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Picturing Algeria – Pierre Bourdieu's beginnings in ethnography and sociology

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Bourdieu first came to Algeria in 1955, when he had obtained his degree in philosophy from the prestigious Parisian *École Normale Supérieure* in 1954 and after that worked during one year as a college-teacher in a small French town

In 1955 Bourdieu was drafted for military services and sent to Algeria as simple soldier as he had refused to take part in the exams necessary for a career as officer, the common track for soldiers coming from a higher education background. He had neither hidden his political opinion concerning “French Algeria” and his critical attitude concerning the colonial war.

So he came to Algeria in consequence of a disciplinary action and hated, as he told me, the idea of participating to the colonial forces occupying Algeria.

During the first months he could advance to the position of a second-class clerk in one of the offices, he started to use this time for own investigations and began working on his first book, *Sociologie de l'Algérie*.

This was motivated by two different reasons.

First his expressed political stance towards the idea of a French Algeria,

Secondly Bourdieu's decision to study the Algerian society was affected by a “civil” impulse. In the course of his “Algerian landing”, Bourdieu quickly realized that the people back in France virtually knew nothing about the country and its inhabitants, no matter whether they were in favour of a “French” or of an “Algerian Algeria”, and that even the intellectuals' discourses on the colonial war and French politics – in France and Algeria alike – suffered from this complete ignorance of its consequences as well as of the actual conditions of life in Algeria.

In order to continue this work, Bourdieu even decided to stay in Algeria after his resignation from the military in 1957 and to take up a post as assistant in philosophy at the University of Algier.

Sociologie de l'Algérie, published in 1958 in the series "Que-sais-je?" mainly deals with the social structures and ethnic relations of the Arab speaking population and the three largest Berber tribes, the role of religion and the colonial system as well as their connection to class relations and to processes of acculturation and deculturation. Complementary to own research interests pursued together with Abdelmalek Sayad, also a former teacher and a sociologically interested disciple from the University of Algiers, Bourdieu and Sayad continue to take part in the empirical studies of statisticians and demographers from the *Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques* (INSEE) like Alain Darbel, Jean Paul Rivet and Claude Seibel (some of them are also collaborators of Bourdieu's later studies in the spheres of cultural capital and reproduction strategies; in Algeria, the INSEE-studies provided Bourdieu with the quantitative data used for example in *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie*, Bourdieu/Darbel/Rivet/Seibel 1963).

The Algerian Situation

As the traditional material base of the Algerian population was snatched away by the colonial power, the social arrangements were degraded and loosened at the same time. The massive, both material and symbolic interventions changed the conditions of life profoundly: Effects of colonialism and war, enforced modernization and deculturation, are evident in the industrialisation of agriculture and the uprooting of the traditional peasant population, in the forced migration to the cities, the emergence of unemployment and a new urban subproletariate. One quarter of the Algerian population is subjected to the resettlement in camps in the "forbidden zones" due to military reasons. The underlying intention of building many thousands militarily surveyed *centres de regroupement* was to break the population's resistance and to isolate guerrilla fighters. Looking at the morphological and cultural transformations effected by displacement in the camps in Ain-Aghbel, Kerkera and Djebabra, Bourdieu and Sayad state that the overall movement of over 2.000.000 people is among the most brutal in history, and has to be seen as 'a pathological answer on the deadly crisis of the colonial system.

While Bourdieu's scientific work concerning the Algerian society and culture also can be seen as a personal way out of the dilemma of his being-within the colonial

