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## How "Not" to Become a Dominant French Sociologist: Bourdieu in Italy, 1966-2009

(doi: 10.2383/31372)

Sociologica (ISSN 1971-8853)

Fascicolo 2-3, maggio-dicembre 2009

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# How “Not” to Become a Dominant French Sociologist: Bourdieu in Italy, 1966-2009

by Marco Santoro

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Writing about the reception of Pierre Bourdieu in Italy inevitably means to address the larger and complex topic of the historical relations between Italian and French cultures: the topic is well known by, and long debated among, intellectual as well as political historians,<sup>1</sup> but relatively unexplored from a sociological point of view. While I suggest that this article can contribute to a (historical) sociology of intellectual relations between France and Italy, this is not its first objective, or at least this is not the objective which I had in mind when I began to work on it. Indeed, I had two related and more specific aims in mind while I was researching for this paper and writing it: 1) to document as closer as possible the history of the reception of Bourdieu's *oeuvre* from its inception in the 1960s to the beginning of the new millennium, looking for patterns and turning points and offering a useful periodization; 2) to advance an explanatory framework for this story, and in particular to account for the relatively strong and apparently mysterious neglect of Bourdieu among Italian sociologists, despite his current global success.

As the title of the paper suggests, I have conceived and written this work as a case study in the sociology of intellectual life, or of ideas.<sup>2</sup> My interest focuses es-

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Mangoni [1982].

<sup>2</sup> In other words, this is also a study in the sociology of science, in particular in that research tradition which studies the processes of legitimation of theories in the human or interpretive sciences [see e.g. Lamont 1987; McLaughlin 1998; Clegg 1999]. This also means that it is a study in the politics of (intellectual) reputation [Lang and Lang 1988; Kapsis 1989; Fine 1996].

pecially on the factors, mechanisms and dynamics which account for the fate of an intellectual work – in this case Bourdieu's – as well as an intellectual identity – in this case that of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (I underline these two features: *French* and *sociologist*) – in a *different* national field from that in which such work and identity developed. There is a small albeit stimulating tradition of studies on this topic [e.g. Lamont 1987; McLaughlin 1998], to which I hope to contribute with a case of relative failure of intellectual import in spite of the many favourable conditions – both internal and external – in which that import occurred and developed. While Lamont focuses on the conditions which generated a new intellectual domination out of its original place (Jacques Derrida in the United States), and McLaughlin explores a case of decline after big success of a foreign scholar (Erich Fromm, again in the United States), I will try to document and explain the story of an early and continuous reception matched with persistent marginalization. The assumption this paper moves from – a relatively commonsensical one among Bourdieu's followers and scholars both in France and in Italy – is that in the Italian intellectual world (or better: field) Bourdieu has never gained that intellectual legitimation which could only support an intellectual domination in a foreign country, where other social basis of cultural power are typically lacking (e.g. direct academic influence, gatekeeping, control of academic positions, etc.). This is particularly true, as we will see, for the academic field of sociology – which paradoxically is the very same field where Bourdieu has mainly contributed to during his long professional life, and to which he has claimed he full belongs since the early phases of his scholarly career.

These considerations raise a further issue which I would like to make explicit. The story of the reception of an author could be read as a clue of a disciplinary field's features and transformations. The choices about which author or text has to be translated and/or introduced, as well as the neglects, silences, and omissions, are powerful indicators of a discipline's structure as a *local* field (in this case a *national* field). Bourdieu [2002] has often claimed that the scientific field is the locus of a competitive struggle for the control (at its best, the monopolistic control, that is the monopoly) of scientific authority. Thus the introduction of a foreign work or author clashes inevitably with a resistance, in so far as it risks to change (at limit, subvert) the existing order and power relations among schools and academic groups as well as among different interpretations of reality [cfr. Pollak 1988]. It is not unusual, in fact, that the entry of a new foreign work goes together with a period of crisis and the advent of a new intellectual generation.

Unlike what occurred in the United Kingdom and in the United States – and possibly in Germany, – the penetration of Bourdieu's work in Italy has been generally

weak, it has been circumscribed to very small and dispersed networks or circles, and it has been unable to initiate significant transformations in the field. This means that we should look not only for factors which have fostered the reception, but also for the ones which hampered it, despite the moments of crisis and the generational change that occurred in Italy as elsewhere in the last thirty years (even if they probably occurred here at a slower rate than in the United States and in the United Kingdom). In fact, as we will see, the factors which limited or hindered a real penetration of Bourdieu's concepts and approach in contemporary Italian sociology are often the same which promoted its early reception in the 1970s through a massive work of translations in Italian language (not only for the logical implication that the many translations of the 1970s have necessarily reduced the stock of works to be introduced and debated in the following decades).

