



Hollywood experts: A field analysis of knowledge production in American entertainment television

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Abstract

How can we make sense of numerous instances of experts in politics, law enforcement, national security, military defense, fire arms, public health, culture, and history working closely with creators of scripted television series in the USA today? Why do TV makers need them? Why and how do these experts come to Hollywood? In order to answer these questions, I carried out a Bourdieusian field analysis of contemporary American TV series production, with a focus on how knowledge about political and social issues is produced and used in the TV industry. I identify four major expertise providers—the state, social movements, research organizations, and independent experts—and build a macro model of expertise exchange in the field of Hollywood TV. I argue that expertise in Hollywood is a form of capital which Hollywood professionals exchange for symbolic capital within the industry and in the field of power; it is also a form of capital that agents of the state, social movements, and research organizations exchange for symbolic capital in the field of power; and finally, independent experts trade their knowledge to accumulate economic and symbolic capital within the industry. This model is based on the analysis of data I collected during fieldwork in Los Angeles over 10 months in 2017–2019, which includes 159 interviews, 7 observation sessions, and archival materials.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

How can we make sense of numerous instances of experts in politics, law enforcement, national security, military defense, public health, culture, history, and other social and political issues working closely with the creators of scripted television series in the USA today? For example, *The West Wing's* producers and writers collaborated with about ten consultants, including a former Press Secretary to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, a former Speechwriter and Special Advisor to Reagan, a former Press Secretary for the Clinton administration, former aides to senators, former White House Chief Economic Advisor to Clinton, former Chief of Staff to Reagan, a political columnist, and Al Gore's chief Speech writer (Crawley, 2006; McCabe, 2012). There were 49 credited consultants involved in the creation of the American version of *House of Cards*, including former Chief Deputy Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and the Press Secretary for Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign. These examples indicate that intense processes of knowledge production and transfer take place in Hollywood's TV production sector. Recent studies of police officers' involvement in entertainment TV production in the USA and Canada (Lam, 2014) as well as in the UK (Colbran, 2014) show that the use of professionals from outside the television world as consultants is standard practice in the Western entertainment industries. In other words, television series production is a knowledge-based industry, and this knowledge is not only knowledge of the craft of television production, but also knowledge about the world external to the craft. Moreover, this latter form of knowledge is often expert knowledge, that is, knowledge with a claim to legitimacy.

In this article, I explore these knowledge production and transfer processes by answering the following research questions: why do TV makers need experts, and why and how do experts come to Hollywood? In order to answer these questions, I carry out a Bourdieusian field analysis of contemporary American television series production, which allows me to identify the social conditions that make this knowledge transfer possible, and thus to better understand "institutionalized ways of knowing things" (Jasanoff, 2004, p. 40) and the ways in which meanings and social categories come into existence, are reproduced, challenged, and altered in social space through popular culture.

I argue that the knowledge in question is a form of capital which players in the field of Hollywood TV, independent experts, the state, social movements, and research organizations use in their competitive collaboration. Some of these competitive-collaborative practices are institutionalized and routinized, and this circumstance sometimes masks their competitive core. The major stake in this struggle is, for Hollywood TV, the accumulation of its symbolic capital for internal struggles and its struggles in the field of power. For the state, social movements, and research organizations, the major stake is the accumulation of symbolic capital for their struggles in the field of power. Finally, the stake for independent experts is primarily the accumulation of their economic and symbolic capital within the field of Hollywood.

2 | LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of studies have dealt with the question of how social and political issues make it into American scripted television series. They are based on profound empirical material and offer excellent analysis; however, they do not form a coherent research field characterized by extensive cross-referencing, and do not build on each other. The present study demonstrates one of the ways this common research field can be assembled, and the works I

discuss in this section are essential for seeing this body of work as a field. Below I point to the aspects of these works that have been helpful in my research and can be useful in the further development of the study of expertise in Hollywood.

Gitlin's seminal study *Inside Prime Time* (Gitlin, 2000) offers a thick description of the inner workings of entertainment television production in America in the 1970s, when certain social issues, such as birth control or the war in Vietnam, came to the forefront of public debate, and the beginning of the 1980s, when television makers became more cautious. Gitlin argues that there is no "special decision-making process for 'social issues,' whatever those were" in the television industry (Gitlin, 2000, p. 13). Instead, institutional, profit-oriented practices were creating social conditions that made it possible to portray certain social issues on TV. The rich empirical materials presented in this study undermine arguments based on the assumption that "central planning," if not conspiracy, stood behind certain decisions in Hollywood in relation to the representation of social and political issues in the latter half of the 20th century. The implications of the study may encourage researchers to focus on material interests of industry professionals, and not only on ideological dispositions of social agents external to it.

