

Lennart G. Svensson

Occupations and Professionalism in Art and Culture

Abstract: The article introduces the topic of this special issue on artists and professionalism from the perspective of the sociology of the arts and culture, in order to demonstrate how the contributions significantly develop studies of professions in general. Some theoretical concepts are defined and discussed: culture, arts, occupations, professions, status, field, symbolic and social capital, emotional labour, and reversed economy. An illustration is used to demonstrate pricing in arts and what may explain it. There is a focus on the field of art with a brief comparison to the academic field. In this issue we find studies on artists, authors, and theatre actors, which provide significant contributions to these themes in theories and studies of professions.

Keywords: creative industries, creative occupations, professions, status, field, symbolic and social capital

A recently overheard conversation in an art gallery:

- Oh, a watercolour to the price tag of 295.000 kronor (SEK)!
- Yes, by X of course!
- I think it embodies precisely his personal and talented style and method from the period up north. But rather expensive, isn't it?
- Yes, since his exhibition at the X museum in the X capital city two years ago, there is another zero added to it.

*Lennart G.
Svensson,
Department of
Sociology and
Work Science
University of
Gothenburg*

Contact:
*Lennart G.
Svensson,
Department of
Sociology and
Work Science
University of
Gothenburg
Box 100
405 30 Göteborg
Sweden
Lennart.svensson@sociology.gu.se*

How do we explain this?

Occupations in art and culture in a broad sense are many and heterogeneous. Some classic and traditional such as literature, art, performing art as music and theatre, and some of recent origin and connected to computer and digital technology such as web designers and computer game developers. There are a wide variety of old and new art educations, some with strong ambitions to be professional in status and occupational performance. Most of the art and culture occupations are strongly dependent on market demands, while others, such as art and literature, are at least in part more autonomous, asserting economic independence and even a reversed economy in the name of professional autonomy—that is, in their case, individual artistic freedom. This is, as well, one of the most controversial issues in these fields, constructing the most important form of symbolic capital.

Together these occupations compose a sector, which in recent decades and in most industrialized countries has been the object of aggressive market intervention, and has become a tool for national economic development both locally and globally. A new label has emerged for the sector—that is, the cultural creative sector or

the culture industries—where innovation, entrepreneurship and marketing are enforced. In Sweden, for example, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth has initiated a special programme for the country's most expansive economic sector (music and computer games for export are particularly mentioned).¹ In the service sector of the economy there is an escalating demand for services connected to entertainment, events and experiences. The strong trend towards entrepreneurship and commercialization has been a major challenge to non-commodified values in the so called fine arts in particular, embodied in the general struggle between representatives for economic and symbolic capital, respectively. The bourgeois Swedish government 2006-2014, particularly the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, has promoted actively neo-liberal policies formulated in various commissions (e.g., SOU 2009, p. 16) that channel practising artists in the direction of entrepreneurship. This also made the cultural and creative sector an object of budgeting and auditing just as other sectors. The importance of the name of the creator, the CV, and the personal branding has escalated immensely—particularly among new and often younger pretenders claiming access to positions and resources in a certain field (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005), and backed up by numerous advisors in the consultant industry.

The cultural and creative sector is made up of a number of fields with their own actors, positions, values and doxa, creating and using symbolic capital as well as social capital. Habitually, though with variable force, negotiations take place between these fields as a form of boundary work to produce and reproduce the set of values within the fields. Nonetheless, there are transgressions and exchanges. This journal issue highlights creative occupations such as visual artists, authors, and performing actors, exploring aspects related to education, organization, autonomy, closure, performance and practice.

Creative occupations belong to what may be called the creative or culture industries, which refers to a range of economic activities concerning the production or exploitation of knowledge and information (Howkins, 2001). The creative industries embrace advertising, architecture, arts, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, the performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, toys and games, TV and radio, and video games (Howkins, 2001, pp. 88–117). The creative industries are regarded as increasingly important for a country's economic welfare, some suggesting that, "human creativity is the ultimate economic resource" (Florida, 2002, p. xiii). Taken together these occupations have been labelled the creative class (Florida, 2002) emphasizing their activities, products and services as well as their social position, and composed also of scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and architects; in other words, including in general, "people in design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or creative content" (Florida, 2002, p. 8). In the Swedish labour market they make up about 3% of the workforce. (More statistics are available in Flisbäck & Lund, 2015, in this issue; and in Flisbäck & Lund, 2010.) From an organizational perspective emphasizing their positions in the labour market (frequently self-employed, lacking predictability and job security) together with their rewards and privileges, which may be regarded as precarious, some culture and arts workers can rather be classified as belonging to the precariat class (Standing, 2011) in a service society often emphasizing emotional labour.