This suggests a third aim of this paper, as well as of the research from which it is drawn: to use the story of the reception of Bourdieu as a kind of "analyzer" of the Italian sociological field, in order to identify its internal structures and its divisions, as well as its peculiarities and above all its patterns of change (as Pollak did with the history of the reception of Max Weber in France). This last objective, even if addressed in different parts of the paper, should be considered as a complementary aim of this specific paper, to be developed in a following one (or a new version of this).

My sources are mainly two: documentary ones (especially lists or catalogues of publishers, tables of contents of journals, scientific as well as newspaper articles, introductions and prefaces to books etc.) and few oral witnesses by relevant actors in the field of sociology (and to a less extent anthropology and history) which I collected for this study. To these two kinds of sources I should add my personal experience (and participant observation) as a professional sociologist and a past academic historian, as well as co-founder and co-editor of one of the two most influential journals in the field of cultural studies in Italy (*Studi Culturali*). Even if it is not largely emphasized in the following pages, this ethnographic backdrop of my research contributed to the interpretive framework which has driven my writing, and the uses I have done of my documentary and oral sources. This means I am the only responsible for what I write here.

### **Bourdieu in Italy: When, How, and Through Whom**

The story of the reception of Bourdieu in Italy begun early, especially considering the relatively recent story of sociology in Italy. A chair in Sociology has been established only in 1950 (at the University of Florence), and the first public compet-

ition for a chair in sociology in Italy was held only in 1960. Compared with France, academic sociology in Italy was still in its infancy in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this, the first Bourdieu’s article translated and published in Italy goes back to 1966, when the author was still in his mid-thirties, and a relatively young researcher in a French research centre under the formal direction of another scholar – the influent Raymond Aron, already well known in Italy as a philosopher of history and a liberal social theorist.<sup>4</sup> The article is a minor one in Bourdieu’s early production, originally co-authored with his wife (the only text he co-authored with her in his life). Interestingly enough, it was translated in an economic journal. Apart from its timing, the historical relevance of this translation is twofold: its outsider status and especially its quality. The first feature has to do with the disciplinary domain in which it appeared: not sociology (the field inside which the article originally was born and presented) but economics. The second feature is relative to the literary form, and the type of translation: not a faithful and complete one, but a selected and resumed one. As we will see, this is a fate shared by subsequent translations of Bourdieu’s works, including books (even important ones).

Moving from this first episode, it is possible to identify five phases or stages in the transalpine import of this sociological *oeuvre*: the first (1966-1969) is the stage of the contingent presence; the second (1971-1976) is the stage of the systematic import through a massive but in the end not successful program of translations which was also a political-intellectual project of cultural intervention; the third (1983-1995) is the stage of a (failed) attempt to legitimate his academic and intellectual work; the fourth (from 1998 to 2001) could be designed as the stage of public exposition, supported mainly by the press, and to which Bourdieu’s premature death has contributed with an exceptional increase in mediatic presence (e.g. articles in newspapers, dossiers in periodicals, conferences, etc.). This crucial moment could have been the terminus *ad quem* of my full reconstruction. But a fifth stage should be considered, albeit briefly: the current period of what I would call the phase of intellectual restoration: i.e. the long-due incorporation of Bourdieu as a primary reference in the con-

<sup>3</sup> I have reconstructed and debated this early history of sociology in Italy, since the 1870s through the 1950s, in Santoro 2010. Following Johan Heilbron’s periodization, we could say that in the 1950s Italian sociology was still in his pre-disciplinary stage [Heilbron 2005].

<sup>4</sup> The relationships between Aron and Bourdieu are worth of study, especially considering the strong legitimation Aron already had in countries like the United States and Italy [on the stature of Aron among Italian social scientists see the useful Panebianco 1992]. Interestingly, I never found any reference to their relationship in an Italian text on Bourdieu or on Aron. Such relationship was institutional more than intellectual, but deep enough to strongly affect Bourdieu’s career as a young sociologist and to inspire and produce some famous sentences in Aron’s *Memoirs* about his early assistant and pupil.

temporary canon of social theory and social research, thanks mainly to the initiatives (both editorial and scholarly) of a small but relatively integrated network of sociologists, usually in their thirties and forties, well acquainted with recent Anglophone and French sociology, located in central places in the national sociological field, and active in research fields traditionally marginalised in Italy as the sociology of art, the sociology of consumption, the sociology of cultural production, and the sociology of time. These initiatives could only be partially described as strategies of postmortem reputation-building: in fact, this fifth stage started *before* the sudden death of Bourdieu in January 2002. As one of its actors, I will only briefly describe and discuss this fifth stage, leaving to others the job of a deeper and more detached analysis.