Mirrlees' and Jenkins' works tend to prioritize the idea of "central planning" and downplay the influence of Hollywood's chaotic and varied inner criteria, considerations, and struggles in the decision-making processes (Jenkins, 2016; Mirrlees, 2016). They thus do what Gitlin has criticized in his book. Yet, this disposition aside, their studies contain a significant amount of valuable empirical data regarding the Department of Defense's and the CIA's collaboration with Hollywood. They show how both agencies have attempted to influence the content of films and television series through various institutionalized modes of collaboration such as contracts, agreements, joint publicity campaigns, as well as the work of military and secret services experts.

Other works focus on day-to-day practices of media production. Most notably, two works by Kirby and Lam, both belonging to the field of science and technology studies, examine day-to-day practices in the film (Kirby, 2011) and television (Lam, 2014) industries. The framework of science and technology studies, and, in the case of Lam, more specifically of actor-network theory, allow these researchers to see the logic of micro-interactions of TV makers between each other and with their material environment, which studies carried out in a broad political economy framework do not always register. Kirby and Lam also emphasize the significance of expertise in the production process. Yet they focus on two types of expertise only, singled out on the basis of its content: Kirby examines scientific expertise and Lam explores police expertise.

Three other works, by Montgomery, Turow, and Colbran, take into consideration power relations and multiple interests within and outside the sphere of entertainment television production, and both regular and irregular aspects of the production process (Colbran, 2014; Montgomery, 1991; Turow, 1989, 2010). Montgomery explains how social movement organizations developed their strategies of influencing the television industry, and how the industry learned to react and, then, to include social movement actors and agendas in their products between the 1960s until the end of the 1980s. Turow offers a thick description of the collaboration and struggles between the sphere of medical organizations and Hollywood from the 1930s to the early 2000s. Colbran's book contains in-depth analysis of the work of police consultants on British criminal and police television series. These studies help identify social spheres, actors, and practices with different degrees of plasticity, stability, and power, which enable expert knowledge production and exchange in and around the entertainment industries. Some of these studies have a long history, some have emerged quite recently, and all of them are products of the development of markets and of broader social relations. These studies make great strides towards explaining the complex patchwork of interactions between experts from different social spheres and the entertainment industries, but they do not map out the field of knowledge provision and actors from multiple spheres as a whole. My study turns to mapping this complex arena where different social spheres overlap when knowledge provision is at stake. Bourdieusian field theory is particularly suited to this analysis because it allows me to construct Hollywood experts as a research object.

Bourdieu posits that human actions and interactions are motivated by the desire to accumulate various resources. He offers a classification of resources, and theorizes them as forms of capital. According to Bourdieu, the

most common types of capital include: economic capital (money, property rights, and their derivatives), cultural capital (education, qualifications, diplomas, cultural goods, manners), social capital (connections with other people), and symbolic capital (prestige, recognition, and legitimacy) (Bourdieu, 2002). As specialized areas of activity have emerged through the division of labor, this has brought about specific rules, norms, criteria, tacit knowledge, and assumptions that are taken for granted (Bourdieu calls them “doxa”), thus generating new forms of capital and new systems of dispositions (“habitus”). Bourdieu claims that division of labor, specific rules, doxa, capitals, and habitus have created social areas that are semi-autonomous (i.e., having their own “nomos,” or law or logic) (Bourdieu, 1969). Bourdieu calls these areas “fields.” The concept of “field” unites two fundamental metaphors: the idea that people compete and collaborate in order to maximize scarce capital, similarly to how players of rugby act on a pitch; and the idea of the magnetic field, which places objects in various positions according to the laws of physics. These two metaphors reflect the dialectics of freedom of agency (people perceive their actions, stakes, and position-takings as essentially their own) and determinacy by the structure (agents are limited by their past trajectories, the volume and structure of accumulated capital, dispositions, positions they occupy, and positions they can occupy, what Bourdieu refers to as “the space of possibles”). Furthermore, Bourdieu emphasizes that the field is a structure of positions and relations between positions, rather than a structure composed of people, their associations, and their interactions (Bottero & Crossley, 2011; Bourdieu, 2013, p. 13). Central to Bourdieusian field analysis is the concept of the field of power. As any field, this is a theoretically constructed space where agents with high volumes of capital compete for the highest stake of all stakes—“the monopoly over legitimate naming” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21), or, in other words, “the monopoly of the legitimate exercise of symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 24). Bourdieu refers to this monopoly as “symbolic power.”¹