¹ The Agency lists the following occupations: architecture, art, computer game, cuisine, cultural heritage, design, experiential learning, fashion, film and photo, media, music, performing arts, and crafts.

Sociology of culture and the arts

The sociology of the arts is a subfield of sociology, studying the social worlds of art in a broad sense (Zolberg, 1990; Mansfield, 2002; Bale, 2009). The sociology of culture deals with culture (including the creative industries), which is usually understood as the ensemble of symbolic codes that are manifested in the society. Culture in the sociological field can be defined as the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together shape ways of life. Art history as a discipline is distinguished from art criticism; the latter which is concerned with establishing a relative artistic value upon individual works with respect to others of comparable style, or sanctioning an entire style or movement; and art theory or the philosophy of art, which concerns the fundamental nature of art.

In contrast to aesthetic specialists, social scientists start from the premise that art should be contextualized, in terms of place and time in a general sense, as well as more specifically, of institutional structures, recruitment norms, professional training, reward, and patronage or other support. Sociologists direct their attention to the relation of the artist and art work to political institutions, ideologies, and other extra-aesthetic considerations (Zolberg, 1990, p. 8).

Vera Zolberg continues to assert that while many art critics from a humanistic perspective may defend the mystery of art, sociologists like Howard Becker and Pierre Bourdieu analyse the social construction of aesthetic ideas and values. The humanistic point of view is internal or individualistic, like the conversation quoted in the introduction. The formal elements of a piece of art are analysed as to the techniques and media used, the content of language, and aesthetic influences from specific traditions. “They regard each great work as a unique, meaningful expression of its creator’s being” (Zolberg, 1990, p. 6). The humanistic perspective is based on the idea that art is the spontaneous expression of its creator, where the romantic notion of the talented genius and art for its own sake is central. In contrast, the sociology of art takes an external or sociological approach and is likely to be materialistic. The sociological approach questions the qualities in art ascribed by individual artists, critics, dealers and connoisseurs. Humanists and aestheticians, on their part, criticize the sociology of arts approach as a reduction of art solely to the outcomes of social processes.

According to Becker (1982, p. xi), the dominant tradition in the sociology of arts took the artists and artwork, rather than the network of cooperation, as the focus of the analysis of art as a social phenomenon. His vantage point, similar to the one for this article, is instead the sociology of occupations and professions applied to artwork and artists. The division of labour, the social relations between actors, and the conventions dictating the work, are essential elements in the analysis (Becker, 1982, p. 35). When Becker deals with the processes of value attribution he uses reputation, respect and admiration as well as the mutual reinforcement between the artist and the work. The creation of value is of major importance in the sociology of Bourdieu. The elaboration of the sociology of art by Bourdieu and his field theory has applied an anthropological approach of major analytical significance. The creative industries are here composed of numerous autonomous sub-fields, each constructed by specific actors struggling over the valued resources and assets produced and reproduced in the field. In a Swedish study the art field was characterised as particularly autonomous and self-reproduced compared to other cultural fields, which makes it most suitable for studying what Bourdieu called the reversed economy of art (Broady, 2012, p. 8). Revealing social forces external to the artists may evoke severe animosities of muckraking by observers among the artists. Studying the reversed economy tracks the driving forces of individuals, revealed as a commitment strong enough to give up material rewards in order to struggle for the value of art, and analyses how they belong to the field itself. Atti-

tudes epitomized in the reversed economy represent the actual entry into the field and would not exist without the field itself (Broady, 2012, p. 9). Bourdieu's field theory is in this issue employed in the contributions by Flisbäck and Lund (2015), Lindström (2015), and Childress and Gerber (2015). Although the occupations discussed in these articles represent different sub-fields within the broader field of creative work, there is a common approach to the struggle for autonomy among practising actors in relation to the fields of economy and politics.

Occupations, status and professions

An occupation is generally speaking the bundle of tasks or the activity which provides an individual a living and which demands some particular knowledge and skills (Hughes, 1958; Svensson, 2003). Sometimes an occupation overlaps with an education, and the title of the graduation is the same as the title of the occupation, as in many crafts and professional occupations. Thus, there is a direct link from education, via graduation and a possible license into positions within certain work organisations, where there are explicit and specific requirements for qualification. This is not the case among most occupations in art and culture—exceptions to the rule may be for example librarians and journalists. There are no occupational positions in art and culture with formal requirements for license or other authorization. Furthermore, there are no occupational titles legally protected. Anyone can call themselves an artist, actor or a music composer in their *curricula vitae*. Nevertheless, and elaborated below, for entry to the field of art there are implicit and informal requirements, which in practice makes formal education almost compulsory (Ericson, 1988). In some instances there are also recent formal requirements.