constellation, the “original sin of the intellectual from the land of the colonial masters” (Bourdieu et al. 1963), it was at the same time the very situation of brutal social change that while affecting him deeply made it possible to study the conditions and consequences of such a fundamental transformation described by Bourdieu himself as characterized by “profound contradictions and paradoxes”. In Bourdieu’s words, Algeria thus could be viewed as some sort of “giant sociological laboratory” – a pre-capitalist system and its “anti-economist logics of economy” had to face the brutal enforcement of a capitalist colonial regime; a traditional society and a pre-modern habitus met with a new mode of economic commerce and logic of action that proved inconsistent with all the social rules valid for generations, with the ethics of brotherliness, reciprocity of gifts etc. The clash between the different modes of economic logics and habitus suggested that “there is no longer any thing such as ‘dishonor’, no longer a fear of abandoning the land or selling it to strangers, no longer a feeling of shame at abandoning a father or a mother in poverty. Now there is no hesitation before taking up any expedient, any ruse, in order to live. There is no longer any obstacle to the individualism that is part and parcel of the modern economy: within large groups, or large masses of isolated individuals, each is protected by his or her anonymity. Each feels responsible for him or herself, but for him or herself alone.” It is here that we already find the “later”, the politically engaged Bourdieu of *The Weight of the World*– as he himself confirmed subsequently, his time in Algeria provided him with a capital of problems from which he could profit the rest of his life’s work, in such a way that his field work in Algeria was and continues to be his “earliest and most up-to-date” research.

Instruments and topics of research

In many aspects Bourdieu’s ways to sociology can be characterized as “learning-by-doing”. His oeuvre, however, clearly promotes the possible advantages of a “cross-entry” into the field of the social sciences. Bourdieu’s urgent wish to understand what happened around him led him to use almost any tool available. Pursuing a research of his own and entering this new terrain unguided by any academic taskmaster whatsoever, he was free to move between and beyond disciplines: ignorant of schools or carved-out territories, by means of a constant radicalization of his own

intellectual and political standards and incessant experimentation with all available quantitative and qualitative methods of social research, he managed to become, by way of self-training, what one could readily call an “undisciplined” researcher in the most positive sense.

During his ethnological and sociological fieldwork in Algeria, Bourdieu experimented with a great variety of methods, instruments and strategies taken up and adapted from the current literature available, he was using questionnaires, pursuing qualitative interviews, participant observation, taking photographs, visualising dimensions of the social space in sketches, collecting proverbs, analysing social inequality, the topography of cemeteries, the relations between religion and economic ethos (Bourdieu was reading Weber’s *Protestant Ethic* in German during that time, the work was not yet translated into French), time structures, household fixtures and housekeeping budgets. Equally, Bourdieu’s Algerian research covers a multitude of social realities, such as architecture as an index of social order, body techniques, gendered divisions and collective representations of labour, cosmologies, elementary forms of exchange (the ethics of reciprocity), time structures of the rural world, vesture codes, family structures and strategies of social reproduction, genealogical orders, consumption practices and many more.

Uses of photography

So which role did photography play within the mentioned mix of methods? As we will try to show later on, Bourdieu’s uses of photography essentially facilitated his turn towards the different social realities mentioned and the “conversion of the gaze”, the training of the sociological “eye” (Bourdieu 2002a, 1999). Irrespective of the aesthetic qualities of the Bourdieuan photographs their relevance first and foremost pertains to their existence as primary ethnographical source and data. Bourdieu’s photographic fieldwork can be viewed as complement to his ethnographic and sociological writings on Algeria and the colonial condition. Alongside this historical dimension of his work, and indeed exceeding it by far, Bourdieu’s photography also retains its character as impressive socio-historical material. It testifies to a world full of non-simultaneities, an experience of estrangement both from tradition and the “modern world” which

continues to condition the Algerian situation even after the end of colonial rule. Perhaps the tragedy of Algeria expressed in Bourdieu's photographs is precisely that they seemingly do not to have lost any of their relevance and realism even today, four decades later.

Bourdieu's photos do not hide their photographer's affection and sympathy for the Algerian people, and this emotional commitment is manifested with far greater immediacy than in his sociological writings that, as Bourdieu stresses himself, sacrifice much more to the scientist norm of permanently showing one's own distance and objectivity by means of a self-restraint and auto-censorship than he might have bargained for: "The tremendous upheavals of this Algerian society in transition shaped and amplified my somewhat crazy clutching to scientism quite substantially. When I was doing my interview or taking pictures there, I was so emotionally churned up that I tried to get a grip on my uncertainty by means of this shield of scientism." Photography for Bourdieu was – besides being an instrument of social research – also a mode of showing people "I'm interested in you, I'm on your side, I'll listen to you, I'll testify to what you're going through". At the same time, following the initial urge to understand, photography, too, serves to testify, to overcome the intense moments of shock and personal dismay through the distance of the lens and, analogously to the cognitive instrument of the interpretative interview, to store data and save traces.

