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**Panel RC33.208 - Political Science in the Public Space: Comparing Experiences and Contexts
Sunday, July 20th, 17:00-18:45, Palais des Congrès, Room 522b.**

***The Many Faces of Political Science:
Orders, Uses and Effects of Scientific Knowledge within Three
Organizational Settings***

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As analysed by Pierre Favre (1989) in his *Naissances de la science politique en France, 1870-1914*, political science (at least in France) does not really make sense as a discipline. Since the creation of the Ecole Libre des Sciences politiques in 1871, there is no unified scientific field, no “founding father” such as Durkheim for sociology, no specific methodological revolution, no real struggle for the scientific power. More precisely, as he argued elsewhere, the academic discipline “does not make sense epistemologically” and “sciences do not own territories and boundaries since a discipline is in fact, at a given period, only a collection of researches that are often complementary but there are also very often isolated from each other or in competition with each other” (Favre, 1995: 144). Surely, there is no doubt political science institutionally exists whether it is through professional associations (Association Française de Science Politique, Association Nationale des Candidats au Métier de la Science Politique, Association des Enseignants et Chercheurs en Science Politique), a specific section (section 04) at the Conseil National des Universités or regulated academic competitions to become Maître de Conférences or Professeur des Universités. Having said that, French political science remains characterised by a proliferation of research objects, a diversity of research traditions (political philosophy, law and policy analysis, international relations and political sociology) as well as of methodological choices, probably because French political scientists do not follow a common training (law faculties, and to a lesser extent history and sociology department, Science Po Paris, other Instituts d’Etudes Politiques, Ecole Normale supérieure...) and because of a lack of a common heritage. In addition, a French peculiarity is the ambiguity of “science po” as it refers to the academic discipline as well as the “Sciences Po” institution, the executive elite school, one of the “grandes écoles” along l’Ecole Nationale d’Administration that are central in the field of power (Bourdieu, 1996).

Moreover, political scientists are not only professionals of political science. They are social agents characterised by their training, for sure, but also by their status, social properties, or engagements and they belong to other groups and institutions and this comes into play when they practice social sciences. As far as the authors of this paper are concerned, we are two rather young (36 years old) senior lecturers in political science, initiated to the discipline

at “Sciences Po Lille” and rather oriented towards political sociology *à la Paris Sorbonne*¹. Before these tenure track positions, we experienced various (precarious) contractual positions thanks to our PhD. One of us is involved in the French Communist Party (PCF), and both of us are engaged in trade unions defending the autonomy of science from governmental influence and economic austerity.

Acknowledging the diversity of political science and of its representatives is even more compulsory when one wants to address the issues of “visibility” and practices of representation of political science outside the academic community that were suggested by the panel convenors. It is pretty hard therefore to consider that political science would benefit from a stabilised image in the French context². One would fall into nominalist and reifying biases if political science was given a disciplinary autonomy that does not make sense for external publics. On the one hand, non-academic worlds hardly consider political science in isolation from scientific knowledge in general, their social utility and the role that researchers (notably in social sciences) are meant to play in decision-making processes or in the development of public debates. On the other hand, *the* political science is only perceived according to the identity of those who intervene on its behalf, their institutional position, their relational resources and their varying capacity to benefit from a social authority that make their assertions specific. Last, one has to take into the account a) the diversity of the publics who may interact with and/or enrol political scientists according to their position in the social space, b) their (precise) knowledge of academic issues and logics and c) the resources that can be extracted from scientific statements in their respective spaces of action.

As such, rather than answering the panel’s list of questions from a macroscopic and somewhat normative perspective, we sketch a comparative analysis based on our in-depth experiences of interactions with non-academic publics. In this compared exercise of “reflexivity”, we leave aside irregular links with journalists, political activists or even friends and relatives to focus instead on our respective interactions with a) the corporate sector, b) the State administration, c) the civil society. On the one hand, one of us (Thomas) was involved in an EU think tank funded by the EU Commission and a handful of food giants and had to produce recommendations to enhance a Public-private partnership in the field of obesity prevention while the other one (Nicolas) was hired by a State office to produce and analysed confidential opinion polls about governmental policies. There were high expectations on our expertise, mostly viewed as an input to *improve organisational efficiency* in the first case and to make the people visible and *reduce the uncertainty inherent in the exercise of power*. On the other hand, we both have been involved in a scientific partnership with a local NGO as part of a collective inquiry on nightlife policies. In this partnership, there was a sheer dialogue on data collection and a real enthusiasm among our partners to comprehend the process of scientific production.

By comparing these three cases of very close interactions with non-academic institutions, our paper aims at understanding the links between their position and power in the social system, the types of demands they address to political scientists, and the value they give to our expertise in the decision-making process and within sectorial power struggles. In short, we would like to analyse the variable uses of knowledge produced with the tools of

¹ The social sciences of politics that have developed since the 1970s with a clear tropism towards sociology and history are one of the originalities of French political science compared to other national political sciences (Gaxie 2004). The review *Politix* is a good illustration of such an epistemological manifesto. Another evidence is that many recent editions of Pierre Bourdieu’s review *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* are coordinated by political scientists. Therefore French researchers in political science struggle on a terminological ground: those who favor the sociological approaches of the political phenomena claim to be named “politistes”, to better differentiate themselves from “politologues”, a label they reserve for political scientists who only focus on electoral analysis and intervene as experts of public opinion in the media.

² Journalists regularly use the plural to designate the discipline (“les sciences politiques”) rather than talking about political science as a unified discipline.

political science and the different mix of resources we, as scientists, are supposed to bring to our potential partners (cognitive, conceptual, argumentative and symbolic resources that can either be turned into subversive resources or legitimating resources). Here, the idea is to deconstruct the concept of “expertise” in order to show it can take various forms considering the diversity of roles the political scientists are meant to endorse in the field of power as Prince’s advisers, Wiseman or Think tankers. On the one hand, researchers can serve dominant institutions which manipulate their scientific competencies and their symbolic authority to reinforce their control on their respective environment. On the other hand, researchers can be enrolled to shed light on various types of injustice framed in scientific and *a priori* disinterested terms. Presenting our three case studies enables to pinpoint the diversity of institutional venues in which political scientists can intervene and to highlight as a result the unequal autonomy that they benefit from in pursuing scientific activities.

