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### A BOURDIEUSIAN STUDY OF THE USE OF MEDIA BY CHINESE PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS

**Abstract:** This paper studies the media phenomenon of “public intellectual” in China and tries to show it entails not only the result of the intervention of mass production of cultural field by the small scale production of intellectual field, but also the necessity of acquiring symbolic capital on behalf of the dominant class of the political-economic field. The engagements of Chinese public intellectuals are socially divided rather than publicly oriented, and the media field under the domination of the political-economic field working as a cultural intermediary inclines to support neo-liberalist discourses about them. Bourdieu’s theories of *champs*, *Habitus* and *capitals* are applied to analyze the media phenomenon of public intellectuals in Chinese context and the paper addresses this question in three aspects. First, the emergence of public intellectuals in the mass production of cultural field and how its power relationship with different *champs* including media field and political-economic field threatens the autonomy of intellectual for public engagement. Second, the competitions of accumulating capitals by intellectuals in the media field and social field, and how it affects their unified engagement. Third, how the practice of *Habitus* by public intellectuals on the media either improve or declines their competition for symbolic capitals, and the potential antagonism caused by the dislocation of the practice of their habitus with some groups’ positions in the social field. This paper uses mainly ethnography and textual analysis to study the public intellectuals’ media program and text, and online research is applied to study the audience reaction in the social field.

**Key words:** public intellectual, field, *Habitus*, cultural capitals, symbolic capital

## Introduction

The public intellectual is a term with an ambiguous definition and it derives from scholars such as Posner and Said, who have carried out a critique of the intellectual field in recent years. According to their definitions, the public intellectual is generally a kind of intellectual who is concerned about public affairs and could use their professionalism for public engagement, which means they have to be intellectual in a certain professional field and then they need to engage in public affairs by using this professionalism.<sup>1</sup> Intellectuals have more cultural capital than ordinary people, such as their professional knowledge and prestige, and they could use them to influence on public affairs through the sub-fields of massive cultural production, which would increase their symbolic power which could be converted into economic-political power.

The cultural production of the public intellectual works within the small-scale production of the intellectual field and the mass production of the cultural field. The small scale production of intellectual field is highly homogenous and oriented towards the intellectuals and other groups with plenty of cultural capital, but the public intellectual's production is associated more with the mass production of the media and cultural field, which is the main focus of this paper. The mass production of the public intellectuals' cultural products such as media program, books, and public actions allow them to achieve more social and cultural success than their academic peers, but it also raises the question of intellectual autonomy and public impact. Bourdieu believes<sup>2</sup> the autonomy of intellectual field is the precondition of the possible engagement of the intellectual, which causes the quest of the intellectual's autonomy to take into account the variation of power of the cultural field, including the media which is infiltrative in various fields. The lack of autonomy of intellectual field would lead to the split and decline of the intellectual engagement, because such engagement would not be independent and powerful under the powerful intervention of other fields.

In *On Television*, Bourdieu analyzed a kind of media intellectuals who gain great reputation and also threaten the self-regulation of the academic field. He believes<sup>3</sup> the media routine shapes public conviction of certain academics as experts on certain issues, but other academics who really have something to say to the public especially young academics come to be neglected by the same media. Bourdieu himself also tried<sup>4</sup> to avoid to be manipulated by the media or what he calls the "journalist field" when he is speaking as a public intellectual in the media. "Bourdieu gave his lectures via the audiovisual service of the College de France, and was not restricted with regard to time, topic or technical requirements. In his own words: 'I have a control of the instruments of production.'"<sup>5</sup> When a public intellectual who is originally from the academic or other

professional field enters into the journalistic field, his / her autonomy will be eroded by the economic force of the media as well as the invisible structure of its field. The public intellectual's interaction with the public today largely relies on the mass media. They could participate in media discussion, interview, salon, civil movements, but none of these activities could get rid of the massive productive force of media.