Habitus and Habitat

It has only recently been noted that Bourdieu's work – and the thick descriptions from his fieldwork in Algeria are just the most obvious example here – contains a strong "visual component" Yet even in his "later" work, e.g. the set of problems connected to gender relations described in *Masculine Domination*, we find indications that Bourdieu was systematically making use of his photographic archive to study the body techniques and the specific *hexis* of women and men. While *Masculine Domination* does not feature any photographs, an interview on the topic released in the well-known French TV guide *Telerama* shortly after the first publication showed several of Bourdieu's Algerian images. Already in 1990, an article called 'La

domination masculine' appeared in *Actes de la recherche en Sciences Sociales* where Bourdieu installed some of his photographs, too. By using his visual database, Bourdieu was able to describe the postures as well as their relations to the concepts developed on their behalf quite precisely. In the following, we would like to demonstrate Bourdieu's use of his photographic material with regard to the "habitat", the living conditions of the Algerian population before and under the colonial rule. In this context, we cannot only see the value of Bourdieu's archive as a collection of data and an instrument of social research, but also demonstrate several applications and functions of photography. While for Bourdieu the traditional social structure and Berber culture is materialized in the Kabyle house, the *centres de regroupement* come to be seen as a symbol of colonial rule and thus stand for the uprooting of the Algerian people. With his photos, Bourdieu is able to show how these places destroy a whole way of life. This analysis allowed him to foresee even back then that the resettlement camps would last even after the colonial war.

The Kabyle house, a visual anthropology

Asked to contribute to the *AWAL* issue on 'the other Bourdieu' mentioned earlier, French rural sociologist Isaac Chiva (in the late 1950s Lévi-Strauss' right-hand man and assistant director at the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale*) describes his first encounter with Pierre Bourdieu on occasion of a conference on social anthropology at Burg Wartenstein, Austria, in 1959: a back-then totally unknown young ethnologist arriving from Algeria, vividly taking part in the discussions, leaving a considerable impression on Chiva and his colleagues (Chiva 2003). Just a few months later, Bourdieu's now classical piece on the Kabyle house is published for the first time as a manuscript of 27 pages (Bourdieu 1960; one of the few copies is kept at the University library in Lausanne, later versions and re-publications will appear, for example, in 1970 in a festschrift for Lévi-Strauss, in *Algeria 1960* and in *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu 1979 and 1990a). 'The Kabyle house or the world reversed' was received as an exemplary structuralist reading and provided Bourdieu with an excellent reputation for his entry in the French academic field. Indeed Bourdieu's purest "application" of a structural anthropology, the study of the Kabyle house

nowadays also serves as a paradigmatic example for the handling of 'Lived visual data' Following Emmison and Smith, Bourdieu's essay is

„... a tour-de-force of structuralist thinking. Bourdieu studies the floor plan of the house, and links it with his ethnographic knowledge of Kabyle life to demonstrate that the house is structured by a number of binary oppositions. These link built form, gender roles, agricultural cycles, human reproduction and cosmology in complex ways... (...) Whilst the organization of the Kabyle house, and its social meanings, might appear to be just the product of an undifferentiated 'tradition' or 'way of life' to an outsider, Bourdieu's detailed decoding shows it to be an environment through which we can read the deep structures which pattern Kabyle life as a whole.“