1. The institutional conditions for academic enrolment

First of all, we present our three case studies through the identity of the partners or clients and its “official” expectations vis-à-vis scientific work. The cases are characterised by three different degrees of autonomy in terms of scientific puzzles, research design and modalities of restitution of results (what can be expressed and what is prohibited). Therefore, these contrasted figurations sketch the plurality of roles that political scientists are bound to endorse and the plurality of the images their partners feed back to them. Having said that, these roles cannot be understood without taking into account the structural evolution of research funding and consequently the relationship between researchers and non-academic institutions. Indeed, reflecting on the audience of political science is highly connected to state of the academic market (discrepancy between the growing number of PhDs in political science and availability of tenure track positions) as well as the transformation of research policies (public and private commissioning; targeted subsidies; applied research; public-private partnerships) that alter scientific practices (Barrier, Musselin 2009) and require to find new niches for political science.

1.1. Political science as a science of government

Thanks to their financial, symbolic and organisational resources, dominant institutions have the capacity to make researchers dependent vis-à-vis their expectations. Scientific knowledge is less considered as an instrument to better understand the world than as a way to control their environment. The research work pertains to a purely instrumental conception of knowledge: research issues are defined upstream and the researcher’s activity are very tightly framed so that results remain in the remit of the terms of reference.

Case 1. Service d’Information du Gouvernement

The Service d’Information du Gouvernement (SIG) case is typical of a situation where politological knowledge is hired by political rulers in a short term and utilitarian perspective. Here, political science is narrowed to a science of public opinion. The job of the researcher is to “give voice” to the people or, more correctly, to measure how opinion reacts to governmental stimuli.

After his PhD on the metamorphosis of French political journalism after World War 2, Nicolas was hired as sociological research officer (*chargé d’études sociologiques*) by the SIG for three years. The remit and perimeter of this administrative structure has evolved since its

creation in 1963. Since 1996 it is theoretically under the Prime Minister's and its cabinet's authority. But under Sarkozy presidency, the leadership on this politically sensitive department was disputed by the President of the Republic³. Central in the governmental communication, this intelligence service has to coordinate the production of surveys on "the state of the opinion and the media regarding news and governmental policies" (official document). In other words, it has to analyse and link the different dimensions of *public* opinion: opinion leaders' statements in newspapers, radio and television; citizen's mobilisation on the web; judgements and perceptions of the ordinary Frenchmen ("Français ordinaires"). Nicolas operated in this latter unit between 2005 and 2007.

The unit's mission encompasses three main tasks whose "strategic" characteristics for the rulers is to be evaluated according to the expectations and susceptibility of clients within cabinets. First of all there is an activity of monitoring and diffusion of public opinion polls. According to a provisional agenda set up at the end of the week, research officers have to collect every single surveys as soon as possible then send them to the clients who are the PR consultants in ministerial cabinets, thematic advisers in the PM's cabinet and the heads of communication unit in ministerial departments. The second mission consists in producing confidential opinion surveys and subsequent results in Pdf file are sent to the same correspondents, based on more or less restrictive mailing lists. Finally, the third task consists in feeding clients more or less frequently with analytical briefs. Their respective importance depends on three criteria: the writer's identity (the most strategic briefs belong to the head of unit), the extent of the evaluation process and the narrowness of their diffusion (the most strategic ones are reserved for a small number of correspondents). The latter dimension highlights to what extent the circulation of such information has to do with power struggles within the field of power. As we will see in Section 2, more than the content of the polls, it is the ways they are used among dominant players that helps to understand the political role of this political knowledge.

If the SIG's direction is directly under the authority of the Executive power, its agents think of themselves as public agents whose loyalty goes to the institution rather than to the majority in power. The service is not concerned by spoils system as such although changes in government may alter the ways of working. Between 2005 and 2007, none of the 9 members of the "study and survey" unit had been recruited according to partisan criteria or political pressure. Holding political science diploma, the team members are relatively young and *turnover* is endemic since they are offered short-term contracts and lower remunerations than in private institutes. Among the criteria for recruitment, oral and writing skills, the ability to synthesize and analyse or the reactivity to the cabinet's demands seem more important than a strong sociological education or a high level management of statistical tools. More broadly, the working conditions do not help challenging the capacity of poll data to translate the public opinion with efficacy. Facing urgency, meeting "ordinary Frenchs" only by the mediation of quantitative data or short sentences stemming from qualitative interviews, working in the posh districts of Paris, the agent of the unit are relatively forced to believe in the predictive capacities of these instruments of knowledge.

In these conditions, the public opinion is perceived only through the categories of understanding shared by the professionals of politics and the professionals of communication. In other words, they assume a ballistic conception of the people: the citizens are perceived as anonymous targets of political messages or as potential obstacles to the implementation of the policies. As a science of government, political science serves here less to shape the public action (this dimension of expertise is being more entrusted to economists, urbanists, sociologists, management scientists or lawyers) than to participate, in a relatively subordinated way, in the elaboration of the governmental communication. In that case, political science is

³ In 2010, around 8 million euros were allocated to the commissioning and analysis of opinion polls in the French Executive power (to which the wages of research officers must be added).

enlisted in a perspective of conquest or preservation of power more than in a perspective of exercise of power. Therefore, the "official" recognition of the virtues of political science is based on the confidentiality of its results, in other words its invisibility. In other words, it is valued only because of the strategic advantage that it is supposed to grant to those who finance it.

Case 2. The Epode European Network

Thomas' experience in the Epode European Network (EEN) requires also some contextualisation. Originally, the first Epode programme (Fleurbaix-Laventie Villes Santé - FLVS) was pursuing a scientific ambition. In the early 1990s, the FLVS study was replicating a community health programme that had experimented in Sausalito (California). Already structured around a Public Private Partnership⁴, the programme was jointly coordinated – with several overlapping actors – by an association (FLVS association) and a communication agency (later merged with the Vitamin agency). Since 2004, Vitamin invested a lot in the promotion of Epode, first enrolling 10 pioneer cities, then “offering” it to local authorities willing to invest in the war against obesity. Extended to the rest of the country, the programme convinced over 250 cities today and attracted the interest of various other countries (over 250 cities today) and beyond (Belgium, Spain, Greece, Mexico, Australia, Netherlands, Romania...). To put it simply, such an enlargement results from a rapid industrialisation and commodification of a programme whose success is celebrated in every health forum, thanks to the support of the EU Commission, renowned academics and the club of Epode mayors (Alam, 2011; Bergeron *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, after two unsuccessful applications to EU Health programmes' call for proposals, Vitamin's leading consultants managed to set up the in 2008. As such, not only the EU Commission – following WHO Europe (2006) – “considers that the development of effective partnerships must be the cornerstone of Europe's response to tackling nutrition, overweight and obesity and their related health problems” (European Commission, 2007 : 4) but it actively supported the Epode European Network, a think tank jointly funded by the food industry⁵. Since the “the think tank label has cache” (Stone, 2007 : 262)⁶, Epode promoters openly capitalised on this label whose legitimacy rests on three myths: think tanks “think”, “serve the public interest” and are “bridges between State, Society and Science” (Stone 2007)⁷.

