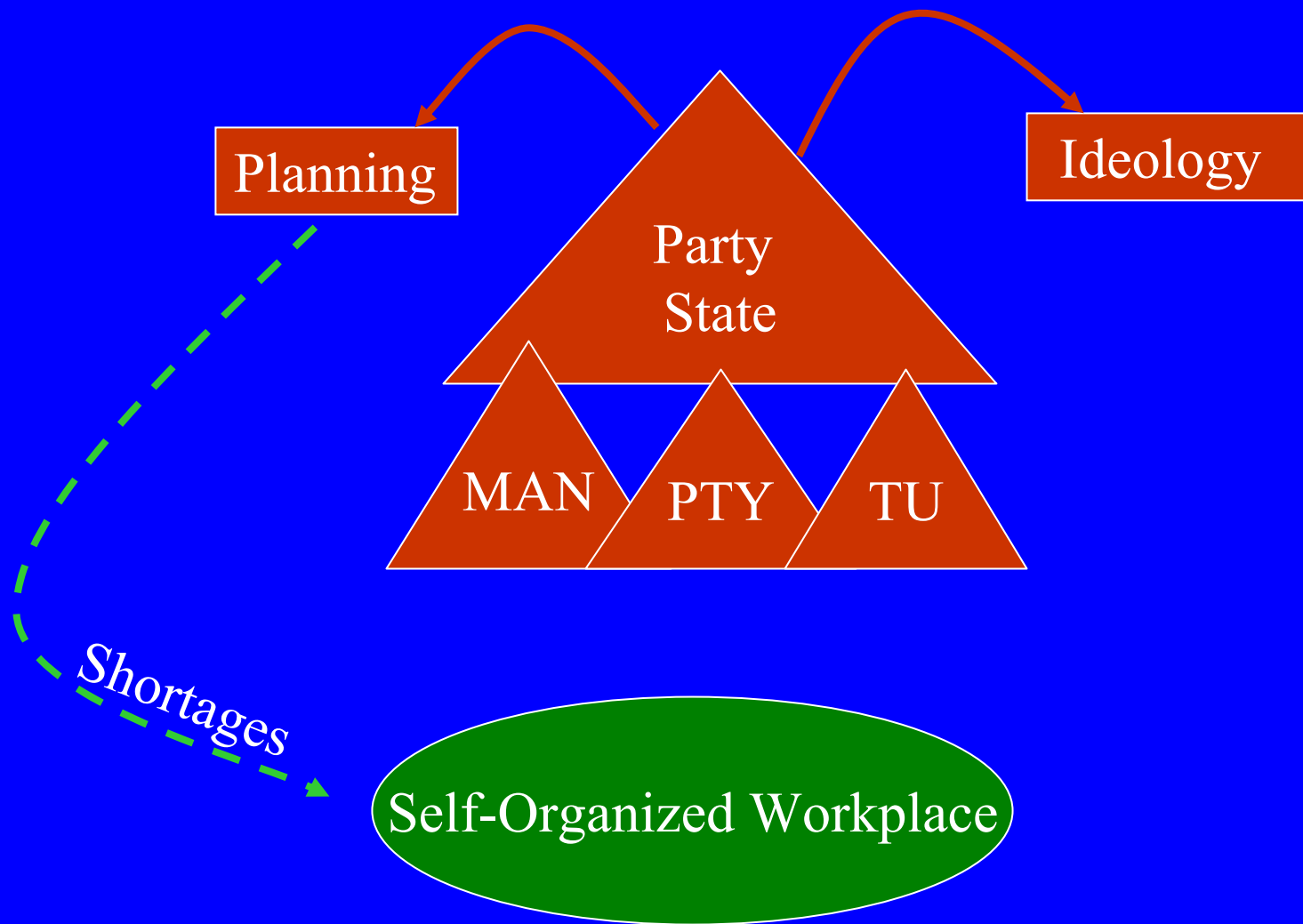
Exploitation of
Direct Producers



Exploitation of Direct Producers

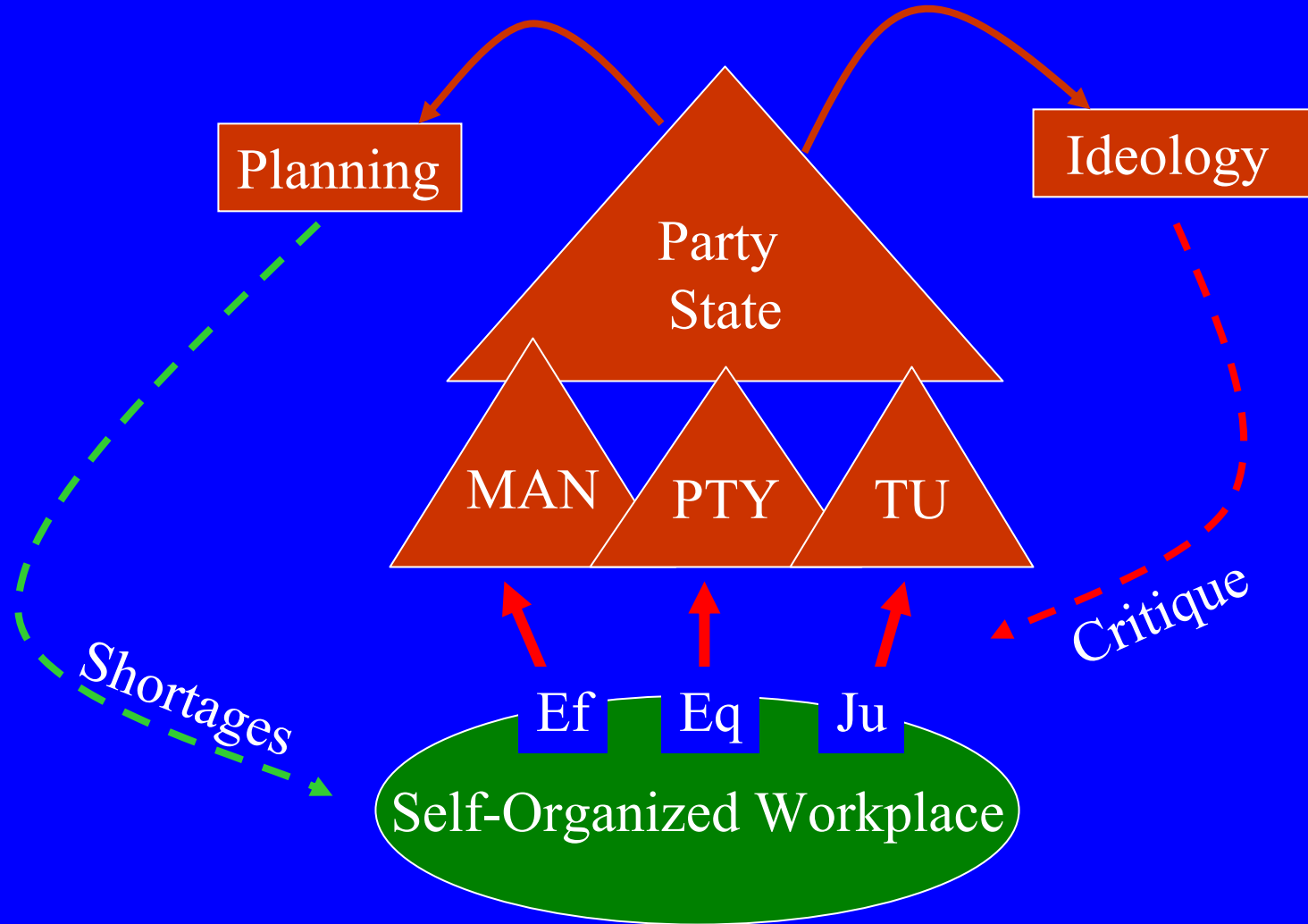


Exploitation of Direct Producers



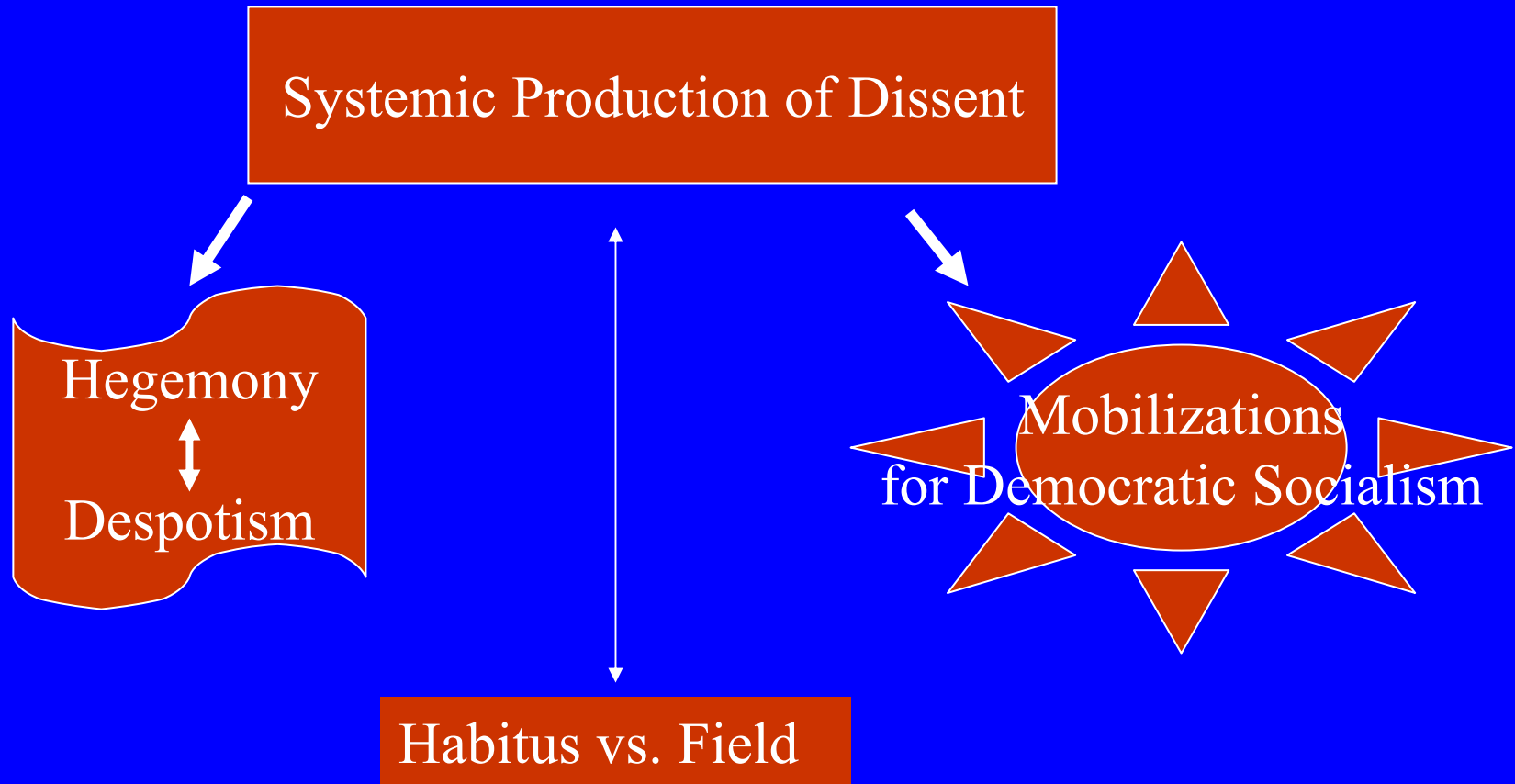
Exploitation of Direct Producers

Manufacturing Dissent



Exploitation of Direct Producers

Dynamics of State Socialism



VI. BOURDIEU REDEEMED: MAKING CAPITALISM WITH A SOCIALIST HABITUS

- Making Capitalism without Capitalists
- Adaptation of working classes

VII: METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

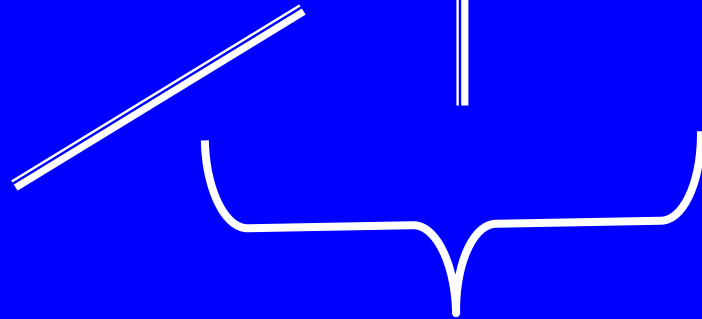
Bourdieu's Methodology

Logic of Theory

Objectivism