Occupations are strongly connected to class and status as they determine positions in the labour market and in work organisations, and thereby also the distribution of rewards and privileges. Inequality at work and in social life in general is usually connected to the distribution of resources and power. There are ample reasons, however, to recapture the traditional Weberian concept of status, which incorporates honour, esteem and respect, and is used in occupational studies as equivalent to prestige (Ridgeway, 2014; Harrits, 2014). Estimations of status contain what we know of the phenomenon as well as how it is evaluated. To estimate prestige is to evaluate, and this gives accounting and legitimation of what is attributed—as in this case of an occupation. Max Weber defines status as positive or negative social prestige based on life style, formal education and origin or occupation (Weber, [1922] 1983, p. 212). Status is founded on different forms or combinations of material or symbolic resources, making up the basis for social closures. This expansion of the concept of status comes predominantly from Bourdieu's notion of different forms of capital, that is, economic, cultural, symbolic, and social (Bourdieu, [1979] 1984). Symbolic capital is what social groups recognise as valuable and attribute value to (Broady, 1990, p. 171). Symbolic closure may accordingly be defined “as the concentration of distinctive lifestyle traits, the restriction of access based on such traits, and the establishment of a clear symbolic group or category” (Harrits, 2014). To be seen, discovered and recognized, to be attributed to the field or to be given the opportunity to take part of certain assets of the field, that is, to have symbolic capital, is of decisive importance in the field of art in particular. Symbolic capital is made manifest in the study of the field of art. Subsequently, the contributions in this issue make significant developments for the study of professions in general.

The evaluation of social differences is universal, and most people care much about being valued. Control over resources and power is durably consolidated by categorical differences. Status is also an independent dimension, creating self-generating effects. It is “a basic source of human motivation that powerfully shapes

the struggle for precedence out of which inequality emerges” (Ridgeway, 2014, p. 12). It is a highly useful concept especially in the world of culture and arts, where education, positions, and products are constantly evaluated.

The durability of status is strongly demonstrated in estimations and ranking orders of occupational status, which are robust and resilient over space, time, and different groups of people (Svensson & Ulfsdotter Eriksson, 2009). Among the Swedish public the following so called creative occupations were mainly attributed relatively high status on the rank order from 1-100: IT-consultant (14), film producer (15), TV-editor (21), web designer (24), journalist (25), author (27), art director (30), theatre actor (31), fashion model (39), and artist (50). Dancers (63) and librarians (64) were, however, exceptions among creative occupations, attributed considerably lower status. There is a significant difference between this estimation of the occupations’ *status in society in general* and what status the respondents in the study thought the occupations *ought to have*. The health sector is then greatly underestimated and the creative sector overestimated, particularly IT-occupations. Artist is lowered in the ranking order from rank 50 to 57. Again, there is an exception for librarians, the only occupation in the sample from the creative sector, which *ought to have* higher status.

An occupation denotes what you *do* as well as who you *are*. Your identity can be more or less connected to your education and occupation. Professional occupations demanding a long and comprehensive education provide more probably an identity where you would call yourself by your title—I am an artist, rather than I am working as an artist (Svensson & Ulfsdotter Eriksson, 2009, p. 9; Ulfsdotter Eriksson & Linde, 2014). Most artists and people in the creative sector would identify themselves with their work. This is in their case also created by the very strong dependence on their own creative and more or less emotional capacities and their selves as the tools and sources for work, which they share in common with many professionals, for example teachers, psychotherapist, priests, and social workers. This intricate process of habituation into an occupation is innovatively explored with in depth interviews of art students in a Swedish study on learning the “rules of art” (Flisbäck, 2006; Flisbäck & Lund, 2010). The contribution by Stina Bergman Blix in this issue elaborates what by Arlie Hochschild (1983) was labelled emotional labour. Theatre actors in their rehearsal process demonstrate the use of personal emotional experiences by double agency (an ability to act as well as observe oneself), decoupling (dissociate private emotional experiences from professional performance on stage), and habituation (socialization of emotions on a more aware level to be able to repeat emotional expressions). This analysis is of great use for studies of a number of other professional occupations encountering clients.

There are numerous definitions of professions (Brante, 2011; 2014). One is offered here, which is general and exceeding the two earlier traditions: the essential trait approach and the conflict project approach. *Professions are occupations applying scientifically based knowledge under collegial control and with the political legitimacy to perform certain societal assignments* (Svensson, 2011; cf. Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001; Molander & Terum, 2008). Occupations in art and culture rarely apply scientific knowledge in the same sense as professionals do in diagnoses, inferences and interventions—often followed by some kind of account for the decisions taken (Abbott, 1988). Still, art is international and global to a great extent comparable to science. Some professions such as law, social work and theology do of course, however, depend more on codified texts and rules than science and research, and are also more nationally delimited. However, there has been an intentional academization of fine arts education with the merging of schools of fine arts into the university system, nevertheless, referrals to theory and research are scarce. In higher education for art and music this connection is as discipline called artistic development, and is mainly comprised by systematic (scientific) documentation of the investigations and studies of artistic case processes. Fine arts primarily refer to

genres, traditions, styles and individual performance rather than to scientific theories and research. Architecture, on the other hand, involves the divisions and tensions between an academic theoretical discourse and an artistic fashion discourse.