This paper intends to use Bourdieu's theories of field, Habitus and capital to study the use of media by Chinese public intellectuals and it tries to answer how intellectuals interact with different fields in specific Habitus for capital reproduction and what kind of problem they are facing. It addresses this question in three aspects. First, it analyzes the emergence of public intellectual in the massive production of media field and its intervention of intellectual autonomy. Second, the competition of accumulating capitals by intellectuals in the media field and social field and how it affects their unified engagement. Third, it shows how the public intellectuals' habitus work in the mass reproduction of capitals and the antagonism caused by the dislocation of their habitus in social field.

### **The Emergence of Public Intellectuals in the Massive Production of Media Field and its Effect on Public Engagement**

The Chinese public intellectual is a new phenomenon in recent years, along with the development of public sphere and the rising awareness of civil consciousness. The phrase "public intellectual" firstly caught public attention on the pro-liberalist newspaper *Southern People Weekly Magazine* in 2005, which praised "fifty influential Chinese public intellectual of the year." According to the magazine, public intellectuals are "intellectuals having academic background or professional knowledge, actors of social criticism, engagers of public affairs, and idealists who have critical thoughts and moral responsibility."<sup>6</sup> They included scholars, independent intellectuals, media staff, social activists, writers, and artists, but they generally are labeled with a similar ideological view of what the newspaper called "political right wing, economic left wing."

Its listed names are divided into eleven categories. There are economists who criticize China's governmental lead economy and the unfair political-economical system, jurists who criticize the legal issues, historians, political scientists, sociologists who defend the right of peasants and weak social groups, writers who write critical articles and columns on social phenomena, scientists who engaged in scientific issues, media staff and, finally, columnists. The group of public intellectuals, which includes communists, liberalists, new-left wingers, and independent critics, is not ideologically coherent as the newspaper suggested, but they have similar action and participation on public affairs.

Almost all of them have critical papers published on the *Southern Weekly* or have media exposure on this pro-liberalist media group of so the called "south-faction," which refers to several media that have pro-liberalist inclination in South China and Hong Kong. From 2005 to 2009, the magazine continued to appraise public intellectuals, and public intellectuals have thus become well known in Chinese society.

The semi-market driven media group like *South Weekly* found that those intellectuals who appeal to the public would bring them great profit, and they continue to market them by strengthening the relationship between their professional media images and liberalist discourse. The presence of the public intellectuals facilitates media to accumulate cultural capital or authority on certain expertise field in order to attract audience. For example, the Kwangtung TV channel has a talk show run by a famous independent economist Lang Xian Ping, and his reputation in finance and macro economy greatly improved the reputation of this local TV channel's critical image and professionalism in the economic area. Hesmondhalgh argues<sup>7</sup> that the mainstream media which belongs to the large scale cultural production field usually give autonomy to some creative producers with high cultural taste with the purpose of gaining symbolic capital among some specific and well-educated demographic groups that belong to subfields of small cultural production. The relative autonomy of intervention of the intellectual field is provided by the local and commercial media dominated by mainstream media corporations in order to strengthen the power of their symbolic dominations in economic issues in this case.

It was not only the new middle class and bourgeois elites that needed have more cultural capital to assert their rights and needs, but also the working class and farmers who are largely underrepresented and resent the social system. The potential social division of the audience of public intellectuals indicates the *universal illusio* of the dominant group in public field, and the public intellectuals try to universalize themselves so that their value would be synonymous to the field.<sup>8</sup> Their audience identifies with the *charisma ideology*,<sup>9</sup> which Bourdieu uses to refer to the dehistoricized cultural consensus exerted by the dominant class of a social field. The public intellectuals argue that they speak for "the people," which is a classless term of the people / government binary opposition, and that they play the role of the representative of the people as opposed to those "institutionalized intellectuals," who speak for the government. The people / government binary opposition derives from the liberalist discourse of Chinese institution, and it is being largely considered as "natural" in the civil discussion in public sphere.