With his photographs and his work on 'The Kabyle house' more generally Bourdieu tried to "secure traces" of the traditional Algerian society. Reading the essay with its detailed descriptions of material objects and their use, the many references to sayings, behavioural patterns or rituals leaves no doubt that Bourdieu had a profound field contact. Seeing his photographs, one begins to grasp that his work involved a more personal contact with the people as well. Taking photos thus for Bourdieu was a kind of way into the field, a way of gaining credit and of getting to know his informants (in fact, he often brought copies of his pictures to the people he had photographed). Faced with the difficult situation of colonialism and war, and even worse, being part of the occupation troops himself, gaining access to the field was even more a matter of trust than under the "normal" conditions of anthropological research. Besides that, photography then mainly served as a kind of externalised memory. Evidently, Bourdieu did not write his books "in the field" but at home at his desk. Photography gave him the extraordinary possibility to have an extreme precise record of the situation, including all the details of the house, its interior and surroundings – with the camera as a perfect complement to the scratchpad. Acting as steps towards the conceptualisation of the objects and items shown rather than as simple illustrations of a textual analysis, the visual data – photographs as well as sketches of the house, ground plans and maps of the village – constitute anthropologically readable primary data themselves.

Consulting earlier works on the Berber house (by René Maunier, Henri Laoust, Henri Genevoix and others), Bourdieu is struck by the systematic lacunae regarding the

location and orientation of things and activities in these writings. The objects and actions studied are neither viewed as parts of a symbolic system nor are they seen in relation to each other, as phenomena deriving their necessities and meanings precisely through being related with all the other social objects and facts. The precise visual recording of present objects and their adjustment as well as the (interior) design of the house let Bourdieu draw the conclusion that they are arranged in a specific order corresponding to social structure as well as to a larger cosmological order. Without his photo camera it obviously would have been much more difficult to gain such a precise recording. As Bourdieu's further fieldwork in the agrarian parts of Algeria showed the traditional hierarchy within the family and consequently in the collective was losing liability. The authority and the knowledge of the elders were devaluated. This is also valid for the social position of the *fellahin* altogether. Traditional action was not appropriate concerning the new circumstances while people did not have the capacity for capitalistic action. More and more, people had to gain their livelihood individually by themselves on the free market – the basis of the traditional society and value system, the family structure, was disintegrated while the Kabyle house was, physically and symbolically, destroyed by the colonial power. Eventually, the traditional collective was destructed by the war. The appearance of "miserable economies" in the cities was one of Bourdieu's main fields of study – he tried to show the consequences of the compulsively established capitalist economy for the deracinated Algerians.¹ Time structures were completely turned upside down by the colonial force and the new economic system. His empirical fieldwork and in particular qualitative methods such as photography gave him the chance to analyse the processes that forcefully established a completely new comprehension of time. Eventually, there were two possibilities for the young researcher: either to keep the precision, clarity and "objectivity" of structuralism at the cost of empirical results or to turn to social science and to break with structuralism – and this is what Bourdieu did in the end.

¹ For further information on the exhibition project "Economies of misery. Pierre Bourdieu in Algeria" (Lüneburg 2005), please visit the website of the *Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg*: <http://www.uni-lueneburg.de/interarchiv/projekte/e-bourdieu.html>

The Centres de regroupement, photography and the social sciences

On the theoretical level, dealing with the Kabyle house, Bourdieu assumed that contemporary Algeria was characterized by a dualism between traditional forms and the colonial condition. In his ongoing research on the Algerian society he remarked that this dualism covers the different connections between tradition and modernization. This assumption has been very much the background of Bourdieu's early research on Algeria – he tried to work out the main features of a pre-capitalist society that, in fact, continued to exist in fragments only. Using the categories Bourdieu developed in consequence one has to state that for societies to remain stable the habitus has to take effect in determining people's action. Traditional society is thus thought of as a total collective with a mechanical solidarity. Photography, at this stage, was thus a means of qualitative research and a medium of contact with the Algerian people. One of the most important insights of his exploratory research was that the people living in a traditional way were always occupied (even while not “working”). Bourdieu's photographs give a clear impression of the profound discrepancies between traditional and capitalist everyday life. While in pre-capitalist society work and life built an entity, colonial rule divorced these spheres. For an observer socialised in one of the capitalistic countries of the West, and this is what Bourdieu also had to learn, is it often difficult to recognize that an economic system constitutes itself as a field of objective expectations only accomplishable by subjects endued with a specific type of economic and temporal sensibility. Similar to Karl Polanyi, Bourdieu recognizes as a central characteristics of pre-capitalist economic practices that the attitudes and modes of behaviour considered as economic in the modern sense are not constituted and made independent as such.