My understanding of expertise builds on the conceptualization offered by Gil Eyal. In his approach, expertise is “a distributed set of actors, conditions and operations, only temporarily and provisionally assembled and embodied by an expert” (Eyal, 2019, p. 42).² This conceptualization allows one to see multiple forms of expertise exchange, including tacit ones. This approach allows us to see the body-orientated skills provided by stunt people and prop masters working physically on sets and the material infrastructure provided by the Department of Defense as forms of expertise. In my analysis, I pay attention to power relations embedded in such networks, and build a model of expertise production and exchange that leads me to conclude that expertise is a form of capital. Such a model can have at least four dimensions: static (what is the structure of the field in question?) and dynamic (how do agents interact?); synchronic (how does it work at a given moment?) and diachronic (how has it evolved?). In this article, I focus on the static and synchronic dimensions, and explain what positions in the field of Hollywood are available currently for knowledge producers and knowledge consumers, and what relations exist between these positions.

3 | DATA AND METHOD

This study draws on fieldwork I carried out in October 2017–July 2018 and in June 2019 in Los Angeles. Most of my data are comprised of audio recordings of semi-structured interviews with Hollywood professionals and experts and hand-written notes taken during these interviews. I also took notes during observation sessions. In addition, I have analysed about 200 pages of production files for *House*, *The Sopranos*, and *The Killing*, including research materials and transcripts of conversations between writers and consultants. These materials were accessed from the Writers Guild Foundation Archive.

I conducted 101 formal semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews, including one 3.5-hr group discussion with 6 high-profile writers and producers; had 58 informal conversations; received information that advanced my analysis from 15 email exchanges; attended 14 public events hosted by representatives of the industry; conducted 7 observation sessions related to the production process; and spent 4 days in archives. Out of 101 formal semi-structured interviews, 48 were with Hollywood professionals and 53 with technical advisors or consultants.

Out of these 53 interviews, 34 were with independent experts; 5 with the representatives of academic units which assist the entertainment industry with research; 10 with representatives of social movements which lobby various causes in Hollywood; and 4 with federal agency employees who specialize in providing Hollywood with accurate information about the state. I attended an event at the Writers Guild Foundation, which was entirely dedicated to the work of technical advisors. I observed a day of filming of a TV show episode while shadowing a medical consultant, which gave me a chance to see the micromanagement of the medical consultant's work on set. I also attended an acting workshop for US military veterans who are building up their careers in the entertainment industry, some of whom work or wish to work as military advisors. Overall, I interviewed people who occupy various positions in the industry, from the top (executive producers, writers, directors, actors, casting directors) through the middle to the very bottom of the hierarchy. At the Writers Guild Foundation Archive I read hundreds of pages of production materials for politically and socially themed TV series, which included research materials and transcripts of conversations between the writers and the consultants.

I used theoretical and snowball sampling of research participants. The theoretical sampling of TV makers was based on the concept of "politically and socially themed scripted television series" for which they would have been credited, which I define as television series where political and social issues are important and sometimes even central subject matters, that is, where the plot handles these subjects or the main characters are professionals in politics or often make social and political statements. The term "scripted" is a folk category, which simply means that the program is based on a script, as opposed to "unscripted," which includes "documentary" programs or films and "reality television" (but not the news, which is a different category, but also beyond the scope of the present study). I interviewed individuals who have worked as consultants, advisors, researchers, and as executive producers, producers, writers, and actors on these television series in the last two decades.

I had never been to LA before I arrived there to carry out my fieldwork. Moreover, I am not a native English speaker. This simultaneously made my fieldwork difficult and easy. It was difficult because of my external-to-the-industry and foreign to the USA habitus, which was very much out of tune with most of the communities I was dealing with, especially in the first months of my fieldwork. It was easy because many research participants perceived me as an outsider and were ready to talk to me and to connect me to their colleagues and friends without much regard for hierarchical barriers, because I was not from their social circles and was perceived as someone who does not occupy any rungs on the ladder of their social spheres. My affiliation with the University of Cambridge lent me high symbolic capital that facilitated access to interviewees.