This succession of stages coincides – from an institutional point of view – with a social trajectory of Bourdieu in the Italian publishing field: from marginal and peripheral positions (highly specialized journals far from sociology, or even provincial ones) towards more central positions, passing through a militant publisher (Guaraldi, the publisher of all the first Italian book translations of Bourdieu) then a highly reputed academic publisher (Il Mulino), and finally a publisher with high cultural legitimation but a general audience (Feltrinelli, who published almost all the latest book translations). If we read it in terms of field theory, we can say that the transition is also from an exclusive location (i.e. marginalisation) in the subfield of restricted and/or local cultural production, to a full presence in the national field of publishing – both restricted and large.

In the following sections I will briefly discuss each stage, giving the necessary information about persons, publishers, and titles involved.

### *Stage One (1966-1969): Contingent and Episodic Appearances*

As the official bibliography of Bourdieu's *oeuvre* [Delsaut and Rivière 2002] attests, his very first text translated in Italian is "I contadini e la fotografia," a short article published in 1966 in the *Rivista di economia agraria*. This is a partial and much simplified translation of the article "Le paysan et la photographie," originally written by Bourdieu with his wife Marie-Claire<sup>5</sup> and published in French in 1965 in the *Revue française de sociologie*. Preceded by articles on viticulture and on the management of the farm and followed by short notes on the market of rural machines and on various

<sup>5</sup> Oddly enough, her status as co-author isn't recognized in the Italian edition, which does not make any mention neither of the previous French edition. This could suggest a direct participation of the first author (Pierre Bourdieu) in the editorial work of abridgment and synthesis. However, I have no data to support this interpretation.

systems of milking, it was difficult that an article on photography among farmers would attract much attention from the habitual readership of the review – an official venue linked to and supported by the state-based Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria. The presence of a rural sociologist in the editorial staff is the most probable explanation for this odd and with no apparent consequences appearance.

This was followed, one year after, by the translation of a much more important and foundational article, “Sociology and Philosophy in France since 1945,” co-authored with Jean-Claude Passeron and originally published in English in the American journal *Social Research* (official journal of the New School for Social Research) in 1967.<sup>6</sup> As Bourdieu’s readers well know, this is a very important text in the intellectual biography of the French scholar, and a relevant contribution to the knowledge of French intellectual life in the XX century. Contrary to our expectations, however, the intellectual mediator for this second appearance in the Italian language was not an academic circle. The journal in which the translation appeared, *Trimestre*, was a recently founded review of culture and politics published in a Southern Italian city, Pescara (and still in print): a very peripheral venue, therefore, not specifically linked to any discipline and far from the capitals of academic life and publishing in Italy.

Two years later the name of Bourdieu appeared on a well established journal devoted to educational issues, *Scuola e città*, as one of the author of a short translation of a text (his co-author is again J.-C. Passeron). This was directly taken from *Rapport pédagogique et communication*, [Bourdieu, Passeron, and M. de Saint Martin 1965] and already published in France as “Language et rapport au langage dans la situation pédagogique,” in the Sartrian *Les temps modernes*, in 1965. The article, entitled “Il linguaggio nell’apprendimento,” was the first attempt to introduce Italian readers – presumably experts in pedagogy and professional teachers – to the many empirical works being developed at that time at the CSE in the area of culture and education. Again in 1968 a short article by Bourdieu alone (apparently unpublished in French) was included in *Libri nuovi*, the bulletin of the Turin-based and left oriented publishing house Giulio Einaudi: this time the article was programmatically not directed to a strictly academic readership but specifically devoted to the profession of the sociologist and the issue of his engagement in public life (“Neutralità della sociologia?”). Interestingly enough, Einaudi was at that time the publisher of the first sociological journal created in Italy after Fascism, *Quaderni di sociologia*, directed by an

<sup>6</sup> Even the well-known article *Structuralism and the Theory of Sociological Knowledge* [cfr. Bourdieu 1968c] would have been published in the same journal (in an English translation by a young Italian sociologist at that time, Angela Zanotti who was studying in the US at the *School for Social Research* under Peter Berger, then editor of the journal).

existentialist philosopher, Nicola Abbagnano, and a young philosopher turned into a sociologist, Franco Ferrarotti. Ferrarotti was the first who win a chair in a public concourse in 1960, and one of the very few in the 1960s who officially taught sociology as a full professor (in Rome). Even more interesting, however, is the fact that this was the first and the last time that a Bourdieu's text was published by Einaudi, which has been for a long time the most prestigious reference in the Italian field of publishing for the intellectual left.