The legacy of profession in fine arts originates in the mid 17th century Europe by the visual art L'Academie de France. There was the first professional graduate school with a core curriculum, guidelines for competitions, formal conferences, and the first visual-based dictionary (Sciully, 2010, p. 44). For two centuries this was the leading professional actor with immense enduring impact on the processes of consecration of visual art—a historical case, which also was used as a prototype on professionalization.

Collegial organization and control of knowledge and performance is an essential property in most professional work, which in turn provides legitimacy and trust. Hence Elliot Freidson (2001) questions the management of professional work by bureaucracy and markets. Collegial control of research and knowledge development, and education as well as performance at work, is strongly asserted particularly in academic professions in terms of academic freedom. The notion of academic freedom lends itself to other fields. There are clear similarities between academic freedom and artistic freedom, which will be further elaborated below in connection with the discussion of symbolic capital.

The political legitimacy of professions is ensured mainly by public education regulated by governmental laws and statutes, and in some cases by state licenses and laws for organizations carrying out societal tasks. This includes delegation to professionals to execute and perform according to scientific knowledge and best practices under collegial control. Teachers, physicians and social workers, for example, are governed explicitly by various legislations. There is no corresponding comprehensive legislation for occupations in art and culture other than more general intentions and directions for cultural services, such as those studied in the contribution by Flisbäck and Lund (2015). Guidelines for art and culture are instead given in regulations for certain institutions such as museums and performing arts venues, governed nationally by the Ministry of Culture, and, recently, also regionally by county governments. This is another motivation for governance by budgeting and auditing in the cultural sector.

Education

In everyday language the opposite of professional is usually amateur, and this is a recurring issue in athletics as well as in art occupations. To be autodidact is still an accepted status among authors and artists, although some kind of higher education is an increasingly important career factor. In most other professions a state government regulated higher education is a necessary element. Professional associations, universities, private institutes, and the state government are four actors in the development of new professional educations for aesthetics, design, and various occupations in the IT-branches. These new educations are more or less competing and contesting the established educations for classical and semi-professional creative occupations (Olofsson, 2011). This is an indication of the demand for professionalism in the educational system as well as in the labour market of the creative sector. In some cases, as illustrated by Clayton Childress and Alison Gerber in this issue, a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing may have more symbolic significance for an author's identity, income and publishing than actual performance skills. Within the sociology of education and professions there has been an ongoing discussion on the status and the symbolic capital created by higher education apart from human capital (e.g. Bourdieu & Passeron, [1964] 1979, 2000; Collins, 1979; Bourdieu, 1984; Ridgeway, 2014).

The importance of the symbolic value of education is illustrated in a study of

Swedish art education of what, according to Bourdieu above, is called a reversed economy (Gustavsson, Börjesson & Edling, 2012). A strong commitment to a life as an artist and the competition for recognition serves as a more important motive to participate in the field than material rewards and profit, which in the long term may produce even better credit and profit. The singularity of the art field is here characterised by exceptionally tight bonds between the art educations and the art field. The educations tend to be subordinated to the logic of the art field, and thereby lacking autonomy (Broady, 2012, p. 8). In the last three decades there has been a prodigious expansion of lower art education in secondary schools as well as between the secondary level and the tertiary level with the growth of schools providing preparatory education for art schools at the tertiary university level. This development has formed a broad base in a pyramid of educations in Sweden with extremely competitive transitions. Distinguishing art education from other professional education, the national statute for university education states that art education should be “based on science or artistic foundation *and* proven experience” (my emphasis). Admission to art education is also widely based on work samples and not on credentials, thus disregarding the results of lower education (Gustavsson et al., 2012, p. 20). Those showing adequate skills and talents should thus not be excluded. Visual art students in the five art schools in the Swedish study are trained in a liberal tradition, emphasising individual tutoring and illustrating an enduring ideal of charismatic teaching (Edling & Börjesson, 2008). The recruitment of teachers to these schools is based, not on their intra mural experiences, but on the extra mural merits they have collected at work and in the practical field of art: practicing, exhibiting, being reviewed and paid attention to by museums and other cultural institutions. The ideals from the field about artistry as individual, free creativity is converted into the criteria to be eligible for entry to the art schools, thus structuring the practice of the education by norms from the profession (Edling, 2012, p. 80). In comparison to other professional educations, there is remarkably less influence from research and academic norms—and from meritocracy in general. The process leading to self-reliance within art education, is more discussed by Sofia Lindström (2015) in her study on students and staff.