But if this think tank “thinks”, it is first of all to “act” on behalf of “public interest”. Hence the insistence of EEN directors on being a *think and do tank*, an activist profile to be poised against more scholarly think tanks or “ink tank” (Stone, 2007: 262). As it appears in the first pages of the Grant agreement in 2008, the explicit objectives of the EEN were to “conceptualise best practices” – Epode being the benchmark – in order to be disseminated in Europe⁸. Four academic teams from different universities were in charge of four work packages

⁴ Nestlé, Lesieur, the Cedus (Centre d'études et de documentation du sucre) and a few names from the pharmaceutical industry were partners.

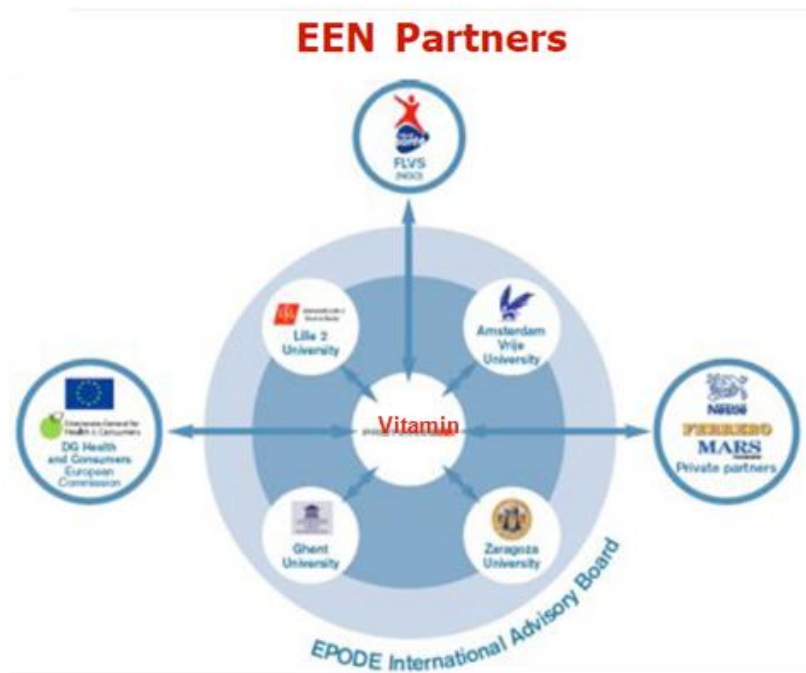
⁵ After two unsuccessful applications in the call for proposals, the EEN was consecrated as an EU health program after the 2007 call for proposals (Public Health Program 2003-2008). From 2008 to 2011, it received subsidies from the European Health Executive Agency and by Mars, Ferrero, Nestlé and (later on) Orangina -Schweppes.

⁶ It was not always such a popular and positive term. It was rather a funny and often condescending expression when the term emerged in the 19th century (Medvetz 2012).

⁷ The latter dimension is embedded in the PPP that sustains the EEN as well as in the Board composed of the EEN directors, 4 (academic) chairmen of work packages, the president of the Alliance for Epode (at the time, Philippe Most, mayor of the city of Royan), a representative of the International Advisory Board (composed of “high level” international experts specialised in public health, CBIs and prevention), the director of DG Sanco and representatives of private sponsors).

⁸ EEN “has been designed to facilitate the implementation of community base intervention (CBIs) programs using EPODE methodology in other European countries”. In other words, it has to « think » and « act »: “to conceptualize, from EPODE / THAO / VIASANO pilot experiences, best practices to foster the set up and the implementation of EPODE-like CBIs in other European countries, regions and cities. The EEN will thus contribute to the EU vision of a multi-stakeholders partnership united in its determination to promote healthier lifestyles, improve diet and

that were defined according to the pillars of Epode's methodology: evaluation, investment of political actors, social marketing and PPPs.



Lost among biomedical and public health researchers, managers and PR consultants, Thomas was the only representative of political science. He was not even the first choice since Nadine, Professor of Nutrition at Lille 2 University, FLVS president and chairman of the Work Package on PPPs was originally looking for a lawyer. Since his PhD dissertation had to do with European food policies (Alam, 2007), it was not so hard to convince her that he could do the job. However, what clearly appears is that the post-doctoral researcher was not associated in the designing of the programme at all. In this labour relation imposed by economic necessity, he had to face a research figuration totally new for him. As formulated by the EEN Board, the work package's objectives were to provide recommendations, guidelines as well as an ethical charter to build trust in PPPs. In applied research, the mertonian ideal of science (research autonomy) is torn between expectations of sponsors/contractors (production of guidelines, production of an ethical charter...) and the heteronomy of research questions: what are the barriers and levers for a successful PPP? What are the critical points? What are the key success factors? How to preserve public interest? How to prevent conflict of interest? And so on... In this case, even the research methodology - 20 face-to-face (expert-to-expert) interviews with relevant stakeholders (most of which were suggested to me⁹) - was prescribed. Carnal sociology (Wacquant 2005) can best apprehend the role conflicts experienced by the political scientist who can only marginally resist to the commission. Although he managed to advocate the use of ethnographic observations and to meet up with dissenters of the programme, it was not always possible to be seen by interviewees nor even to act as an independent researcher¹⁰.

physical activity habits and to prevent obesity and other chronic diseases". It will have to "enrich existing methodologies and produce best practices" in order to "raise political, institutional and scientific awareness of the relevancy of local, long-term and multistakeholders approaches (...) [and] stimulate relevant stakeholders - i.e. political representatives, city and regional structures, national public health agencies, private stakeholders - to commit themselves in implementing effective local strategies across Europe".