Logic of practice

Primary
Experience

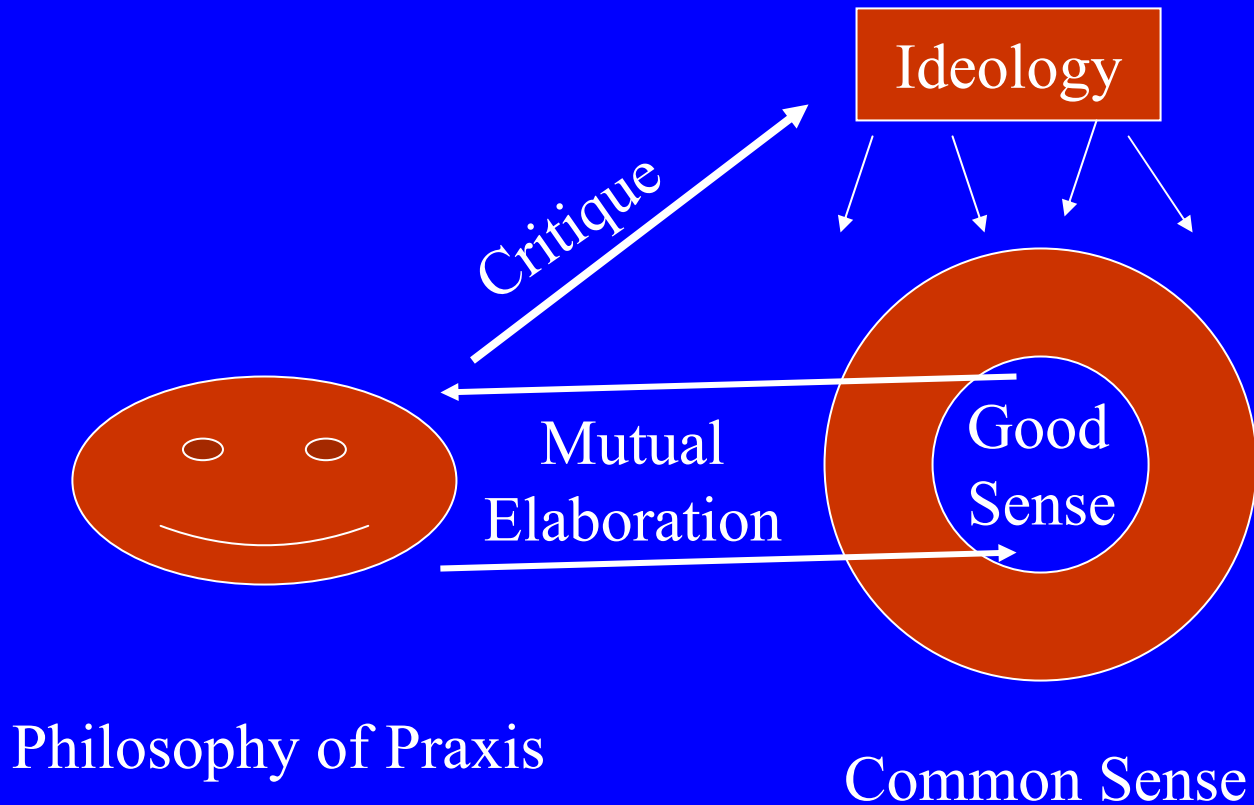


Scientific Analysis

Bourdieuian Methodology

“It is simply an invitation to hold together the findings of objectification and the equally clear fact of primary experience, which, by definition, excludes objectification. More precisely, it is a question of accepting the permanent obligation of doing what is necessary in order to objectify the scholastic point of view, which enables the objectifying subject to take a point of view on the point of view of the agents engaged in practice: the dual, bifocal point of view which, having reappropriated its experience as an empirical ‘subject’, ... endeavours to include in the (inevitably scholastic) theoretical reconstruction the truth of those who have neither the interest, nor the leisure, nor the necessary instruments to reappropriate the objective and subjective truth of what they are and what they do.” (Bourdieu, PM, p.191)

Gramscian Methodology



Common Sense and Good Sense

The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world: and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. But this verbal conception is not without its consequences. It holds together a specific social group, it influences moral conduct and the direction of the will, with varying efficacy, but often powerfully enough to produce a situation in which the contradictory state of consciousness does not permit of any action, any decision or any choice, and produces a condition of moral passivity. Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political “hegemonies” and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one’s own conception of reality.

(Gramsci, PN: 333)

VIII. CONCLUSION

- Advanced Capitalism: Neither Gramsci nor Bourdieu
- State Socialism: Gramsci
- Transition to Capitalism: Bourdieu
- Structuralism outweighs Subjectivism
- Next time: Fanon who has both Gramscian and Bourdieusian moments in the analysis of colonialism.