Higher education is further demonstrated to be of major significance for the careers of professional artists in the field. In the years between 1938 and 1984 about 90% of the students from the most prestigious art school in Sweden, the Royal Institute of Art, made an imprint in the field with exhibitions at important art galleries, reviews by important critics and important scholarships and grants (Gustavsson et al., 2012, p. 23). 30% were considered as leading artists, and almost 50% of the leading artists graduated from this institute.

The criteria for eligibility and the curricula in art schools demonstrate the direction towards individual capacity and talent. Work samples are used to give the applicants the opportunity to show individual expressions and their artistic ambitions. There are no given curricula in an education to develop individual artistry. The education is more or less designed to nourish the talent the student has already proven on entry to the school. However, since the implementation of the Bologna system there are more optional technical as well as theoretical courses in the curricula, which are intended to develop the students’ entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, the development of the student rather than education is in focus (Edling, 2012, p. 69). Tutoring is aimed to support the student to chisel an “I”, strong enough for constant renewal, transcendence, idiosyncrasy and integrity to create esteem and reputation. The capacity to persuade others about their distinctive individuality is not a sole condition, but a necessary condition for an artistic career (Edling, 2012, p. 78).

The talented art student is an enduring image. The following quoted vignette, telling about teaching watercolour using a beautiful metaphor from performing arts, illustrates well the notion of the innately gifted art student:

Question: What kind of tools do you use in your teaching?

Answer: My own experience in practice. To quickly apprehend what the students want, their intended images, and to give them their focus. Why and where are they heading, and how to reach there? Very important in water-colour is to let go! You can liken it with a stage director. The paper is the stage, the pigments are the casted actors with their individual characters, which give the dynamic relationships; then broad brushes and rough strokes will spread the colours; adding water quickly and patiently, let go and lean back, gives leeway to the colours, the actors, and they will move according to their characters. It's all about timing, as the stage director advises, NOW!

Field, symbolic capital and reversed economy

The concepts of enclosure and boundaries are prominent in the neo-weberian and conflict-orientated sociology of professions (Abbott, 1988; Saks, 2010; 2012; Harrits, 2014). Bourdieu emphasises the internal processes within specific fields, how they are integrated and reproduced by cultural and symbolic structures—beliefs and convictions rather than by boundary work. His approach provides options to effectively analyse the driving forces and strategies among agents and their trust in what they have been invested in, related to discursive symbolic structures in the actual field (Carlhed, 2011, p. 298). So far Bourdieu's concepts of field, symbolic capital and reversed economy have only been mentioned. In this section the concepts will be further discussed drawing heavily on the research conducted at the Centre for the Sociology of Education and Culture (SEC), University of Uppsala, Sweden and particularly quoting the edited volume from the research centre (Gustavsson et al., 2012). A field is an enclosed social system of positions occupied by specialised agents (with their particular dispositions) and institutions, struggling for common field specific resources or assets (Broady, 1990, p. 270; Bourdieu, 1986, 1993, 2000; Gustavsson et al., 2012, p. 13). In the case of visual art worlds the agents are artists, gallery owners, critics, teachers, curators, reviewers and museums, galleries, journals, academies, and schools respectively. What are produced in the field are ordinary products such as art works and art genres as well as desirable values and beliefs. The field specific assets are defined by rank orders of, for example, galleries, museums, critics and assignments. The field also produces the values to be defended in the environment, making up the boundaries of the enclosure (*illusio*), which includes rules constituting the game itself. Revealing (as sociologists may do) or questioning these rules, is a threat often evoking strong animosity. These rules are acquired and internalised during the individual's preparatory education and practice, creating an inclination to subordinate oneself to them and simultaneously give up certain assets valued in other fields and in "ordinary life". Symbolic capital is, by the agents, considered as more valuable than economic capital. Symbolic capital is dominant in the field and is an essential part of defining the field's autonomy. This is different from most other fields and the society at large, which lead us to label the field's economy as a "reversed economy".

Cultural fields in society are separated from economic fields. Cultural fields including art fields are divided on a horizontal dimension between two economies: autonomy (limited production) and heteronomy (large scale production). In the autonomous subfield, there is no or little contemporary demand in the market, and the so-called reversed economy is dominant. Economic capital is devalued while symbolic capital is highly upgraded. Here *l'art pour l'art* is embraced and revered, and the valuation by colleagues, competitors, critics and exhibitors is primarily sought. As said about the ideal employee: A person regarding his/her own work as

excellent is reward enough. In the large scale and market directed subfield artists are instead competing for public success and sales, not among connoisseurs in the cultural elite, but among collectors in the economic elite and people in general.