Therefore, the public concern of those intellectuals usually built their reputation by criticizing government and its ideology. Every cause of

social issues could be traced by those intellectuals to the dominant power of the government, while actions or speeches of particular social groups of the civil society are always presumed by them to be the people's voice, which is, of course, correct. This binary opposition legitimates the public intellectual as some objective observer who could act in a position out of the binary opposition structure and guard people's interest without self interest. However, Bourdieu argues<sup>10</sup> that no intellectual could be totally independent from their social position and professional field, and that they also engage in an invisible competition of capturing symbolic capital and reproducing capitals. The title "public intellectual" is especially questionable in China, when it usually links to the ideological dissidents rather than mere engagers from academia. In the nominated public intellectual list of the *Southern People Weekly Magazine*, there are names like Ai WeiWei, Yu Jie, Li ChenPeng, who are political dissidents. Moreover, public intellectuals today act generally in a similar way by challenging governmental authority and its power by means of calling institutional reform. Simultaneously, they also question the power of the mass and try to "enlighten" them with democratic culture.

With the homogenized actions and stances of the public intellectuals in their engagement, the unification of intellectuals is built upon the basis of the same target: the government and the state institution, including the policy, the law, etc. The "publicity" of intellectuals on media is put into question, and the judgment of a female fraud entrepreneur Wu Ying is a good example of it. Wu Ying is accused of capital raising fraud and being sentenced to death in 2010. Her family and she could not accept this sentence and they appealed the case to the higher court. In the meantime, her father opened his Sina Micro-blog account and began to use media to exert pressure on the judiciary system. Many intellectuals began to plead for her on the media especially on micro-blogs, and their idea is that Wu's crime does not deserve death penalty since she is only a victim of the unfair economic law of capital raising. There were also wide spread rumors about the local government officials' involvement in her capital raising, and the public showed sympathy with the suspect Wu.

Wei Jia and Li Juan studied<sup>11</sup> the pleading campaign for Wu on micro-blogs and they found there is a highly homogeneous social and class identity of those who plead for her, that is, scholars, media staff, entrepreneurs and lawyers. There are only 10 related posts that are not posted by those groups among 82 posts, and 32 posts are posted by intellectuals, including 26 economists and jurists, and 6 humanist scientists. They are all kinds of opinion leaders on micro-blogs who have a large number of followers and, thus, powerful mobilization ability. WeiWei and Li Juan claimed those intellectuals are motivated by their own class and social position to assert rights for those certain groups

rather than do it for public goods. They also imply that people's voice on micro-blogs could be manufactured by those special interest groups under media hegemony, and the public could be easily deceived by it as a public consensus. As a result, the misrecognition of public intellectuals could be the result of media hegemony, but the rich symbolic capital that those intellectuals accumulated under the media hegemony is also a source of their public power.

### **The Competition of Accumulating Capitals by Intellectuals in the Media Field and Social Field, and How it Affects their Unified Engagement**

Media is an efficient way of gaining symbolic capital for those who lack power in the professional field, as they only need to reproduce their successful discourse in different issues. Economist Lang Xian Ping works with several mainstream media including Shanghai television channel, Kwangtung TV channel, and China Business Network, as an economic commentator. Lang gains symbolic capital in these programs as a public intellectual and he began to criticize social and culture issues, which led to the convergence of different intellectual issues into his economic discourse. The symbolic capital of his professional prestige, visionary and public concerns built on TV, allows him to comment other academic issues that are not his professional area, and this led to the public questioning of his professionalism in return. However, his public image is built upon his bold criticism which is favored by the media, but he does not differ largely from those technocrats who reduce problems into technically economical-political questions and call for more effective technical settlements.

He gives lectures around the country, and many of his audience are governmental officials and entrepreneurs who are dominant in economic field. Lang's success owes to his left-wing rhetoric, which justifies his criticism on the defects of Chinese economic system for public good. He criticizes the reform of national enterprises and suggests that political reform could not change the economic problem. He uses ideological terms such as "imperialism"<sup>12</sup> to warn against the defects of Chinese national capitalism exposed in front of international capitalism, and he professes those middle class audiences in many program about the economic risk they are facing. His reputation reflects the taste of his audience for the economically dominant class, the new middle class at most, but those underclass audiences misrecognize his symbolic charisma as a critical economist speaking for ordinary citizens and national interests rather than interpret him in the same way as dominant classes.

Mainstream media such as local and commercial televisions also invite intellectuals for talk shows or interviews, but those intellectuals' influence on mainstream media is limited by self-censorship and audience coverage.