⁹ In the UK, Thomas was advised to meet representatives from the Oxford Health Alliance or the International Business Leaders Forum which are not known to be critical of PPPs.

¹⁰ Thomas' self-presentation as an independent researcher was challenged right from the start of the interviews with NGO representatives or health civil servants who were critical of the citizen engagement of food giants. "Qui vous télécommande?" or "what does Nestlé want to know" were often the first questions asked to the EEN inquirer.

Only observing participation is able to reveal to what extent the academic role differs from the expert role (hierarchical authority, evaluation by contractors and not peer review, lack of independence in the research, urgency of results, production of “indisputability”...). However, the publicity given to political science does not proceed from the traditional epistemology of social sciences. To start with, the heteronomous questions are meant to increase organisational efficacy (and, as we shall see in section 2 the legitimacy of the program). Like mainstream managerial science, these questions embody a vision of the programme as “a given, an entity that has a ‘normal’ functioning whose objective is to ensure its reproduction” (de Gaulejac, 2009: 73). Consequently, the formulated recommendations rested more on the “monstration” of their scientific relevance than on their scientific demonstration (Alam, Godard 2007).

If he wants to turn into an expert, the social scientist “has to exchange Weber’s epistemology of social sciences, characterised by a comprehensive stance, for an ‘expert’ epistemology that is rationalist, positivist and radically action-oriented. In a world, he knows to be uncertain, conflictual and non-popperian, he has to arbitrate, decide what the norm is (in terms of ethics or public interest), manufacture the “universal” and the “indisputable” truth, and ‘negotiate with the tension between scientific reservation and expressive will, neutrality and value, specialty and generality, description and prescription, facts and laws’ (Memmi, 1996: 75), that is to say to wear the too-big-for-him clothes of the moralist” (Alam, 2011: 245).

1.2 Political scientists as regulator of public controversies

Case 3. Candela – a study on nightlife policies

The mertonian ideal of science is somehow better preserved in the third case we want to address: Candela. Candela was first of all an initiative from IPSA congressmen in Madrid who were not only stunned by the Spanish night life but also by the Marcha Negra that arrived in La Puerta del Sol late at night. Back in Lille, they gather other researchers into the project and designed a research programme ranging from the city regulation of bars, clubs and nightlife, light policies, to nightlife public space’s occupation and gender’s unequal access to it (Winter, 2012)¹¹. Although elective affinities clearly came into play in its genesis, this programme goes beyond a bunch of friends driven by slow science. Elected by a call for applications requiring us to work with a civil society organisation (the projects “Chercheurs citoyens” of the Regional Council Nord-Pas-de-Calais), we developed a partnership with a local NGO (KOAN) at the crossroad between urban planning, art and participative democracy. This detour by Madrid is important to stress the extent to which there was autonomy in the choice of the research questions, in the research design and in the pace of the research development. As far as we know, the grant we applied for did not significantly alter the course of our investigation. More than the financial resources it provided, it brought symbolic resources that we helped the project being taken seriously¹². But the negotiations with KOAN took place well after the designing of the project (Spring, 2013), prompted by opportunism, experimentation and contingency.

Untypical for various reasons, this research led us to get in contact with many non-academics who were either our partners or our interviewees. As nightlife and binge drinking were getting high on the local political agenda, we managed to get access to relevant field sites in the Lille City Council by negotiating a position of participant observers in the “Etats

¹¹ Among the 13 team members, the majority (roughly two thirds) comes from political science. Other backgrounds come from sociology, law history, public law and geography.

¹² In another paper, we developed the idea that the label “chercheurs citoyens” was clearly an asset in the group’s self-presentation and that it was a consecration for the group as the selection of our project operated as a “rite of institution” (Candela 2014).

généraux de la nuit” in the first half of 2013. As Candela’s main interlocutor with the political and administrative personnel was a Professor of political science holding a position at Science Po Lille at the time, we were widely seen as “les gens de Sciences po” although it is not clear whether people knew the difference between the discipline and the institution. We tried and resisted being enrolled as experts designing recommendations and stuck to the sole writing of synthesis of the debates that took place. This institutional legitimacy and the bureaucratic work we delivered for free helped us being invited in “Nightlife Commissions” and rapidly being considered as “one of them”. In a very different vein, as far as our NGO partners are concerned, we presented on several occasions our investigations and our research development, explaining to the so-called “lay people” the way we worked¹³. Although the figuration was very unusual to us, it was an opportunity to engage in open discussions about the framing of our initial research and about research agendas that we did not pursue¹⁴.

However, our economic independence, our mass presence, and above all the scientific monopoly on the research design framed the research figuration in a very different shape from the above mentioned experiences. Because we were so many, it was almost not straightforward for non-academics to enrol us (we turn back to this issue in section 2).

One of the straightforward effects of political science has to do with Anthony Giddens’ double hermeneutic of social science. In other words, we provide cognitive resources that help our partners rationalise their activities. If this is the official objective of our mission, the uses and effects of our statements or even of our very presence have more to do with politics as we bring symbolic resources, in terms of legitimacy and credibility.

2. The strategical uses of political scientists and the unexpected effects of their statements

The three cases highlight classical interested uses of science and show the link between the social position of the non-academic partners, the objectives they officially assign to political scientists and the visibility of the researches. But we also have to understand the unofficial ambitions in mobilizing science and the unexpected effects of the work of the scientist in those different fields. Here, science is often used by dominant institutions in search of legitimacy as it provides a varnish of objectivity to choices that could be different, while it can provide argumentative or conceptual resources to outsiders or marginal actors in their subversive strategies. Then, when political science is given publicity, it is more on behalf of the symbolic authority of science than of the scientificity of its results. Actors will only give publicity to the researchers if they are able to demonstrate that the science involved is done on behalf of public interest. It is all the more the case that dominant institutions own the capacity to defined what is public interest - in other words what is legitimate to study (Lacroix 1985). So, when political scientists challenge the interests behind the so-called “public interest”, they are viewed as ideological, pursuing crusades and discredited for not being “neutral”.

¹³ On the contrary, we have never been asked to explain our research design in nightlife commissions. We only presented the synthesis we drew from the Etats généraux in the Summer of 2013 and in front of wider audience in December 2013.

¹⁴ On the very first encounter (in March 2013), a KOAN member was wondering why we did not develop research on race discrimination in nightclubs and bars, advising us to meet relevant NGOs.