In the autonomous subfield there is also a vertical polarity between established and acknowledged artists and those new and younger artists mounting more or less avant-garde attacks towards the “establishment” in order to acquire the subfield’s valued assets, which creates a certain dynamic. This is again where the strategic importance of the name, the CV, the personal branding, or other forms of self-commodification turn up.

Symbolic capital is what social groups recognise as valuable and attribute value to. Cultural capital can be considered as a subdivision of the symbolic, including human capital such as credentials, and other storable capital such as titles, institutions and codified laws and rules. A third kind of capital used in studies by Bourdieu et al. is social capital understood as valuable networks and social relations, which they define as: “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249). This form of capital is more often discussed in the social sciences in general and well known to a broader audience (e.g. Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2002). Social capital is of major importance in any social field, but may be more subtle, and even more important in the field of art as a dynamic energy to create symbolic capital; for one thing because of the lesser significance awarded to meritocratic cultural capital for eligibility to education, as was demonstrated by less formal requirements above. The concepts social capital and symbolic capital are closely linked. Using the notion of symbolic capital Marita Flisbäck and Anna Lund (2015) find the ideals of the reversed economy in government commission reports.

Another autonomous field includes the academic profession. The field has many similar dynamics and processes compared to cultural fields— and the field of art in particular. Comparing the academic field with the field of art sheds light on the character of professional fields in general. Academic freedom is a worldwide idea and ideal, codified in magna chartas, and which strive to exclude economic and political intrusion. The production of symbolic capital within the academic field is provided by agents as lateral colleagues, superior colleagues, critics, reviewers, referees, and by institutions such as hierarchies, examinations, graduations, journals, reviewing, publishers, and the explicit as well as more implicit status rank orders of these institutions. The doxa or the rules of the game as such is comprised of transparency, scientific ethics, accuracy and publishing. However, there is no self-evident reversed economy in the sense that symbolic capital is created by a strong commitment and low income. On the contrary, it is legitimate to make a fortune out of a discovery, an innovation and a patent. Another obvious similarity is instead the trademark of your name as artist or as researcher. The *curricula vitae* of artists and researchers have much in common (credentials, sites, networks, institutional consecration), illustrating the fundamental importance of the social origin and disposition of the originator. This is also demonstrated by the copyrights in the respective fields, although there are increasing exceptions to this individual rule by collectives in both fields, causing problems in recruitment to positions and awards. However, the originality and uniqueness of the product is not as important in the academic world as in the art world. Research reproducing earlier results with new data is acceptable and encouraged. To be the first one to publish a new finding is, however, very important in the academic profession. Manuals and methods are also far more prominent in academia compared to art and most other cultural fields.

Impressions from a local art world

In this section I will provide decades of impressions acquired by a non-participant observer of a local Swedish art world. So, let us go back to the gallery visitors quoted in the beginning to see in what context they are located. What did they reveal about the local subfield of art?

The national art field is comprised of local peripheral fields strongly subordinated to the field in the capital city. Endless comparisons are made between the local and the capital city fields. There is an air of status attributed to those artists who graduated from the Royal Institute of Art or the next prestigious one The University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. The local art schools make up an implicit rank order of educations, and two schools are considered as locally outstanding. The private galleries and the public museums form a rank order of sites for exhibitions, according to the horizontal dimension autonomy versus heteronomy, mainly operationalized in the common discourses as the degree of commercialization and demand for formal education or not. During the years there have been three or four private galleries classified as more prestigious and autonomous. The vertical dimension is materialised by small galleries connected to the art schools versus the museums and a few established galleries. Membership in a local art collective renders some symbolical capital, and they also help develop important networks. Private galleries usually have a number of “house” artists and they are referred to as the artists in their (horse) stall. As a “house” artist you are expected to stick to this gallery for as long a time as the gallery owner decides. (At a distance of 300 km according to one informant.) To use another gallery, within a certain area in the local field, is severely sanctioned.

The on-going discourses and private discussions reproduce the classifications and the rank orders in terms of genres, styles and methods, for example visual, performance, conceptual arts; non-applied and applied; arts and crafts; drawing, painting (oil, acryl, watercolour), sculpture (stone, metal, other materials); video; ceramics; textile; etc. One informant contributes with this illustrative picture on the status differences of genres and the bases for it in the field of arts, locally as well as in general:

Watercolour is not for real. To be a woman, middle age, lacking art education, painting watercolour, and on top of that perhaps painting flowers—and you are out. There is a whole world of prejudices around this “amateur sport” for women, degrading the status of this art form. However, the newly established watercolour museum may slowly change this.