I always made it very clear that I was not trying to get a job in the industry in any capacity, and this, too, made research participants more accessible and more willing to connect me to their colleagues. In addition to being referred, I reached out to many of research participants through cold-calling via email and phone. I used an Internet Movie Database Pro account to identify potential research participants and to find their contact details. The response rate for cold-calling was low, though: from a group of 82 independent experts who I reached out to via email without any referrals, 72 did not respond, 3 refused to be interviewed, and 3 started arranging an interview with me, but then stopped answering my emails, and only 4 were successfully interviewed.

Snowball sampling was much more successful. I asked almost all participants to refer me to other people I could interview, and this practice significantly boosted my contact base. Through LA-based researchers in media studies and sociology, whom I contacted on the basis of shared research interests and who turned out to be crucial gatekeepers for me, I got access to high-profile Hollywood professionals. Initially, I had a very small number of friends in LA, some of whom were however industry professionals, but they helped me to establish contacts with research participants and generally expand my social networks. A community of migrants from the country I was born in was extremely helpful, and their referrals cut across many industry hierarchies. My interest in classical music and contemporary art also allowed me to connect to communities who became providers of connections in the industry. Social gatherings, such as Emmy Awards "For Your Consideration" events and friends' parties, were very helpful. The former allowed me to connect to high-profile professionals and their publicity managers. Finally, frequent Uber and Lyft rides were a rich source of contacts. I did not have a car in LA and for 10 months, I was

typically undertaking at least two Uber or Lyft rides per day, shared with other passengers, lasting typically for an hour because I was living in Sherman Oaks. The passengers who shared my rides were often employed in the television industry, and informal chats led to interviews and further contacts.

The ethics review board of the Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge, approved the study. My research participants signed consent forms or expressed their consent to be interviewed in writing in emails. Audio recordings, transcriptions, and digital notes have been stored on an encrypted hard drive. Transcripts were anonymized, except for a few cases where research participants expressed their consent to be quoted by name.

I carried out a thematic analysis of my data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012), bringing together thematic patterns emerging from the data and theoretical concepts originating from my theoretical framework, giving priority to the former.

4 | HOLLYWOOD AS A FIELD

Building on the works of Bourdieu and on the subsequent theorization of field analysis, primarily by Hilgers & Mangez, Lahire, and Krause, I conceptualize the social sphere of entertainment content production as a field (Hilgers & Mangez, 2015; Krause, 2018; Lahire, 2015).³ Hollywood demonstrates necessary conditions to be conceptualized as a field. It is a particular social space and game, within which actors battle for a specific type of capital. They compete or collaborate in order to accumulate this capital, and this capital is irreducible to other forms of capital. This capital is expressed in a number of non-economic criteria of distinction and produces hierarchies; the capital includes reputation, awards, past credits, talent agents, creative partners, studios and networks, the “quality” or “power” of “stories,” their “relevance,” “voice,” style, taste, and talent. Economic capital (budgets and economic profitability, “the bottom line”) is also important when creators “pitch” their products and when studio and network executives “pick them up,” decline, “cancel,” or “renew.” The production of mainstream film and television content, which is the core of Hollywood, is hardly possible without significant financial resources. As a result, the field does not have a pole of pure “disinterested” production, yet the degree of interest-ness can vary. Non-economic and economic forms of capital are easily convertible between one another, but cannot be fully reduced to each other. Their distribution forms the structure and hierarchy of possible positions in the field.

The field of Hollywood generates high volumes of economic and symbolic capital and thus belongs to the field of power, that is, the field where social agents who possess high volumes of various forms of capital (or, simply, elites) compete for the possibility to impose their categories and classifications of the social world on others, and to frame them as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 215). Hollywood’s “stories”, the “power” of which its professionals often praise, are precisely such classifications. Thus, I can identify two major aspects of Hollywood’s symbolic power. First, Hollywood “tells stories” which impact human lives, or, in Bourdieu’s language, Hollywood produces symbolic structures, classifications, categories of vision and division which have strong performative power in the social world. Second, Hollywood is a space of work which has its own hierarchically ordered positions and embodied dispositions (*habitus*) orientated to the field. Capitals, including symbolic capital, are unequally distributed in Hollywood. These inequalities are supplemented by many other symbolic boundaries and classifications based on ideas of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, citizenship status, occupation, class, education, family capitals, and bodily needs, which can be found in other social spheres as well. Yet, overall, to many people the industry looks like an appealing and prestigious place to work, that is, it possesses a high volume of symbolic capital. Moreover, its high-profile professionals are recognized by elites of other fields as peers, or, in Bourdieu’s language, Hollywood’s elites belong to the field of power, or the field of elites. Not only are they in close social proximity to other powerful agents, but they also all struggle over symbolic capital and power. In the next section, I argue that expertise is capital that can be converted into symbolic capital.