According to the ethnocentric settings linking up to the image of the homo oeconomicus the Algerians, insofar as they lacked this specific set of economic and temporal dispositions presupposed in modern(ized) societies, were neither able to pre-plan the future nor to act rationally at all. Through a closer anthropological examination of the traditional habitat, this view could be easily refuted: one of the constitutive parts of every Kabyle house is the granary, a container formed of clay with several small holes in its outer wall, the function of which is to indicate early

enough whether the supplies are running low. As becomes more and more apparent within the course of Bourdieu's research, not only the individual objects of research (e.g. Bourdieu's Weberian question of the interplays between temporal and economic structures and his anthropological interest in the cosmology of the Kabyle house, two issues squared up in the material ethnology of the grain jar and other items relating interior spheres to exterior orders) are intrinsically linked, but also the modern and the traditional ways of life cannot be studied separately without equally taking into account the agonistic dualism of their paralleled existence. This awareness of the forceful interlocking of traditional and modern spheres also calls into conscience the colonial dilemma constantly conditioning Bourdieu's research:

"For example, there is another series of photos that are not particularly aesthetic, that I took in a place called Aïn Aghbel and in another place called Kerkeria. The military had herded people together who had previously been living scattered around the mountains and resettled them in a kind of terraced houses styled on a Roman *castrum*. Against the advice of my friends, I had set out into the mountains on foot to look at the destroyed villages, and I found houses that had had their roof taken off to force people to leave. They had not been burned down, but they were no longer inhabitable. And I came across clay pitchers in the houses (something I had already begun researching in a different village, Aïn Aghbel: there are places where everything that we would call furnishings is made of fired clay, made and shaped by the women); in Kabylia they call them *aqoufis*, those big clay grain pitchers decorated with drawings. The drawings are often of snakes, snakes being a symbol of resurrection. And although the situation was so sad, I was happy to be able to take photographs – it was all so contradictory. I was only able to take photos of these houses and immovables because they had no roofs any more..."

With the quoted description, Bourdieu reflectively articulates his own active concern with the colonial situation. Taking Bourdieu's stance towards his own positing as a French researcher further, one may grasp yet another quality of the (post)colonial dilemma: an intellectual from Europe, Bourdieu is himself part and product of the colonizer's system. His own research can and must be seized within this context. His task of objectifying and restoring the meanings of their actions for the people hints towards an educational mission that critically speaking could be also compared to the vocation of other fractions of the colonizers' "field of power". The ambivalence of wanting to do something for the Algerian people by producing a discourse about

them for a foreign observer from the colonizer's homeland inevitably establishes another power relation. Well aware of the mechanisms of symbolic violence, Bourdieu without much doubt knew about this bias. De facto, there is almost no other possibility of escaping this dilemma than that of continuously reminding oneself of the conditions of one's own research and of broaching the issues of its constraints as well as of its potentials. Another conclusion drawn by Bourdieu has been the appliance of interdisciplinary work and internationally composed research groups. With respect to Algeria, he was pleading for the necessity of a "Sociology of Algeria" undertaken by Algerian scientists and researchers.

The dramatic conditions and consequences of the resettlement of more than a forth of the Algerian population – over two million people - indeed could not be ignored. From the perspective of the colonial rulers, restructuring the living space of the Algerian population had not only the decided advantage to gather and seize a people that had been "everywhere and nowhere at once," but also allowed for further, previously impossible symbolic disciplinary measures .The resettlement at the same time was a necessary condition and a first step in the direction of establishing new economic structures and the destruction of the social and cultural traditions the "old" habitus was situated in. The so-called *centres de regroupement* thus not only functioned as the materialization of the changed living conditions but also became a symbol for the *déracinement*, the uprooting, of the population. With his photo camera, Bourdieu could record the different stages of this development and compare and analyse them later. The structure of the camps clearly shows that the interest to govern, dominate and train the population was one of the main ends in constructing those places. The new order enforced on the Algerians is played out in a sphere of heightened visibility and builds on the power of making seen, hence affirming colonial domination in manifold ways. The most direct one is of course the military force that – by the arrangement of architecture – encompassed the camps. But the effects of the restructuring of the peoples' habitat were much more fundamental. The resettlement camps not only mixed up people and tribes of different regions, dialects etc., a measure easily understood as an attempt of homogenisation of the Algerian population. Retrospectively, as Bourdieu pointed out, an enlargement of the differences belonging ethnicity and cultural traditions was the impact Even the

location of the public buildings and the fountain has to be understood as an overthrow of traditional ways.