In addition, also eminent painters may improve the status of a method or a genre, as in the quoted conversation. Reviews in the local daily newspaper on exhibitions are of major importance for an artist’s position in the field. The critics are well known and their networking is critically scrutinized. Reviews in national leading daily newspapers are fiercely sought after. Exhibitions in the capital city field are very desirable and imply the force of symbolic values in the local capital field as well as the national field of art. The competition in the fields continues.

Conclusion

So, what kind of explanations may be given to the increase of the price of the particular watercolour painting the two visitors in the gallery above encountered? Firstly, according to the humanistic tradition of art, references to the talents of the artist would be explanation enough, indicated by the first comment. Secondly, and closely related, references to skills acquired in education or practice would be another explanation. Thirdly, the status attributed to individuals and positions could

be yet another explanation. Fourthly, taking some of the field context into consideration, for example a commercial heteronomous gallery, the market demand from the economic elite would explain the increase in price. Fifthly, accounting more for the field context in terms of the career and branding of the artist, including certain venues for exhibitions as well as critical acclaim and so on, the symbolic capital in a reversed economy is a fundamental and robust explanation, as the second comment indicates. The creation of symbolic capital and symbolic closure is of major importance for professional occupations and professional fields in general. The field of arts and other fields in the cultural sector are excellent examples of these subtle and delicate productive processes.

References

- Abbott, A. (1988). *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bale, K. (2009). *Eстетikk. En innføring*. Oslo: Pax förlag.
- Becker, H. (1982). *Art worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J-C. [1964] (1979). *The inheritors*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J-C. [1970] (2000). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of culture production. Essays on art and literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Konstens regler. Det litterära fältets uppkomst och struktur*. [The rules of art. Genesis and structure of the literary field]. Stockholm: Symposion.
- Brante, T. (2011). Professions as science based occupations. *Professions & Professionalism* 1(1), 1-17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.v1i1.147>
- Brante, T. (2014) *Den professionella logiken. Hur vetenskap och praktik förenas i det moderna kunskapsamhället*. [The Professional Logic. How science and practice is united in the Modern Society of Knowledge]. Stockholm: Liber.
- Broady, D. (1990). *Sociologi och epistemologi. Om Pierre Bourdieus författarskap och den historiska epistemologin*. [Sociology and Epistemology. On Pierre Bourdieu's work and the historical epistemology]. Stockholm: HSL förlag.
- Broady, D. (Ed.). (1998). *Kulturens fält: en antologi*. [The Field of Culture: an anthology]. Gothenburg: Daidalos.
- Broady, D. (2012). Förord. [Preface]. I M. Gustavsson, M. Börjesson & M. Edling (Eds.), *Konstens omvända ekonomi. Tillgångar inom utbildning och fält 1938-2008*. [The reversed economy of art]. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Carlhed, C. (2011). Fält, habitus och kapital som kompletterande redskap i professionsforskning. *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift* 2011, 4, 283-300. <http://svt.forsa.nu/Artiklar-SocialVetenskaplig-Tidskrift.aspx>

- Childress, C., & Gerber, A. 2015. What's an MFA in creative writing for?: The uses of a "useless" credential in the U.S. literary field. *Professions and Professionalism*, 5(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.868>
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*. 94 Supplement, 95-120. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/228943>
- Collins, R. (1979). *The credential society. An historical sociology of education and stratification*. Orlando: Academic Press.
- Edling, M. (2012). Att förbereda för "rummet av möjligheter". Om skolornas antagning, fria utbildning och starka fältberoende. [To prepare for "the space of options". On recruitment, free education and strong field dependence of art schools]. In M. Gustavsson, M. Börjesson & M. Edling (Eds.), *Konstens omvända ekonomi. Tillgångar inom utbildning och fält 1938-2008*. [The reversed economy of art] (pp. 40-82). Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Edling, M. & Börjesson, M. (2008). Om frihet, begåvning och karismatiskt lärande inom den högre bildkonstnärliga utbildningen. *Praktiske Grunde. Tidskrift for kultur- og samfundsvitenskap*, 1, 66-93.
- Ericson, D. (1988). *In the Stockholm art world*. Stockholm: Department of Anthropology, University of Stockholm.
- Flisbäck, M. (2006). *Att lära sig konstens regler. En sociologisk studie av osäkra framtidsinvesteringar*. Göteborg Studies in Sociology no 30. Göteborg: Department of Sociology, Göteborg University.
- Flisbäck, M. & Lund, A. (2010). Konst- och kultursektorn—ett pionjärområde för ett arbetsliv i omvandling?, *Arbetsliv i omvandling*, 4, 1-13.
- Flisbäck, M. & Lund, A. (2015). Artists' autonomy and professionalization in a New Cultural Policy landscape. *Professions and Professionalism*, 5(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.867>
- Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class. And how it's transforming work, leisure and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Freidson, E. (2001). *Professionalism: The third logic*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Gustavsson, M., Börjesson, M. & Edling, M. (2012a) Inledning. [Introduction]. In M. Gustavsson, M. Börjesson & M. Edling (Eds.), *Konstens omvända ekonomi. Tillgångar inom utbildning och fält 1938-2008*. [The reversed economy of art] (pp. 11-36). Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Gustavsson, M., Börjesson, M. & Edling, M. (2012b). *Konstens omvända ekonomi. Tillgångar inom utbildning och fält 1938-2008*. [The reversed economy of art]. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Harrits, G. S. (2014). Professional closure beyond state authorization. *Professions and Professionalism*, 4(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.567>
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: The commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: The University of California Press.
- Howkins, J. (2001). *The creative economy: How people make money from ideas*. London: Penguin.
- Hughes, E. C. (1958). *Men and their work*. New York: Free Press.
- Lair, D. J., Sullivan, K., & Cheney, K. (2005). Marketization and the recasting of the professional self: The rhetoric and ethics of personal branding. *Management communication quarterly*, 18(3), 307-343. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0893318904270744>