Using "Behind The Headlines," a Hong Kong based Phoenix TV station's Mandarin talk show which is recorded in Beijing and invites intellectuals as an example, the talk show's timeliness topics and intellectual atmosphere attracts massive audience. The intellectuals presented there use fashionable words for discussing and analyzing issues with their own professional knowledge. The talk show could only be watched in Beijing and some Kwangtung cities, and its broadcast is usually being interrupted by the authority due to "sensitive content." However, most mainland audiences could watch it online and comment on their official site.

Censorship also works in a subtle way from a journalistic point of view in this program and requires the participator to circumvent in its rhetoric. The TV show has only twenty minutes except advertisement time, and the advertisement could be used to cut the speaker's speech when he or she "hits" the forbidden area. The emcee is good at changing the intellectuals' attention into different directions and using humor to depolitize their rhetoric. Intellectuals' criticism thus become appropriate to the audience under a kind of negotiable consensus, which shows this program reproduces dominant discourses with the *doxosophe* of the intellectuals.<sup>13</sup> This program greatly contributed to the public prestige of some media intellectuals such as Liang WenDao who is also a columnist of *South Weekly*. Liang was nominated by the *Southern People Weekly Magazine* one of the influential public intellectuals of the year in 2009. He also had a collection of his column articles published there and eventually became busy in giving lectures in Universities and Salons. Liang's success shows how the appropriation of symbolic power from the media field to cultural field, intellectual field and even political field greatly sways the autonomy of these fields.

Most intellectuals today have their own blogs or micro-blogs that have a large number of visits and comments. Meanwhile, few public intellectuals choose to establish their own official websites except some on their professional information, and most of them use commercial website services for public engagement. One exception is the "Bullog" established by the English teacher Luo YongHao, which is one of the famous websites of intellectual criticism and has specifically classified categories for each intellectual domain, but it has been shut down by the government in 2009. Online media today is still largely dominated by those domestic big websites such as Sina, Baidu, and SoHu that conglomerate most Chinese "Netizens," and these websites' news still largely come from similar official sources and have the professional structure of the media field.

Bourdieu pointed out<sup>14</sup> that media usually exchange information with other media, which led to the homogenization of media information. Those online media also functions in traditional ways and they would

post one intellectual's statement after others have done it, and their media report is also usually homogenized into one version. As a result, one homogeneous media representation of intellectuals is created by the conglomeration of online media as suggested in Bourdieu's *On Television*. What is more, these domestic media all have a self-censorship mechanism under the online surveillance system. The domination of these online media strengthens the power of censorship of intellectual speech.

Whereas intellectuals are not largely disempowered by the online Panopticon system<sup>15</sup>; on the contrary, they rely on it to obtain symbolic capital today. It renders them more chance of being recognized by the public, and a Chinese word "Chao Zuo," which means promotion for one's interest is also characteristic of the action of these intellectuals. "Chao Zuo" manifests in the forms of astonishing speeches and actions, debating with other intellectuals, and even quarrel with other intellectuals or public figures on the media. However, "Chao Zuo" as a marketing idea is difficult to be verified as a motivation in a non-economic field, especially when it is conducted by intellectuals who are considered to be relatively autonomous regarding the economic field. The application of "Chao Zuo" by the public intellectuals reflects the erosion of intellectual field by economic field in contemporary China, and some intellectuals become increasingly involved in commercial activities. The seeking of exclusive news of online media and the audience interaction on the internet allows intellectuals to expose themselves easily and become well-known, and their shocking critical speeches or behavior will become a kind of scoop like entertainment stars. The difference between online "ChaoZuo" and TV marketing conducted by the journalistic field is that online "ChaoZuo" does not rely on the taste or cultural power of media elite or journalists, but it could be done as a daily "news," in the sense of what Funkhouser called the "pseudo news" which is constructed for special interest groups.<sup>16</sup>

In the new media world, this exchange of information could be done easily by the users through the "share" function of the social media, which causes online information of intellectual field to be more standardized. Micro-blog, the Chinese version of Twitter, is the most popular social media in China today, and many intellectuals use it to express their own ideas and engage public affairs. Micro-blog is still developed by those online media giants such as Sina, TenCent, and the censorship still works effectively. Wu implies<sup>17</sup> that the private and public boundary is blurred by the technological feature of micro-blogging, and it is much more friendly to multimedia information. It could be also used for "Chao Zuo," but it enables people to express themselves directly to the public and engage in social field without journalistic intervention. Public intellectuals could call for public attention on some issues by posting an item or



sharing an item, and their post would be shared by hundreds of millions of users around and outside the country. "Netizens" could share a post in different social media and forums, which often leads to great social impact in China. Intellectual news sometimes could trigger social discussion on some problems, but it also might drive public attention from some more urgent problems to some depolitized issues that are usually about the symbolic power of the intellectuals.

