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Introduction to the Third Part

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Introduction to the Third Part

by Marco Santoro

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This third, and last, part of the Symposium on the international circulation of Bourdieu's work (see the general [Introduction to the Symposium](#) for a detailed discussion of its ratio and objectives) features five new contributions: three on individual national cases (Australia, Russia, and Italy), and two on particular topics which develop and detail issues already addressed in previous chapters: the global flow and timing of Bourdieu's translations and the reception, with a focus on Latin America, of Bourdieu's (and Wacquant's) harsh criticism of American cultural imperialism.

In their article, Australian sociologists [Ian Woodward and Michael Emmison](#) illustrate the modalities, timing, and patterns of reception of Bourdieu's work in their national field, which is not only English-speaking but also located at the crossroads of Western and Eastern intellectual influences. Both specialists in the social study of cultural consumption and globalization (Emmison has contributed to one of the very first attempts to replicate *La distinction* out of France, in 1999), the two scholars chronicle the affordances but also repudiations of Bourdieu's sociology in Australia, showing how the story of Bourdieu's incorporation has been slow and patchy, characterised by indifference or lack of appreciation for most of the 1970s and 1980s. This happened irrespective both of the local extent of research into matters central to Bourdieu's program (e.g. class, education, and social reproduction) within sociology, and the rise of cultural studies as a new discipline. According to the authors, this weak reception is a function of intellectual networks within and across institutions, of the scholarly training and the academic trajectories of key players within both soci-

ology and cultural studies, and of traditional historical concerns of scholarship within these fields. Their analysis also shows, however, an appreciation of Bourdieu's work across the social sciences and humanities from the late 1990s on, especially within educational studies and researches into cultural consumption.

An interesting case study in itself for obvious reasons, Russia is explored here from the point of view of the uses of Bourdieu's work as a crucial resource in the re-founding of an intellectual field which has been strongly affected in the past by communism and the hegemony of dogmatic Marxism. This accounts for the late arrival of Bourdieu in this region of the world, where translations and even renderings of the original publications did not arrive before the early 1990s. [Bikbov](#)'s study reconstructs the ways a "Bourdieu in Russian" has been produced as a tool for the construction of the early post-Soviet sociological field. A managerial-based academic power structure (as opposed to a professional- or peers-based one) is held as the key factor explaining the difficulties for a critical sociology to work as an asset for a "normal" academic career – which has turned the "Russian Bourdieu" into an essentially extra-disciplinary phenomenon.

Finally, Italy is here addressed as a case study in the sociology of ideas and of intellectual reputations. The reception and uses of Bourdieu's work in Italy, especially among sociologists, from 1966 to 2009, is investigated using both published and personal documents, i.e. interviews and participant observation. I reconstruct the whole series of translations (articles and books), identify the processes and mechanisms of introduction in Italy of a French scholar, and analyze the modes of reading activated by these processes among Italian social theorists and empirical researchers. Finally, I attempt to offer a structural explanation of these patterns of reception through an interpretive model focused on the analysis of the genesis, structure, and transformation of the Italian sociological field since the 1960s. Ecological, network, organizational, and epistemological factors are highlighted and documented. What the paper discusses is a case of intellectual marginalization in spite of an early and diffuse penetration (mainly through translations), but also the ongoing transformations that the field is currently experiencing thanks to an increasing internationalization of research topics and practices, which make Bourdieu a crucial resource especially for younger scholars.

As anticipated, the last two papers address not national cases but relevant thematic issues. The fourth paper is about the global reception of Bourdieu's harsh criticism of American cultural imperialism, focusing on the circulation of a well-known text. Published in 1998, "Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste," appeared for the first time in *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* and was immediately translated into Portuguese and German, and a year later into Spanish and English (and even Italian).

While some scholars considered this article scarcely relevant, others recognized it as one of those texts that “made history.” The data collected by [Beigel](#) shows that its circulation was marginal in the United States and it had minimum reception in Latin America. Two different questions are addressed by the paper in order to account for this pattern of reception: was it that the state of the academic field did not allow the revival of the issue of “cultural imperialism” that seemed long time buried after military dictatorships and Neo-liberal governments? Was it that the article under study failed to recognize or understand the endogenous situation and for this reason it received scarce attention, especially in Brazil? Beigel shows that both questions are pertinent and locate the explanation of the odd reception in the carrefour between them. With its new data and its perspective, the paper nicely complements the two articles already published about this region of the world (Argentina and Brazil).

Finally, [Sapiro and Bustamante](#) focus on the flow, timing, and structure of Bourdieu’s book translations from French. It is a contribution to both the sociology of the circulation of ideas and translations studies, which documents with a large data base how Bourdieu’s work has entered languages different from the original one. Translation is conceptualized by the authors as an indicator of recognition and of reception of his work. What emerges from their research, is that until 2008, Bourdieu had 347 translated titles, published into 34 languages and 42 countries. The statistical analysis of these titles provides a picture of the linguistic and geographic distribution of this work in translation and of its evolution over time. Network analysis is used in order to display the centrality of languages, countries, and works: a contribution not only to the sociology of intellectual life, then, but also to methodology, by one of the major heirs of Bourdieu’s teaching and lesson (an internationally renown specialist in the sociology of literature, Gisèle Sapiro has studied with Bourdieu and is currently *directeur* of the CSE in Paris).

As a whole, this third part adds new insights and dimensions to the understanding of the global circulation of a large and complex sociological work like Bourdieu’s, not only by widening the gaze to regions previously untouched, but also highlighting and discussing from original points of view and with new empirical material topics already addressed – like the global circulation of texts through translations and the issue of cultural globalization and imperialism. I hope the many texts collected in this and the previous issues have contributed to a better knowledge not only of Bourdieu’s work and its position in the current global sociological debate, but also to the understanding of the many ways in which an *oeuvre* can be received, interpreted, used, assessed, and criticized, as well as the variety of social processes and mechanisms which are at play in the circulation of ideas – even in the field of a “science” like

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sociology. The Symposium has come to an end, but the discourse it has prompted is open and alive – and to be continued.

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