“After the style of Roman colonisers, the officers in charge of organising the new communities begin by disciplining space, as if hoping that this will allow them to discipline people, too. Everything is subjected to uniformity and aligned neatly in a row: the standardised houses on allotted plots of land stand straight as a die along wide roads based on the ground plan of a Roman castrum or colonial settlement. The central square houses the characteristic triad of French villages: school, town hall, and war memorial.”

The arrangement of these buildings and institutions structured the everyday life of the inhabitants. This had enormous consequences for the constitution of private and public sphere, the gender relations, the family structure and so on. Often, the colonial policy did not lead to the intended effects but rather had impacts that were not anticipated. As Bourdieu tried to show with his sketches of the newly formed camps, this enforced form of resettlement showed devastating effects especially for the female population. thanks to the separation of male and female spheres of social space in the traditional society the women here had their own sheltered places to cultivate specific forms of sociability and communication where they could do without protective measures such as the veil. Thus, in the allegedly backward rural areas, the veil was a much less frequently seen accessory than in the cities or the resettlement centres where women for example on their way to fetch water from the well had to cross the newly constituted public space. The apparently picturesque images of children gathering at the fountain depict one of the ways the dilemma was dealt with, another consequence was that many women preferred to take up the much longer walk to one of the traditional water places rather than using the newly established central one. With account to the *Études méditerranéennes*, power has also to be seen as issued in the symbolic domination and in the ways in which even the body becomes venue of symbolic conflicts: "One has seen that many cultural patterns such as the adherence to certain details of clothing (like veil or fez) and certain attitudes, beliefs and values could symbolically serve as means of expressing one's rejection of the sentiments of belonging to the Western civilization and one's will to remain oneself. It also serves to reiterate the fundamental and insuperable differences, to negate self-denial and to defend a threatened and harried personality.

In a colonial setting, any disclaim of these cultural patterns and their symbolical value would objectively have meant the disclaim of one's self and dutiful obedience to the other civilization. (...) Most obvious and impressive, perhaps, are the signs of abstention that refer to traditions with a fundamentally symbolic value, for example wearing the veil or the fez. The traditional function of the veil became superimposed by another function that indicates the colonial context. Even without detailed analysis it becomes clear that the veil serves primarily to defend one's privacy and to protect it from violation, a fact that Europeans have always vaguely recognised. By wearing the veil, the Algerian woman creates a situation of non-reciprocity; she plays an unfair game by seeing without being seen, without allowing herself to be seen. As such, by means of the veil, the ruled society as a whole refuses to reciprocate by seeing, observing and penetrating without allowing itself to be seen, observed and penetrated... For a couple of years, one can observe a strong tendency to abandon the veil among girls and young women, a tendency that has been weakened and recurrent since May 13 [1958] – wearing the veil has regained its significance as symbolic negation..."

Coming back without coming home

Although it was Raymond Aron² who convinced Bourdieu in 1960 to come back to France and take up a job as assistant at the University of Lille, Bourdieu himself recalls that it was only in 1963 or 1964 that he finally set up camp with the sociologists; before he felt more "at home" in the ethnologist circles around Lévi-Strauss, whose seminar he also visited back then. The research Bourdieu carries out in that time – together with his Algerian friend, disciple and collaborator Abdelmalak Sayad – is concerned with a kind of inverse ethnology of the Béarn, and informed by the experiences in the study of a traditional (peasant) society in transition undertaken in Algeria before. Conceived as a kind of *Tristes Tropes* in reverse, 'an ethnography of ethnography and the ethnographer', Bourdieu's work on his homeland marks also the decisive departure from Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology and the shores of

² Aron, while differing in his theoretical readings e.g. of Weber and being located in a different corner of the sociological field, was impressed early on by Bourdieu's intellectual capacities and prospects. A supporter of an Algerian Algeria and author of *L'Algérie et la République* (1958), he came to know Bourdieu in the late 1950s by way of his writings on Algeria.

noble science: when the studies of Kabyle society in the scientific context of their time were “in the bizarre situation of being situated somewhere between orientalism and ethnology,” .