For example, the dispute between Fang Zhouzi and Han Han shows the competition for symbolic capital between public intellectuals. Fang who is a scientist was being nominated by *Southern People Weekly Magazine* in 2005 as one of the fifty influential public intellectuals in China for his dedication to fight against counterfeit. Han Han is a rebellious writer who is famous for his works criticizing the mainstream society and he became a famous public figure after writing a series of critical articles on Chinese society beginning with 2008. Fang doubted his works' ingenuity publicly and believes Han has other persons to help him writing his articles, and he even uses scientific methods to verify his hypothesis. Han's response is to accuse Fang for libel and to invite "netizens" to go to his home to watch him writing an article.<sup>18</sup>

Whether it is a "Chao Zuo" incident or not, the dispute then becomes a show of intellectual competition for symbolic capital and it distracts the "netizens'" attention from some other more important social issues. After searching key words "Fang Zhouzi, Han Han" from the start of the dispute of January 19 to February 20, 2012 on Micro-blog, there are 19298 items about this issues, while there are only 3561 items about Tai Wan election campaign at the same time. What is more, after searching the international well-known "Chong Qing incident" in which a Chinese police official enters into the US consulate for protection, the latter only has 2797 corresponding items in the period of February 8<sup>th</sup> to February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The competition between the public intellectuals is not only the result of the intervention of economic field on social field, such as "Chao Zuo," but also is the caused by the split of intellectual habitus, which usually requires them to take different reactions.

### **The Function of Public Intellectuals' Habitus in the Mass Reproduction of Capital and the Dislocation of Habitus in the Public Engagement of Social Field**

Bourdieu's notion of Habitus refers to "the partly conscious 'take in' of rules, values and dispositions, which he defines as the 'durable installed generative principle of regulated improvisation which produces practices.'"<sup>19</sup> Bourdieu uses Habitus to solve the lack of autonomy and practices of subject in past objectivist social science. Habitus is something that constructs the subject and is being produced in its practice within its

cultural history. The Habitus of an agent is constructed by its own education, social identities and community values, etc., but the agent is able to improvise its Habitus through practice and even change it. The Habitus of an intellectual could be high class taste and professional knowledge, and the intellectual could also improvise their professionalism in media and reproduce their taste or cultural capital in a low-culture way. The Habitus of public intellectuals is improvised from the academic to the media and social fields through their practice of discourses and actions, which greatly transforms the reproduction method of the Habitus and makes the domination of cultural structure invisible. For example, Intellectuals like Lang and Liang both use academic discourse for public criticism and maintain their professional dispositions as calm and visionary at the same time, but they also improvise their habitus according to the rules of cultural field and social field, though their habitus are largely different.

Lang was a former professor in a US university and he always wears suits and ties when he is on media. His American education background is inscribed in his habitus and influences the way of responding to economic questions as well as his straightforward way of communication. He would talk about the backwardness of governmental and company management and ideas by using humors and provocative speeches. Stressing his profound knowledge of the Western economic system and his capitalist education background, he is not afraid to say any harsh words about the Chinese economy, except when directly criticizing politics. He usually boldly questions other Chinese intellectual's ideas and provocatively interrupts or questions other presenters in his program.

On the other hand, he improvises his Habitus in order to fit the Chinese context with his leftist-ideology. Also, his habitus does not prevent him from using Chinese humors and words such as "comrade" when he is facing Chinese ordinary audience who does not have much professional knowledge of his domain. Unlike some professors hiding behind "ivory towers," he could build easy communication with his audience, and his symbolic charisma in the field appears highly convincible backing up by his media forensics. No matter how inconsistent and deficient his viewpoints in the perspective of intellectual field on the media, his media image depicts a conscious and responsible man towards the public goods and national interests, and his influence on government and entrepreneurs grows swiftly.