- Lin, N. (2001). *Social capital: A theory of social structure and action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815447>
- Lindström, S. (2015). Constructions of professional subjectivity at the fine arts college. *Professions and Professionalism*, 5(2).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.869>
- Mansfield, E. (2002). *Art history and its institutions: Foundations of a discipline*. London: Routledge.
- Molander, A., & Terum L. I. (2008). Profesjonsstudier—en introduksjon. [The study of professions—Introduction]. In A. Molander & L. I. Terum (Eds.), Profesjonsstudier [The study of professions] (pp. 13-28). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Olofsson, G. (2011). Högskoleutbildning, yrke och profession. [Higher education, occupation and professions]. In G. Olofsson & O. Petersson (Eds.), *Med sikte på profession: Akademiska yrkesutbildningar vid ett nytt universitet*. [Aiming for a profession: Academic vocational educations at a new university]. Lund: Arkiv förlag.
- Putnam, R. D. (2002). *Democracies in flux: The evolution of social capital in contemporary society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/0195150899.001.0001>
- Ridgeway, C. L. (2014). Why status matters for inequality. *American Sociological Review* 79(1), 1-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0003122413515997>
- Saks, M. (2010). Analyzing the professions: The case for the neo-Weberian approach. *Comparative Sociology*, 9(6), 887–915.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/156913310X522624>
- Saks, M. (2012). Defining a profession: The role for knowledge and expertise. *Professions and Professionalism*, 2(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.v2i1.151>
- Sciully, D. (2010). Structural and institutional invariance in professions and professionalism. In L. G. Svensson & J. Evetts (Eds.), *Sociology of professions. Continental and anglo-saxon traditions* (pp. 33-74). Gothenburg: Daidalos,
- SOU 2009:16 (2009). *Betänkande av kulturutredningen*. [Report from the commission on culture]. Stockholm: Kulturdepartementet. Retrieved from: <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2009/02/sou-200916/>
- Standing, G. (2011). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Svensson, L. G. (2003). Yrken, professioner, klassifikationer och status [Occupations, professions, classifications and status]. In M. Blomsterberg & T. Soidre (Eds.), *Reflektioner. Perspektiv i forskning om arbetsliv och arbetsmarknad*. [Reflections. Perspectives in research on working life and labour markets]. Research report no 132. Göteborg: Department of Sociology, University of Gothenburg.
- Svensson, L. G. (2011.) Profession, organisation, kollegialitet och ansvar. [Profession, organization, collegiality and accounts]. *Socialvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, 4, 301-319. Retrieved from: <http://svt.forsa.nu/Artiklar-SocialVetenskaplig-Tidskrift.aspx>

- Svensson, L. G., & Ulfsdotter Eriksson, Y. (2009). *Yrkesstatus: En sociologisk studie av hur yrken uppfattas och värderas*. [Occupational status: A sociological study on receptions and valuations of occupations]. Göteborg: Department of Sociology, Göteborg University. Retrieved from: http://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/19737/1/gupea_2077_19737_1.pdf
- Ulfsdotter Eriksson, Y., & Linde, M. (2014). "Being" or "doing" a profession. Work as a matter of social identity. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies*, 8(1), 33-43.
- Weber, M. [1922] (1983). *Ekonomi och samhälle* [Economy and Society]. Vol. 1. Uppsala: Argos.
- Zolberg, V. (1990). *Constructing a sociology of the arts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511557712>