2.1. Strategies of “procedural legitimization”

The three cases show clients or partners of action who mobilize the political expertise in strictly instrumental purposes. What interests them here, it is the academic and methodological skills more than capacities of investigation, the epistemological break or the theoretical innovation. The science is reduced here to technical stakes what would insure its “neutrality”. In the eyes of the non-academic actors, the scientific objectivity is guaranteed by the production of quantified data and standardized briefs (case SIG), by the quest of the organizational efficiency (case Epode) or by the adoption of a status of impartial clerk of the court of a public debate (cas Candela). The institutional actors promote then a bureaucratic design of the political science (they expect cognitive or symbolic profits because of its serious and rigorous appearance) and update their spontaneous representations of the political scientists: individuals who are responsible and share naturally the concerns of the political, administrative or economic elites with whom they interact. Then, whether it was deliberately or not mobilized to this end, the political science produces effects of procedural legitimization by guaranteeing the credibility of institutions, devices or tools. Therefore, the involvement of science in public policy can reinforce the *illusio* of actors (Bourdieu 1994) involved in public private partnerships or in participatory dispositive and strengthen the belief in the predictive values of opinion polls.

(a) In case 2, the war against obesity is presented as indisputable necessity in face of which the legitimacy of PPPs for health promotion has to be demonstrated. As “legitimacy does not come from efficacy but from presumption of efficacy” (Lagroye, 1985: 463), one has to acknowledge that Epode’s success above all rests on an efficient marketing campaign that builds faith in the programme, gathers supports and downsizes criticisms. Very clearly, the EEN is engaged in the scientific marketing of Epode; as Robert Madelin, director of DG Sanco, put it in a Board meeting: the first EEN’s function is to deliver a “marketing campaign” so as to disseminate the seeds of success all over Europe. Just like any firm, think tanks spend time “marketing their products” (Abelson 2009: 77). Far from being a “university without students” (Weaver 1989: 564), a place where independent, original and disinterested thoughts are produced, the EEN is clearly oriented towards the repetition of a simple message: Epode is a success whose best practices should be transferred. As such, the EEN is perhaps closer to an “advocacy tank” since it is highly connected to interest groups and combines “a strong policy, partisan or ideological bent with aggressive salesmanship and an effort to influence current policy debates” (Weaver 1989: 567). Indeed, it is extremely adjusted to the lobbying strategies and self-presentation of its corporate sponsors from the food industry who promote a framing of obesity as a multifactorial issue (Sugarman, Sandman) and advocate horizontal subsidiarity, self-regulation and multi-stakeholder approach in order to avoid regulation (tax, labelling, product reformulation) (Alam 2011).

As highlighted by Thomas Medvetz’s structural perspective on US think tanks, the EEN is a good example of this new space of action at the crossroads of the political, academic, media and business sphere (Medvetz 2012). Therefore, the professional identity of the EEN members mixes four roles with contradictory scripts. On the one hand, the coordinating team members all come from the Vitamin agency. Half a dozen people from Vitamin’s social marketing department belong to this group. All together, they are individuals with strong communication skills (PR, social marketing) but adapted to the world of corporations involved in health and nutrition strategies. Their educational and professional trajectories, which have been significantly internationalised over the period, are relatively interdependent. Next, although the agency is meant to be only a service provider, it really had captured the project (it even owns the trademark and associated concepts) due to the initial ignorance of the FLVS association representatives. Even if the association is instrumental for credibility and tax reasons, it is really the agency that interacts with corporate sponsors as well as with local

authorities. It acts as a discrete policy brokers. Thanks to the diversity of its commercial activities, Vitamin is at the crossroad between Epode promotion, corporate and local public partners. It had been contractually linked for a while with the Institut National de Prévention et d'Éducation à la Santé and worked for the PNNS communication. Moreover, many food giants belong to its portfolio and the agency advises them on health corporate communication. For corporate partners, it is maybe more natural to fund a programme led by an entrepreneurial broker. Beyond the fact that corporate partners and Vitamin share the same professional norms and beliefs (private management, evaluation and communication), Vitamin can also be seen as a more legitimate partner for public actors than corporations whose images are generally associated with junkfood.

As far as the academics are concerned, the committees' research works are mostly implemented by "post-doc" researchers. It comes as no surprise since work package's chairmen are mostly there for public relations and brokerage with health institutions (even more so that they are not very familiar with the issues they have in charge). The analysis of their social properties demonstrates these chairmen are multipositioned brokers who significantly built their career towards the accumulation of their "scientific capital of external reputation", rather than the management of their "academic capital" (Bourdieu 1984: 128-132). Just like the Professor of nutrition I worked with on PPPs in Lille – who is involved in civil society (president of the FLVS association, president of a local network of medical care for obese patients - OSEAN), in the academic field (head of a service of nutrition in the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Lille, assistant general secretary of the "Société Française de Nutrition") and in various expert committees (Ministry of Health, INPES, EPODE...), the three other scholars take advantage of their social ubiquity due to internationalised resources that are partly heteronomous to the scientific field. Holding prestigious academic titles, these individuals guarantee by their sole presence the scientific quality of the works undertaken in the think tank as well as its pretended universality and disinterestment (Memmi 1996: 41-47). Their social ubiquity (multipositioning), in various policy sectors, venues and at various levels of government blurs boundaries between these different fields. Acting as "double agents" between the national and the international spaces (they can import at home what they have built abroad and vice-versa), these brokers help strengthening the universal legitimacy of Epode (Dezalay, Garth 2002) and consequently "disseminating" the programme.

To go back to the role conflicts identified in section 1, being a post-doc in the EEN creates even more of those that the main activities of this advocacy tank have to do with marketing. As such, seminars, symposiums, *book of recommendations*, promotional movies and interviews... – are all part of the same *missionary* policy: the repetition and amplification of this simple message "Epode is a success". As can be drawn from the frame below, expressing doubts regarding PPP is unthinkable as the political scientist is discredited for not being neutral. Dissenting analyses drawn from the research should remain confidential.

PPP, Socio-history and ideology: a scepticism seen as heretic. Excerpts from Thomas' fieldnotes, 5-7 May 2009.