Compared to Lang, Liang WenDao is a Hong Kong intellectual who is also a media staff and social activist. His cultural capital mainly comes from his former academic background in Hong Kong's University, and his dual identity as born in Hong Kong and raised up in Taiwan causes his Habitus to be different from mainland intellectuals. He was once a

philosophy student in Hong Kong and was greatly influenced by intellectuals like Foucault and Bourdieu, which causes his rhetoric to be much more like philosophical speeches derived from the academic field. Liang is a Buddhist and he often wears traditional Chinese suit and round glasses, which makes him look like an intellectual in Republic area before 1949. He uses fluent Mandarin Chinese in the mainland's talk shows and uses Cantonese dialect when speaking in Hong Kong. He always attracts audience with his special and witty view on social topics on media programs and he would also use popular folk humor in his speeches. In the program "Behind The Headlines," he usually displays his question of some social issues in the name of "common sense" and then indicates how that "common sense" works in Hong Kong or Western countries. His published best seller is also called "Common Sense", and states that China's social problem results from the lack of common sense. His rhetoric deals with specific questions in Chinese society to deliver his universal values and rules, which is an alteration of his Habitus in order to fit in the mainland public sphere environment.

As a staff within the Phoenix TV station, he also runs other cultural programs and builds his prestige among the audience who aspire to cultural consumption. He behaves in a gentle manner which is thought to pertain to the Republic manners, which rarely exist today in mainland China. Some of his audience stated after his public lecture that "He is gentle and erudite.....You will find that people can reach such a state of being calm and gentle at the same time and have such personal charm."<sup>20</sup> His improvisation of his Habitus in mainland China turns him to be a gentle and transcendental intellectual with a profound understanding of Chinese society and social responsibility.

The improvisation of habitus by Lang and Liang both contributed to their ascending reputation in mainland public sphere, and the intellectuals strengthen their influence on certain public issues through the improvisation of habitus in different fields. In the case of WuYing, if we leave WeiWei and LiJuan's Gramscian construction aside, the actions of public intellectuals are improvisations of their specific habitus of different fields in order to achieve the unification power of intellectuals. Economists such as Wu XiaoBo questioned the legal reference of Wu Ying's crime and suggested the "inevitability" of this kind of crime. Apart from their close relationships to entrepreneurs, their intellectual *doxa* enforced their habitus of supporting individual entrepreneurs and oppose state power. Jurists use this issue to criticize the judicial system and they insist that the popular plea for WuYing should be taken account in the judicial sentence. Pro-liberalist institution is the *doxa* of most Chinese jurists, which integrates with their belief in defending the rights of the individual. Many of them also hold the view that death penalty should be

abolished in the economic field, while it should remain valid for corrupt officials. It also shows the interference of the political field and judicial field by the veiled *doxa* of the intellectual field, and the dominant group of intellectual field will exert its symbolic power on other fields.

The neoliberalist discourse prevails among these intellectuals, and the binary opposition of citizen / government, derived from the people / government dichotomy, is easily brought into the construction of this issue. For instance, Wu Ying, a fraud capitalist, is portrayed as a martyr of citizens. As dominant intellectuals perform as individual citizens, the distinction between people and government is reproduced by their habitus. Phelan argues<sup>21</sup> that the sedimentation of neoliberalist media habitus led to the reproduction of “normal” news practice, and it is the dislocation of Habitus and social position in the social field that led to antagonism and social change rather than being homogenized into the sedimentation.

The development of the dominant groups of the political-economic field causes the adjustment of relative inferior intellectual and media fields, and the habitus of intellectuals leads them to unconsciously act as the speaker of those groups. Those institutionalized intellectuals who want to gain symbolic capital within the intellectual institution would try to justify actions of the state system by criticizing the same issues criticized by public intellectuals.