5 | THE DEMAND FOR EXPERTISE

In this section, I answer my first research question, that is, “why do Hollywood TV makers need experts?” Hollywood's social agents constantly work on accumulating all available forms of capital—economic, social, cultural, industry-specific, and symbolic—and convert them into one another. Their success depends largely on the judgement of distributors and audiences, and thus Hollywood has to coordinate its products, as well as its public image, with the appreciations, demands, and sensitivities of these two parties (Lotz, 2018).

One of the capitals which Hollywood is interested in accumulating is expertise in issues that lie beyond the immediate lifeworld of industry professionals and can be helpful in the creative and marketing processes.⁴ More specifically, as my analysis of interviews with industry professionals allow me to conclude, Hollywood needs such expertise for the following reasons. First, a major stake in Hollywood TV is the rights to an original and appealing story, and expert knowledge helps executive producers and writers get inspired and come up with such stories. Second, expertise helps TV makers to accumulate audiences' trust in details and to “cash” this trust by creating not necessarily realistic but dramatically remarkable story lines (two interviews with the writers). Third, experts' involvement allows Hollywood professionals to promote their work as accurate, authentic, and backed by “professionals” (“Homeland” Finale for Your Consideration screening at The Television Academy and the discussion panel with the actors and producers, June 5, 2018). Accuracy and authenticity of cultural products, or, on other words, their perceived realism (Hall, 2003), is a powerful means of gaining distinction in the competition for the attention of distributors and consumers alike. Fourth, expertise works as a shield that protects TV makers from criticism (interview with a writer of political and medical shows).

The risks have become higher throughout the last decade for three major reasons: first, American TV programs have become more accessible to global audiences, especially through streaming portals (Lotz, 2017, 2018). Hollywood's products exist in a mediatized social environment (Couldry & Hepp, 2017): they are made mostly by LA-based social agents, but their subject matters often exceed the geographical, temporal, and social habitat of their creators. The shows produced there are watched, scrutinized, appreciated, and criticized by audiences worldwide. The shows become embedded in the “real” life worlds they depict. Second, with the rise of social media, shows can be discussed and judged online by growing social media communities. The shows often generate waves of critical feedback online coming from the places remote from Los Angeles. Third, Hollywood's many social agents have stocks of power high enough to take part in the field of power where Hollywood's elites compete with elites from other social spheres over the right to impose their categories of vision and division, classifications, and hierarchies as legitimate and ultimately unquestionable. Hollywood's contenders in the field of power are the state (Brownell, 2014; Holt, 2011; Lyons, 1997; Ross, 2011; Vaughn, 2006a, 2006b), social movements (Doyle, 2016; Montgomery, 1991; Perlman, 2016; Raymond, 2018; Suman & Rossman, 2000), and research communities (Kirby, 2011; Nelson et al., 2014; Turow, 1989, 2010). Hollywood positions the experts as a force which guarantees the accuracy and authenticity of its stories and thus supports Hollywood's claims for the legitimacy of its social categories, that is, of its symbolic power. In case of backlash, TV makers can refer to the fact that their shows have consultants on board, or they can promise to hire such consultants in the future to lessen public pressure and criticism (Montgomery, 1991) and strengthen their positions in the field of power.

Thus, expert knowledge is a form of capital which Hollywood professionals generate and convert into other forms of capital: primarily economic capital, industry-specific recognition, and symbolic capital. As a form of capital, expertise is utilized in struggles and collaborations within the industry and outside it, and that is why Hollywood needs experts. In the next section, I answer the second research question, that is, why and how experts come to Hollywood.