Less than four months after my arrival in the think tank, I had to present my first recommendations to the EEN Board in Amsterdam. Relatively unaware of the expectations of the sponsors, I presented a first slide about the epistemological dilemma for an expert-sociologist: "How to deal with normative issues in a sociological research?" I then presented the theoretical foundations of PPPs which are said to be based from the onset on trust and are seen as technical, politically neutral and "win win" operations. As such, I emphasised that PPPs were not an innovation of the managerial modernity but had a long history intimately linked to the socio-genesis of the State. Regarding the fashion of PPPs, I nonetheless underlined that we were witnessing a "commodification" of ethics which had become an "offer" from the corporate sector (Salmon, 2004). First recalling the need to think beyond the theory of "hostile worlds", I then listed the benefits expected by corporate sponsors ("a discrete lobbying", "a subtle PR strategy", "material benefits" such as tax refunds) as I believed it was

important to identify what could be the rewards before regulating PPPs. Finally, I wondered what kind of recommendations I was meant to produce: what is the priority in terms of “risk analysis”? Would the drafting of strict partnership rules jeopardise the (financial) participation of corporate partners?

The more board members casted reproachful looks at me as the presentation went on, the more isolated and misadjusted I felt. But I could not imagine to what extent this methodological scepticism would isolate me after a very tough discussion. The head of the EEN urged me to drop what she saw as an ideological stance and to focus instead on local partnerships (which are probably less sulphurous). Among various reactions, the general director of the EU Commission’s Health and Consumer Protection DG advocated a change of vocabulary was needed. He suggested favouring “voluntary cooperation” over PPP as it is less symbolically loaded and advised me to define concrete parameters: “*Talk about evaluation and accountability. Set explicit public good goals from the beginning, then develop monitoring and evaluation*”. This interaction is enough to depict how sociological work is regarded with contempt and to what extent academism is seen as irrelevant compared to managerial evaluation. As a strong reminder, the head of the EEN confessed her concern two days later in a violent email “about the progress of my work but also about my focus and my positioning which do not match our reciprocal engagements and expectations”. She added that “the general framework of the grant agreement is non-negotiable” and that “our objective is not to question the relevance of PPPs (...) but to find innovative solutions in order to regulate in an efficient and flexible manner the relations between the different stakeholders”. She explicitly concluded that “if EPODE’s philosophy was not in line with [me] (...), the terms and conditions of our collaboration can be reconsidered”.

(b) As seen earlier, Case 3 is different from many respects: autonomy of research questions, relative independence of researchers from the institution under investigation and significant amount of political scientists involved to name a few. When access to the “Etats Généraux de la Nuit” (EGN) was negotiated with the elected representative in charge of law and order, we stressed that we did not want to endorse the role of policy adviser and acted as observers, taking notes and drawing syntheses from them in the Spring of 2013. Obviously writing syntheses is an operation of construction of reality and we were involved at a limited level in public policy. As such, we were not invisible observers considering that 2 to 4 researchers were present at every round tables. In this respect, our collective and mass involvement as academics (“les gens de Sciences Po”) has certainly sustained the beliefs and expectations of the believers in the EGN (Festinger et al. 1956) by feeding the *illusio* of participants in a very unprepared participatory dispositive. We probably gave even more credibility to the machinery by our very presence that we *knew right from the start* that the mayor’s cabinet did not have high expectations about the EGN. When we were discussing the EGN’s organisation in April 2013, one adviser of the mayor openly confessed that the cabinet would independently draft a new charter for nightlife which was precisely the objectives of the exercise! In addition, although syntheses were transmitted in advance to our contacts at the Lille city council, they were only once presented and discussed in the following roundtable. In other words, the scientific resources were monopolised by the dominant institution and remained confidential as long as they were not useful to it. After a few month of silence, publicity was eventually given in December 2013 to the data collected as we presented the outcome of our observations to a large audience of EGN’s participants. Again, no real debate was possible since the elected representative for law and order dominated the floor. He hardly gave it back in the following months as the campaign for local elections had started.

(c) Finally, in case 1, this effect of procedural legitimatization is less obvious since SIG’s opinion poll’s products are intended for a small public who is above all wondering about the exploitability of results. However, one can observe effects of legitimatization associated with the belief in the scientific value of poll’s data. They are notably reputed to offer a decisive advantage to those who own them: knowledge of public opinion appears as a critical weapon in politicking rivalries which are perceived by communicants, as mainly involving the images of political leaders.

If the content and surveys that the SIG orders are theoretically regulated to prevent any “patrimonialisation” of this public service’s products¹⁵, most studies touch upon images’ characteristics associated with the PM’s or PR’s personality. In this context, urgency is a fundamental requirement. Clients of surveys and analytical briefs share the same belief that the value of a poll gets depreciated when it is available to the wider public. As such, when a survey company forgets to send the SIG a survey destined to be made public, the firm is regularly contacted so as to diffuse the survey before the embargo is lifted. Above all, urgency concerns popularity indicators. These sequences highlight the “magical” properties of surveys. Leaders’ popularity being structurally rather low (at least because a significant ratio of ministers are hardly known), the main issue is to know at all time “où on en est dans l’opinion?”, efforts have paid, “si le courant marche enfin?” or “marche toujours”. In front of a highly competitive and anxiogenic activity and overly structured by ego rivalries, surveys ensures a function of daily reinsurance for communication advisers in cabinet.

Although more empirical data would help drawing a parallel with gambling, but we introduce the hypothesis that behaviors vis-à-vis surveys are structurally similar to the gambler’s behavior in front of casino machines. The gambler knows pretty well that it is very unlikely that he will win, however he believes in his chances and, worst, he is ready to believe any discourse that claims that his chance will come, will come back or will last long.

2.2. Knowledge uses inside subversion strategies

Beyond explicit strategies of enrollment for symbolic legitimatization, political scientists and their products can conversely become resources for outsiders engaged in the subversion of established order. As such, if these actors want to benefit from scientific support as well, they are much more interested in the scientific results, especially when the latter can help developing critical viewpoints. Here scientific knowledge is particularly useful since it provides argumentative resources within sectorial power struggles. But the uses of scientific productions remain diversified according to the specific objectives of actors. First of all, they may do their best to publicize research in order to put a political problem on the agenda which is denied by public authorities (case 3). Then, they can use them more confidentially to discredit embarrassing partners and thus renegotiate the principles of the partnership (case 2). Finally, they may do their best to remain their only recipients so as to monopolize strategic data and become more powerful insiders (case 1).