“I thus understood only retrospectively that I had entered into sociology and ethnology, in part, through a deep refusal of the scholastic point of view which is the principle of a loftiness, a social distance, in which I could never feel at home, and to which the relationship to the social world associated with certain social origins predisposes. That posture displeased me, as it had for a long time, and the refusal of the vision of the world associated with the academic philosophy of philosophy no doubt contributed greatly to leading me to the social sciences and especially to a certain manner of practising them. But I was to discover very quickly that ethnology – or at least the particular way of conceiving it that Lévi-Strauss incarnated and thus his metaphor of the ‘view from afar’ encapsulates – also made it possible, in a somewhat paradoxical manner, to hold the social world at a distance, even to ‘deny’ it in Freud’s sense, and thereby to aestheticize it.”

In just the other way round as his almost forgotten memory of a similar logics of practices habituated during his own upbringing in the Béarn widened his understanding of the practical logic of the pre-capitalist Kabylean economy, his research experience in Algeria allows for a more distanced return to the rural cosmos of his childhood. It is this “kind of methodologically provoked anamnesis“, the objectification of one’s own position within one’s research that Bourdieu is missing in structuralism and phenomenology alike and that leads to his central assumption of reflexivity (Bourdieu’s anamnesis of his own position and itinerary in social space is further deepened and systematized in his sociological “Self-Analysis”, cp. Bourdieu 2002a).

As has been already hinted towards, Bourdieu’s early uses of photography as an instrument of research advanced his understanding of the principles of objectification as well as his conversion to a social scientist, the training of the “sociological eye”. After all, a photograph –while simultaneously offering an acceptable framing of the world, a distanced or distance-able representation also fit for a philosophical discourse on the object of the image – may also carry a subjective knowledge, a hint towards experience or memory that requires a specific cultural competence to be deciphered. It contains the cognition of the world as product of a viewing eye while

calling for the setting-in-relation of spectator (and/or photographer) and image. The photographic gaze in this sense resembles the sociological gaze, both of which are in need for a definition of their field (of vision or research) proper to their subject, a sensibility for details as well as for the guiding principles of composition or structure. In his work on 'the social uses of photography' (this is the subtitle given to the French and the German edition of Bourdieu's *Photography. A middlebrow art*, cp. Bourdieu 1965/1996) Bourdieu called attention to the fact that photographic documents are no neutral representations of a presupposed reality but expressions of a certain perspective on a subject matter, they are produced by social actors with specific dispositions and socially embodied schemata of seeing the world – products of a specific habitus and the field(s) inhabited by their "author". Our argument on the role of the photographic gaze in the genesis of Bourdieu's sociological gaze is based and relies on this insight. Comparing the possibilities of photography to those of a more textual approach towards the researcher's direct experience (e.g. the diaries 'from the field' popular in ethnographic research), we would thus and despite of their representational constraints vote for the more immediate potential of objectification opened up by the visual material and the temporal separation of collection and the interpretation of data.

Taking all this as given, how can we grasp the fact that photography as a method seems to be that important in Bourdieu's early works just to lose its relevance almost completely since the mid-1960s? Several explanations are possible. On the one hand, as Bourdieu himself stated that he acquired in Algeria a whole capital of problems sufficient for one life's full of work, one could assume that he simply was not in need of taking his photographic research any further – an assumption that might be strengthened by the observation that Bourdieu in the following years even reduced his archive (from the more than 2,500 photos shot in Algeria today there are around 800 left) in order to get to a database he could work with and handle – and to which he went back every once and again, as works like *Masculine Domination* or *The Logic of Practice* indicate (one of the central specificities of Bourdieu's working and thinking can be seen in the spiralled form of taking up and returning to questions over the years, a mode of theoretical practice essentially facilitated by visual memory hooks of the kind the photographic archive provided richly).