6 | THE SUPPLY OF EXPERTISE

There are four major social spheres⁵ that supply Hollywood with expertise: state organizations, social movement organizations, research organizations, and independent experts. The first three spheres supply expertise in

exchange for the possibility to manage their image, control the discussion about issues which they see as part of their agenda (for example, national security). State organizations also aim to attract new employees, while social movements aim to change hiring patterns in order to make jobs in Hollywood more accessible to their constituencies. They target Hollywood because of its size in terms of numbers of possible vacancies (and thus the high number of positions with high levels of capitals), the size of its audiences and its media capital (Couldry, 2003), its prestige, that is, its high symbolic capital (and thus high chances that its large audiences will perceive their categories of vision and division as legitimate). In other words, Hollywood looks appealing for representatives of these three spheres as a field with high potential returns of capitals, and, at the same time, as their powerful contender in the field of power. They aim to change Hollywood as a workplace according to their values and to change its stories (i.e., categories of vision and division). They also aim to change social space at large (including aspects of their own inner workings and their place in this space). Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, relations of open vigorous competition between Hollywood and these three spheres became gradually supplemented and sometimes even replaced by less ostensible forms of competition, ultimately resulting in something that today can be described as competitive collaboration. Expertise exchange has been a popular form of such competitive collaboration (Brownell, 2014; Montgomery, 1991; Turow, 1989, 2010). The fourth sphere I mention here, that of independent experts, is a subfield of Hollywood, and thus its logic is different from the logic of the first three spheres. I will explain this in greater detail below.

State organizations working with Hollywood are federal agencies that have public affairs departments and sometimes specifically "Hollywood liaison" departments. For example, the branches of the Department of Defense; the CIA; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Customs and Border Protection have such offices. They see their mission as informing the public of their work, protecting their image and the image of the state in general, and boosting their recruitment numbers (four interviews with representatives of state organizations). They have specific protocols of working with the film and TV industry (an interview with a representative of a military organization). State experts are both reactive and proactive. They answer Hollywood calls and attend film and TV conferences to inform Hollywood professionals about their consulting services. Those of them in possession of material infrastructure, such as equipment and military bases, usually provide this infrastructure together with their expertise, free of monetary charge, yet in exchange for the possibility to review scripts and overview the filming process.

A representative of an LA-based entertainment office of a service branch of the Department of Defense explained at length in our interview how collaboration with the industry is organized. It involves a lot of communication, mostly through conference calls between an officer in an LA office, a member of the Department's entertainment media office in Washington DC, and Hollywood professionals. Communication at every stage hinges on the signing of a contract based on the Department's special "Instruction" (*DoD Instruction 5410.16 "DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Media Productions"*, 2015). The research participant emphasizes:

We don't exercise creative control. And that's something that a lot of times people are like, "Well, you probably only want to work with people who are going to depict the Military in a positive light?" That might not always be true. (March 2018)

The research participant remembers the case when the office supported a program where the protagonist associated with the branch was "a perpetrator." Yet, the office normally tries to negotiate for the plot to be altered so that such a person at least faces consequences of his or her behavior. Additionally, a representative of the office would usually be "on the ground" (at a military base where the filming takes place) to analyze, and, if possible, to correct "the attitude" of the actors (the motivation of the actor or a stereotypical behavior of the character):

A lot of times things aren't written, so it's only kind of in the attitude. So kind of seeing how the actors play stuff is important as well. (March 2018)

Social movement organizations, that is, organizations that support the rights and depictions of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, women, LGBTQ+ communities, migrants, domestic workers, caregivers, people with disabilities, and military veterans, can be grouped into the following two types: social movements for which media and Hollywood outreach is just one out of many activist directions (for example, Define American and Color of Change), and those who specialize in media activism (for example, GLAAD, National Hispanic Media Coalition, or Muslims on Screen and Television). Both lobby particular types of portrayals of their constituencies or of certain issues and argue for more workplace inclusivity. The experts who represent social movements are proactive and reactive: they reach out to Hollywood and offer their consulting services, and if they are already well known in the industry as expertise providers, they receive calls from creatives without first reaching out.

During the period of time I spent conducting fieldwork in 2017–2019, there were many social campaigns going on in the USA in general, and in Hollywood in particular. Many of them were driven, directly and indirectly, by Donald Trump's presidency and the intended and implemented policies of his administration. The most prominent campaigns were those in support of immigration to the USA and against gender-based discrimination and violence (Women's March, #MeToo, Time's Up, campaigns against Harvey Weinstein and Kevin Spacey). However, despite the power and meaning struggles in Hollywood and in the USA in general, which have been taking place at least since the 1960s (Doyle, 2016; Montgomery, 1991; Perlman, 2016; Raymond, 2018; Suman & Rossman, 2000), and which have gotten even more intense since 2016, people of color and women remain significantly under-represented in the industry (Hunt, Ramón, & Tran, 2019; Hunt & Ramón, 2020; Lauzen, 2019, 2020a, 2020b; Yuen, 2016).