Nevertheless, the Fang and Han dispute case indicates a dislocation of the *doxa* of social field and the intellectual habitus. According to online voting on the Micro-blog, more netizens support Han than Fang. One most popular voting suggests there are 2803 persons voting for Han, accounting for 74.4% of the voting population, but there are only 405 persons supporting Fang.<sup>22</sup> Han Han’s mass support comes from his relative popular background, because he did not receive higher education after quitting high school. He becomes a writer and car racer, and he is considered to be a representative of the new Chinese generation brought up under the one child policy.<sup>23</sup> Although he is not an intellectual, he engages public affairs like a public intellectual, which makes this young writer a more influential figure among netizens than some other public intellectuals.

The transformation of Han’s habitus from a writer to a public critic still works within his popular background with his rebellious consciousness, but the question from Fang made him perform his habitus by using the legal force which belongs to his writer’s habitus and is in contract with his popular background. He also invited netizens to his home for inspecting his writing, which derives from his populist habitus. The accusation of Fang then evoked the resentment of netizens who were convinced Han is a kind of “true opinion leader,”<sup>24</sup> especially for the young. Whereas,

Fang's intellectual *doxa* as "scientific" is being questioned in the social field, and his insistence on questioning (derived from his intellectual habitus) only causes his alienation from the netizens. As a result, the improvisation of Han's habitus in social field credits Han's symbolic capital and decreases the prestige of the public intellectual.

The micro blog offers the intellectuals great power to expand their habitus in various fields and accumulate symbolic capital in the name of public conscience. Netizens communicate about public concerns when they share, comment or @ their post, while it often causes disputes or even quarrel them and the intellectuals, which suggests that the public consensus represented by the public intellectual is always split in social positions. Many intellectuals further alienate themselves from their academic field and largely rely on their symbolic capital to discuss some issues that are competently out of their domain. What is more, they could not stop engaging in some issues out of their reach and knowledge, because their Habitus requires them to reproduce symbolic capital with their superior culture capital.

Nevertheless, the netizens are often unsatisfied about the inconsistency and "falsehood" of the speeches of the intellectuals and they constantly mock and criticize the latter. For example, the professors are called "roaring beasts" and experts are called "brick expert" in Chinese, which shows that there is, indeed, a crisis of the prestige of the intellectual field in the social field, as well as a dislocation of the intellectuals' habitus with certain groups' social positions.

Benson argues<sup>25</sup> that the deviant trajectory is one main reason of the mismatch between the habitus and the social position, which could threaten or weaken the field. He addresses the disability caused by the dislocation within a field, and the mismatch of social position of the agent with his habitus would cause his new reaction on the field. The dislocation of netizens' habitus in the media or cultural field dominated by intellectual *doxa* not only shows in their different understanding and interpreting of social issues, but is also embedded deeply in their difference of capital. In the case of Han and Fang's dispute, the netizens' opposition of Fang is also a result of the distrust of the intellectual's position and its representative power. Han, who has relatively less cultural capital and generally opposes intellectual *doxa*, could use netizens' words for massive cultural production, and his refusal of the "public intellectual" tag enables him to move closer to ordinary netizens.

Although Chinese public intellectuals demonstrate the potential of symbolic intervention in public affairs, they are mostly framing social issues in a neo-liberalist discourse with the intervention of the economical field. This indicates that public intellectuals could not act as an objective observer; on the contrary, their behaviors are always constrained by

interferences of other fields, including the media and political-economic field, as well as the habitus of their own field. The dislocation between certain groups' social positions and intellectuals' habitus also shows that the intellectual groups face the challenge of their mismatched habitus and positions in the social field. In the case of Fang and Han dispute, the netizens stood on the side of Han, who has much populist background and opposed Fang's intellectual *doxa*. The netizens generate their own opinion leader (Han) rather than identify with the media generated public intellectuals, and their misrecognition of public intellectuals is challenged by their self-reflexive practice.