(a) The Candela case show clearly a situation where actors, wishing to hire a balance of power with the authorities, are clearly asking the researchers to mobilize a reflexive knowledge and not only an instrumental one (Burawoy, 2009). It is particularly the case of our partner association Koan which, entering in the logic of the program “Citizen Researcher”, was taking advantage of the partnership for politicizing some stakes in the night-life (the discriminations in the entrance of the discotheques, the absence of places of night-life in the poor areas of the city and especially the repressive character of the regulations towards “cafés with live music”). While we were committed in the empirical part of our work and therefore, very cautious about not taking side publicly on this salient electoral issue, Koan was conversely eager for us to intervene in public debate in order to feed their work on these issues and grant credibility to it. As such, we have been enrolled in a debate whose title was « Ce qui se joue la nuit : les cafés-

¹⁵ La circulaire du 23 mars 2006 vise notamment à s’assurer que ces enquêtes financées sur fonds publics ne pourront servir à alimenter les campagnes électorales menées par les acteurs de l’exécutif. En tant qu’agence de l’État, le SIG ne peut servir aux partis de la majorité pour dissimuler leurs dépenses de campagnes. Aussi les enquêtes qui présenteraient un caractère politique ou partisan doivent-elles cesser à l’approche des échéances électorales. En théorie, c’est même l’ensemble des enquêtes qui sont supposées porter sur l’action et la communication gouvernementale, et non sur la personne des gouvernants.

concert à Lille » and had to present the state of our research (29 January 2014). Trouble is this debate had clearly been designed by KOAN managers as an opportunity to put issues on the agenda: nightlife cultural diffusion and contestation of the city council's policy. Thomas's presentation of our work blatantly stressed collusive transactions in the city's management of nightlife, the arbitrary dimension of regulation and the privileged relationships between the city council and certain powerful bar and club owners. This intervention was subsequently reported in various press articles in local media that only retained the critical part of his statements and recalled his dual engagement in science (« chercheur à Lille 2 ») and in politics (candidate – on a non-eligible position – for the Front de Gauche to local elections). This undesired publicity largely affected our relations with the city council and access to the field. To date, as we had left the role of “neutral” observers that was assigned to us, we lost the authorization to follow nightlife commission meetings. The publicity given to public management processes that are usually confined was enough for us to be seen as actors animated by a political mission we never really wanted to pursue.

(b) In the case Epode, the engagement of Thomas in the field enables to think about the concrete use of expertise *in situ*. As we have seen, researchers are not asked “to question the relevance” of PPPs, opinion polls or participatory dispositif, but to provide recommendations in order to improve the devices at stake. From this point of view, some elements of our expertise may also participate in the politicisation of certain stance-takings in universes which however do their best to display a technical, managerial and pragmatic stance on the relevant issues. A good indication can be found in the way Thomas strived to illustrate the ideology underlying the PPP; an ideology which the activities of the think tank – as a typical neutral locus (“*lieu neutre*” – Bourdieu, Boltanski, 1976: 62) – precisely contribute to conceal. As paradoxical as it may be for PR professionals and food industry lobbyists, Thomas has also contributed to introduce incrementally bits of economical thinking in an entrepreneurial world which did not display such a pecuniary dimension. For example, one of the communication consultants insisted he should delete a slide devoted to the “corporate ethical offer” (Salmon, 2004) which was questioning the relevance of CSR from the commodification of ethics' perspective. Similarly, any mentions related to the sponsors' subsidies had to be deleted from the deliverables. Not only this information would have revealed differences in the level of generosity of corporate sponsors but it would also have highlighted – for an informed reader – the discrepancy between the allocated amounts and the marketing budget of food giants. Having said that, Epode's presentation as a disinterested programme is not only a strategy to promote a favourable image of the food industry, it is also a mean to conceal the intermediary role of the communication agency. Indeed, the agency has not only acted as a service provider, it has clearly captured the programme, registered the brand and the associated concepts (which enables the agency to claim royalties), and has charged the Epode association disproportionate invoices for their services. As such, one of the value of the research Thomas conducted was to “open the eyes” of the president of the association (to quote her words) whose interest for budgetary issues dramatically increased. This collaboration was also followed by the designing and adoption of new internal governing rules which is a clear sign that expertise in political science – at least by the questions it asks – is prone to politicise public action. In other words, political science statements were turned in argumentative resources mobilised within internal organisational power struggles that eventually end up in the FLVS NGO denouncing the contract with Vitamin in France! Needless to say it was not expected by the EEN's initiators. However, the ultimate arguments drawn from the political scientist was that the “symbolic dividend” of local authorities' actions – at the root of the Epode “trademark” success – are mostly benefiting to corporate actors from the food industry, today the sole sponsors of the programme. Unaware of games going on at other levels, local authorities and tax payers' money are eventually subsidising lobbying strategies of multinationals. This analysis developed in a scientific journal (Alam 2011) did not attract much

attention from local authorities involved in Epode (nor from the documentarians of the “Alimenteurs” and “Gavés de Sucre” broadcasted on French TV in June 2012). At best, it received indignation from Epode’s public partners - whose sincere engagements in the war of obesity was challenged - when Thomas presented it orally in a workshop on PPP organised by the Ministry of Health in Marseille.

In broader terms, it highlights that political science statements can become subversive resources for marginal actors in internal sectoral power struggles but, provided the political scientist turns into a whistleblower (which is another issue !), the publicity of such an isolated statement remains pretty narrow and has very little chance to affect the *illusio* of Epode public partners (Alam 2014)

(c) Due to a lack of data in the SIG case, it is not straightforward to precisely trace the outcome of survey products in the governmental machinery. Beyond automatic acknowledgements of receipt, most of studies and briefs that were sent to the cabinet did not generate many reactions. However, several signs suggest that the management of opinion poll data is an issue and a weapon within inter-governmental power struggles. Monopolising opinion-based knowledge brings resources to the professionals of communication who routinely meet difficulties to be heard in the decision-taking process (Legavre, 2007: 184). Nevertheless, it is only a resource among others and the power provided by confidential surveys to their owners is not as massive as we may think.