In the context of expertise exchange and on a daily basis these power and meaning struggles consist in relationship building between Hollywood and social movements and iterative consultations of the industry with the experts in social issues. A representative of one social movement describes how they usually work with the television writers. This account represents a way typical amongst my research participants:

A lot of what we do is going into writers' rooms, and discussing the ways that [our issue is] portrayed. And we do that in a lot of ways. [...] Sometimes we go in the writers' room, and you know, just like have kind of an open conversation. Sometimes we go in there and more of an intentional way. So, we'll bring in members of the community that speak to one of their needs. [...] Sometimes, it's, it's reviewing scripts, you know, for accuracy, and to see the, you know, and you know, questions about "How realistic is this?" Sometimes it's legal questions. [...] Sometimes we do set visits, [...] because sometimes there's questions during the filming of like, okay, now that we're seeing this coming together, maybe we could do this and it'd be more compelling. (March 2018)

The entertainment media department of this organization was quite new on the scene, and my two interlocutors who work there emphasized their conflict-averse disposition:

We always come from a like what we call a high trust position. So we, when we work on a show generally we're looking for a partnership. We don't expect them necessarily to honor all of our notes and changes but we make strong suggestions and hope that they will.

They prefer long-term collaboration, which is mostly possible on television, compared to feature film, because television projects last for a long period of time, and the writing is taking place at the same time as the filming.

The third sphere supplying expertise to Hollywood is the sphere of research organizations. The USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism has a research and advocacy unit called the Norman Lear Center,⁶ which specializes in the analysis of media effects. In 2000, the Norman Lear Center launched a program called Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S), which, as the HH&S website states, "provides the entertainment industry with accurate and up-to-date information for storylines on health, safety and national security" (*About Us | Hollywood Health & Society*, n.d.). Shortly before I started my fieldwork, UCLA completed a similar program,

called Global Media Center for Social Impact. The National Academy of Sciences runs a public outreach program entitled the Science and Entertainment Exchange, which focuses on providing Hollywood professionals with general updates about the development of the natural sciences and consultations about particular problems through putting people in touch and networking events.

When speaking about the ultimate interests of all the three types of organizations, their representatives made it clear that they work with Hollywood in order to essentially introduce and promote their categories of vision and division and accumulate symbolic capital in the field of power, to draw on Bourdieu's terms. A representative of a social movement organization said in one of our conversations:

We always have the deeper goal to educate. Oh, we never talked to our writers' room about educating anyone about anything. It's the easiest way to turn them off [laughs]. They just want, they're just interested in good stories. [...] We always say it's like you have to coat the broccoli with a ton of cheese, the education has to be entertaining. And our goal is always to educate. (March 2018)

A representative of a state organization puts it like this: "Ultimately, our job is to protect and project the image of the United States [name of the organization]." A representative of a research unit talks about their mission to "raise awareness" of the issues they consult on and to "disseminate" information. As much as they value their relationships with the industry, their ultimate interest is not to please them, but to control, produce, or change meanings. Neither are interested in accumulating economic capital through their consulting practices. Importantly, social movement and research organizations are cautious about being mentioned in credit titles. A representative of one such organization explains their attitude towards credits in particular films or television shows in the following way: "We prefer not to be credited. [...] Usually that's because we have no guarantee of how the storyline is going to play out." A research organization representative states: "We also don't take a credit on the show screen credits. You know, we're here simply to support the writers." In contrast, the Department of Defense's Instruction regulating the Department's relations with Hollywood states straightforwardly:

The production company will place a credit in the end titles immediately above the "Special Thanks" section (if any) that states "Special Thanks to the United States Department of Defense," with no less than one clear line above and one clear line below such credit acknowledging the DoD assistance provided. (*DoD Instruction 5410.16 "DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Media Productions"*, 2015)

At the same time, it is standard practice for social movement and research organizations to organize events in typical Hollywood formats: panels, festivals, and award ceremonies. A representative of a research organization notes in this respect: "It's also PR, it's PR for us [...] and it's publicity for their show."