In conclusion, the Chinese public intellectual emerges in the mass production of cultural field, especially the media field, and is a hybrid product of various fields, which causes its habitus to be shaped by the power of these fields and at the same time threaten their stability and autonomy. The media and intellectual field build a reciprocal relationship and disseminate the *doxa* in the social field. Therefore, their use of media becomes a way of accumulating their symbolic capitals, and their influence on the public usually turns into a kind of symbolic violence exerted by the media. Internet also has intervention from the media and other cultural fields, but it allows intellectuals to exert more public influence and communicate with groups of social field directly. The use of blogs, micro-blogs and on-line broadcasting facilitates the direct communication between intellectuals and netizens in the social field, but in the new mediated communication the dislocations seem to be enlarged. Research shows that the media function as a *cultural intermediary* in which the agents of public intellectuals' actions affect power balance in different fields, but more empiricist researches need to be done on the deviant groups of the social field to find out in what conditions the habitus of public intellectuals would mismatch those groups in the social field.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, Vintage Books, UK, 1994; Richard A. Posner, 2002, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, "The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of the Intellectual in the Modern World," in *Telos* 81 (1989): 99-110.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, "Cultural Literacy and the Field of the Media," retrieved July 9th 2012, from:

<http://reconstruction.eserver.org/042/schirato.htm>

- <sup>6</sup> *South Weekly*, Issue No.7, 2005, South Daily Media Group.
- <sup>7</sup> David Hesmondhalgh, "Bourdieu, the Media, and Cultural Production," in *Media, Culture & Society* 28 (March 2006): 221-2.
- <sup>8</sup> Jen Webb Jen et al., *Understanding Bourdieu* (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 26-27.
- <sup>9</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Bourdieu" 212.
- <sup>10</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Homo Academicus* (Paris: Minuit, 1984), 17-18.
- <sup>11</sup> Wei Jia Wang and Li Juan Yang, "'Wu Ying Case' and Party Spirit of Intellectuals on Microblog," *Open Times*, 2012, no. 5.
- <sup>12</sup> Lang XianPing, *Lang Xianping Speaks: New Imperialism in China* (Oriental publications, 2010).
- <sup>13</sup> Michael James Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Agent Provocateur* (London: Continuum, 2004), 152.
- <sup>14</sup> Bourdieu, *On Television*, 26-28.
- <sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1977).
- <sup>16</sup> He believes the agenda set could be deployed by some special interest groups for their commercial interests, and some unworthy incidents are deliberately chosen for news making. The result is that the audience will pay attention to their news in the long term, and the news becomes advertisement. Cited in J. Severin and W. Tankard, *Communication theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media* (Longerman Publisher USA, 1999), 263. This corresponds to Bourdieu's analysis of the symbolic violence of television, in which media deliberately constructs the reality which could mobilize or demobilize the audience (Bourdieu, *On Television*, 18-21).
- <sup>17</sup> Wu Yan, "Micro-Blogging as a Rapid Response News Service in Crisis Reporting: The 2011 WenZhou Train Crash," in *Journal of Journalism, Media, and Cultural Studies of Cardiff University*, no. 1 (June 2012): 4-5.
- <sup>18</sup> DanWei, "Han Han the novelist versus Fang Zhouzi the fraud-buster," retrieved July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from: <http://www.danwei.com/blog-fight-of-the-month-han-han-the-novelist-versus-fang-zhouzi-the-fraud-buster/>.
- <sup>19</sup> Jen Webb Jen et al., *Understanding Bourdieu* (Allen & Unwin, 2002), 36.
- <sup>20</sup> Duan LingYu, *In Search of the Largest Common Divisor: The Rhetoric of Liang Wendao* (Shanghai: ShangHai Culture, 2009).
- <sup>21</sup> Loncoln Dahlberg and Sean Phelan (eds.), *Discourse Theory and Critical Media Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 148.
- <sup>22</sup> "Fang ZhouZi VS Hanhan, who do you support?" Microblog vote, retrieved on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2012 from: <http://vote.weibo.com/vid=1394956&source=feed>
- <sup>23</sup> "Han Han - The 2011 TIME 100 Poll," *Time*, retrieved July 8<sup>th</sup> 2012, from: [http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2058044\\_2060338\\_2060109,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2058044_2060338_2060109,00.html)
- <sup>24</sup> Severn and Tankard, *Communication theories*, 228.
- <sup>25</sup> Rodney Benson, "Field Theory in Comparative Context: A New Paradigm for Media Studies," in *Theory and Society* 28, no. 3 (1999): 463-498.

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