The strategic importance of surveys within the governmental machinery can notably be observed in the processes of definition of mailing lists. Nicolas’ professional experience within the SIG was characterised by a permanent issue: who should he send the analytical report or brief to ? The evolution of mailing lists was the product as well as the revelation of tensions within government, and even within the PM’s cabinet. As such, as the PM’s image and leadership were affected by serious difficulties and, of course, as the Presidential elections was getting closer (Spring 2007), the mailing lists were shorter and shorter. Indeed, owning the capital extracted from poll’s data benefits to the one who is able to reduce the fundamental uncertainty associated with the knowledge of public opinion. In other words, the one that makes visible the invisible is potentially able to announce « good fortune » and to anticipate future. Efforts aiming at making mailing lists shorter has to do with the project of monopolising the transmission of information (whether it is positive or negative, actual or prophetic) to leaders. One can better understand why competencies expected from agents from the “Study and Survey” unit have more to do with writing skills than with sociological or methodological competencies: briefs have to be short, synthetic, punchy, easy to read for readers in a rush. The idea is not to problematise, nor to enter into details, nor to produce a subtle exegesis of ambiguous poll’s data. What the interlocutors in cabinet want are precise and short analytical elements which they will be able to interpret for their hierarchy. One realises to what extent the specific constraint of the cabinet’s work impact on the way they use poll’s study: they impose urgency and focus on a few “figures” that are reputed to translate French people’s global mood. Therefore, it is not possible to understand the success of surveys in the political field if the plasticity of the instrument (it allows diversified uses) and its capacity to satisfy the economical constraints of information and work are not taken into account.

Table 1. Summary of the cases

	SIG	EEN	CANDELA
<i>Orders and links of subordination</i>	Public administration / opinion analysis Contractual position Orderer : PM's cabinet	EU programme / applied research Initial contractual position and later independence Sponsor : communication agency	Academic research / co-operative partnership with CSO Independence but research funded by Regional Council (partnership with CSO) Main partner: collegiality, research team Secondary partner (without funding): Lille city council
<i>Data production</i>	Opinion polls provided by private companies	Qualitative analysis (interviews, ethnographic observation, archives)	Qualitative analysis (interviews, ethnographic observation, archives)
<i>Deliverables</i>	Urgency Confidential analytical briefs	Urgency *Powerpoint presentation in public seminars and Symposium *Confidential report *Scientific articles promoting the programme Book of recommendations	Slow science driven by the call for proposals Scientific papers and public interventions (website, public debate, press interviews)
<i>Type of Expertise</i>	Methodological expertise Make the invisible visible Reduce uncertainty	Instrumental expertise Build recommendations based on scientific "monstration"	Scientific knowledge oriented towards public interest Neutral observation and conceptual competencies
<i>Evaluation of the expertise quality</i>	Clients (according to the immediate use of the products in communication strategies)	Sponsor / clients (according to the immediate use of the products and no discussion of the underlying principles of the programme)	Peer review ; presentation of results to the CSO
<i>Official objectives</i>	Decyphering public opinion Governmental policy advising Feeding language elements	Improve organisational efficacy in the war against childhood obesity ; raise public awareness; disseminate best practices	Academic research ; building debates with the community
<i>Non official or unexpected uses</i>	Providing electoral resources within the political competition Provide symbolic resources to communication consultants within struggles in ministerial cabinets	*Scientific legitimatisation of the programme and of Public Private Partnerships *Contribution to the marketing of CSR (lobbying strategies from the food industry) Providing cognitive resources to the NGO president within organisational dispositive	Argumentative resources Provide visibility and credibility to the CSO Provide credibility to Lille city council's dispositive and free bureaucratic work
<i>Individual negotiation with the imperative of (axiological) neutrality</i>	Sticking to "objectivity" of science and methodological rigor Reluctance to the instrumentation of science by	Methodological rigor, defence of the autonomy of social science No participation in promotional movies nor	Contribution to the Communist party's manifesto regarding nightlife policies Contribution to articles in a critical newspaper

<i>Role conflicts</i> <i>Ethics of science</i>	conservative politicians	“dubious” scientific articles Public denunciation of the instrumentation of science by the corporate sector (scientific articles and intervention in policy fora)	
<i>Ideal type of the political scientist</i>	Exegete of the public opinion	Policy adviser and policy advertiser	Wiseman / Regulator of policy controversy

*
* *

Drawing on this expeditious presentation of our respective interactions with non-academics, which are summed up in this conclusive table, we want to build up ideal types of the roles endorsed by political scientists. This generalisation corresponding to the interpretation of our three cases will probably help discussing Political Science in the Public Space. As any ideal type, they do not correspond to pure entity and characteristics of them can be mixed up in the experiences we reported. The Exegete of the public opinion, the policy adviser and advertiser, the Wiseman are broad categories but they refer to roles - more or less in the spotlight - that have a long history when monarchs resorted to intellectuals and sciences of government (Treib 1984), when knowledgeable scholars were consulted to solve controversial issues. Niccolo Machiavelli who knew well the issue for having served the Borgia family very early on disserted in *The Prince* on the role of political advisers and *éminences grises*. Many references can be found in the bible about the wise man, opposed to the fool, that is to say a mentor in spiritual and philosophical topics who is renowned for his profound knowledge, his disinterestedness and ability to take decisions in isolation of passion. In health policies, in ethics, government frequently resorts to Wiseman from the “great and the good” to build up scientific committees in the face of uncertainty such as in the BSE case in the 1990s (Jasanoff 1997) or to discuss bioethical and moral questions (Memmi 1996). The third figure is certainly more recent and has to do with the development of think tanks. In this new space of production of knowledge, at the crossroads of the political, academic, media and business sphere (Medvetz 2012), the policy adviser is simultaneously a policy advertiser. We were even close to refer to another figure, the trickster or the joker’s one. The trickster figure, *The Great Perturbator*, appears in almost every tradition whether in texts, practices or rites. In medieval times and in various political traditions, the joker seems very far away from the world of science; the buffoon being probably the antithesis of the scholar. But as suggested by anthropologists, the trickster manifests the work of disorder within order, the boundaries of power. It reveals the necessity to leave some space for freedom in a world of constraint. As such, the buffoon in court is more than a clown or a monster. Derision and transgression become expressions of truth, and within this limited time space, reversal of order is eventually reinforcing order (Balandier 1980). Reversal of order is not chaos, but “inverted” legitimatisation of domination. In the processes of commodification of public policies we described in the Epode’s case, the political scientist pops up from its box to blind us with science and gives legitimacy to a corporate capture. But there is more, even if he tries to denounce the instrumentation of science with his modest argumentative resources, he may well reinforce the dominant players who excel in internalising critics.

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