A certain concern for (or even fear of) being – sometimes actually deliberately – misunderstood may also be taken into account on the issue of not having published more of his photographs, given the readings of his work Bourdieu had to face time and then. With regard to his background, it may have been also a fear of humiliation that might have influenced Bourdieu to prevent being labelled a hobby photographer or – maybe even worse – an amateur photojournalist³. On the other hand, he probably would have been equally un-elated of being passed on as the sociologist who also takes photographs (a kind of second career his colleague Jean Baudrillard started to pursue in the late 1990s), thus viewing his photographic research as an artistic attempt or a narcissist pleasure. Looking at Bourdieu's shifting research interests and his focus on issues of symbolic capital and domination on the other pole within the field of power in the 1960s and 1970s, one could also argue that it was simply a requirement for other research strategies that let Bourdieu turn away from photography. Another strand of explanation links up to the feelings of foreignness Bourdieu might have experienced coming to Algeria as a soldier of the colonial forces as well as to the philosopher's estrangement from the social world: due to this line of argument, photography was essentially important for developing a means of objectification – a point we also developed above – and for dealing with a strange situation, one's foreignness and one's own dismay, a measure of distance and proximity that helped to train one's reflexivity and sociological "eye" at the same time. Recalling the role we earlier awarded to photography in Bourdieu's conversion and the genesis of his sociological gaze and a "professional" habitus (an embodied mode of reflexivity and self-objectification), one could even be tempted to say that photographing had already performed its tasks for Bourdieu and was further used only with regard to his photographic archive, as an active reminder of certain questions and subjects as well as of the scientific task of finding the right measure of distance and proximity relating to one's own position and interest as well as to the conditions being looked-at and theorized.

³ "There is this petty bourgeois spontaneous sociology (that petty bourgeois writer Daninos in France, for example) that makes fun of people who set out on their tourist excursions with cameras over their shoulders, and then do not even really see the landscape because they are so busy taking photographs. I always thought that was class racism. In my case, at least, it was a way of sharpening my eye, of looking more closely, of finding a way to approach a particular subject ... During my years in Algeria, I often accompanied photographers doing photo reportages, and I noticed that they never spoke to the people they were photographing; they knew next to nothing about them." (Schultheis/Bourdieu 2001)

Even though Bourdieu did not continue to use photography as a methodological instrument more systematically despite of the impact we attribute it in his early works – and hence for the development of his whole oeuvre – his photographs do not only present interesting objects for a deepened understanding of Bourdieu's sociology but are also sociologically relevant primary data for grasping (the historical conditions and) the actual political and social situation of Algeria. When Bourdieu wrote that his observations in the centers of resettlement made it possible to forecast that a lot of those facilities (often in a glib way referred to as concentration camps) would persist independence he was, unfortunately, right. In 2006, a small research group consisting of students of the re-visited Djebabra, a former resettlement center and one of the places of Bourdieu's fieldwork. One of their concerns was to see whether Bourdieu's assumption that not only the consequences of the resettlement, but even its material architecture would continue to structure the country for a long time even after its independence had come true. They had to discover that the grid of the colonial resettlement camp still existed and indeed has remained instructive for the organization of the social and public space. This little example illustrates the deep influence and the non-reversible effects of colonialization with regard to the destruction of traditional patterns. The context of the described excursion, an exhibition of Bourdieu's Algerian photographs and their reception in Algeria elucidates another facet of the (post)colonial dilemma: the implications of the sometimes guilt-ridden and afflicted relations of European scholars to the people of a postcolonial setting and to their self-set task of restoring their history to the people. What we still can learn from Bourdieu's quest for an organic intellectual and his dealing with his Algerian experience is indeed the relevance of reflexivity and a continued self-objectification as well as of a truly collaborative and transdisciplinary style of work involving the subjects in question.