The fourth sphere that provides Hollywood with expertise is the sphere of independent experts. They consult on issues which are also covered by the three spheres discussed above, but they are not backed by organizations (other than their own small consulting businesses, if they have them), and, therefore, unlike experts from the state, social movement or research organizations, they have much less power. These experts form a subfield of Hollywood. They depend on Hollywood,⁷ that is, they exchange their expertise for economic, social, symbolic, and Hollywood-specific capitals within the industry. They play by industry rules, buying into its hierarchy and aiming to rise within it. There they belong to the dominated pole because they typically have little leverage in the industry.

7 | CONCLUSION

In this article, I argue that demand and supply of expertise in Hollywood create and reinforce each other. Expertise exchange is a relational phenomenon, which emerges and is reproduced as competitive and collaborative relations

between Hollywood, its subfield of independent experts, and also the state, social movements, and research organizations. The agents of these three spheres, as well as agents of the field of Hollywood, are aware of the benefits which can stem from their collaboration. Hollywood needs experts because they bring new stories, contribute to the creation of perceived realism and relevance of TV series, and thus help raise economic, industry-specific, and symbolic capitals of Hollywood that are necessary for within-the-industry competition, as well as for external struggle of Hollywood in the field of power. The agents of the state, social movements, and research organizations see Hollywood as a means to deliver their categories of vision and division to audiences (or as a source of media capital that works across several fields—Couldry, 2003), to raise these agents' symbolic capital in the field of power, and thus to dominate in this field, where Hollywood is also their competitor. This way, Hollywood plays a triple role in relation to expertise exchange: it is a field, a source of media capital for the expert organizations, and their competitor in the field of power. Independent experts use it to accumulate economic and symbolic capital within the industry. In all these cases, expertise functions as a form of capital.

The collaboration between the experts and Hollywood TV makers might offer an impression of pre-established harmony between the four spheres of expertise supply and the field of Hollywood TV. This harmony is a result of the coordination between various interests of the players of the field of Hollywood TV and the four spheres discussed above, assembled through routinized and institutionalized knowledge-transfer practices. This coordination masks the tensions and conflicts taking place during the production processes. The collaboration might look like a dance, while its core is a fight.

If we agree that the social order is produced and reproduced through social actions and interactions, and these actions and interactions are meaning-driven and sustainable (institutionalized and professionalized), then, by answering the questions posed in this study, we get closer to a better understanding of how one of the most influential meaning-generating industries in the world produces and reproduces social order.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The anonymised data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ In this study, I rely on definitions and explanations developed in the collectively written volume of Hilgers and Mangez (2015), especially in the contributing article by Lahire (2015), and also the work by Krause (2018).
- ² See more on the expertise as networks conceptualization which has informed this study: Eyal and Buchholz (2010); Eyal and Pok (2015, 2017).
- ³ During my fieldwork, I selected research participants, phrased my interview questions, and looked for documents by focusing predominantly on issues related to scripted television series production, and my analysis and conclusions relate to this particular field. However, as many research participants pointed out, the borders between this field and the neighboring fields of film, animation, late night shows, improv and stand up, LA-based music, video games, theater, and even theme parks production, are porous, and all these fields are often referred to as all encompassing "Hollywood" or "the industry." When in the article I use the concepts "Hollywood" and "the industry," I imply that my statements relate to this overarching field of the entertainment content production. When I refer to Hollywood TV or the field of scripted television production, I am not certain that my statements about this field can be also relevant to other neighboring fields within Hollywood. See more on the limits of the field in Bourdieu (2013), Buchholz (2016), Lahire (2015), and Sapiro (2013).
- ⁴ I distinguish this type of expertise from expertise about the within-the-industry matters, which is also a very important form of capital, but it lies beyond the scope of this research.
- ⁵ I use the concept "social spheres" and not "fields" because it is outside of the scope of this study to establish whether these spheres can be considered as fields in Bourdieu's sense. I have focused on the interactions of these spheres with

Hollywood and not their internal struggles. This does not mean that they cannot be conceptualized as fields, but in order to construct them as such, another type of study should be carried out. Therefore, for the purpose of the present study, only Hollywood is conceptualized as a field, and not the other social spheres I discuss.

⁶ The Center is named after the American television writer and producer Norman Lear who has been one of the industry professionals who challenged and changed Hollywood's treatment of birth control, women's liberation, and other social issues both as a professional and as an activist (Montgomery, 1991).

⁷ I call them "independent" in relation to other spheres outside Hollywood.

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