In only three years, anyway, Bourdieu, still in his thirties, entered the Italian culture through a series of different intellectual actors and structures, with different disciplinary horizons and diversified degrees of institutionalization: from the state-supported *Rivista di economica agraria* (official journal of the National Institute of Rural Economics) to the leftist and highly intellectual Einaudi group, from the provincial cultural circle of *Trimestre* to the professional and policy oriented journal of education *Scuola e città*. All together, the four texts offer a good sample of Bourdieu's work, both in its content and in its manner: the topics were cultural practices, epistemological foundation and reflexivity, and educational transmission. Also, the typical mode of intellectual work was collaboration and collective endeavour. But this would become clear and valuable only retrospectively. At that time, the main features of Bourdieu's early presence in Italy were the usual ones claimed elsewhere to be responsible for the difficult reception of his work and name: dispersion of intellectual interests and a weak identity even in respect of authorship. Bourdieu was not yet the author of an *oeuvre*, of a whole work with a definite identity, albeit in the making, but of individual and apparently disconnected texts.

### *Stage Two: The Systematic Import (1971-1978)*

A true intellectual project centred around Bourdieu and what was now increasingly perceived as *his* school (or *his* Center<sup>7</sup>) began to develop in Italy only at the end of the 1960s (i.e. after 1968). The situation (and impression) of dispersion which was the main feature of the previous stage of reception is now overcome and a new organic identity is proposed. He is now the sociologist and social researcher endowed with

<sup>7</sup> The Centre de sociologie européenne (CSE) was founded by Raymond Aron in 1960 (under the original label of Centre de sociologie historique) and was directed by him with Bourdieu's help – formally as general secretary – until the end of the 1960s; it went under the direction of Bourdieu in 1970, after the May events and the split between Aron and the team of younger sociologists working with Bourdieu. These young sociologists re-identified themselves as Centre de sociologie de l'éducation et de la culture (CSEC), originally a partition inside the CSE which later became an alias. Cfr. Lescourret [2008, 130-32, 238-242].



a strong and consistent research program focused on culture and inequalities, with a reflexive sensitivity to issues of epistemology and methodology, and the leader of a stable circle (or *equipe*) of pupils and collaborators. This project of local appropriation and transmission had a main character, Giovanni Bechelloni a Florence-based historian turned (or turning) into a sociologist. Bechelloni was in his thirties and still without an academic position, but very active and well acquainted in reformist i.e. socialist intellectual circles.

As an early student of the historian and politician Giovanni Spadolini,<sup>8</sup> Bechelloni was the true hero of this second stage: alone or with his soon-to-be wife Milly Buonanno (who had studied sociology in Rome with Franco Ferrarotti) he was responsible for the first Italian translation of almost all of Bourdieu's authored, co-authored, and edited early *sociological* books, like *Les Héritiers*, *La Reproduction*, *Un art moyenne*, *L'amour de l'art* and *Le métier de sociologie*. Between 1971 and 1976 Bechelloni and his close network translated six books and at least two articles (see Tab. 1). The years 1971-1972 were the crucial ones. In few months five books with the name of Bourdieu among the authors were published. The first one was *Mitosociologia. Contributi a una sociologia del campo intellettuale*, a slim original book comprising two previously published essays [cfr. Bourdieu and Passeron 1963; Bourdieu and Passeron 1967] collected here for the first time and presented as contributions to a sociology of the intellectual field (the second article was the one already translated in 1967 in *Trimestre*, now in a revised and more complete edition). The second one was *I delfini. Gli studenti e la cultura*, a translation of *Les héritiers*, again authored by Bourdieu and Passeron as the following and more compelling *La riproduzione. Sistemi di insegnamento e ordine culturale* (published in Italian in 1972, only two years after the original French edition) would follow. Also in 1972 two of the early and seminal books which expanded the research on education to the more general field of cultural practices appeared: *La fotografia. Usi e funzioni sociali di un'arte media* (a translation of the second and revised edition of *Un art moyen*, written with Luc Boltanski, Jean-Claude Chamboredon, and Robert Castel, and originally published in 1965) and *L'amore dell'arte. I musei dell'arte europei e il loro pubblico* (a translation of the second and augmented edition of *L'amour de l'art*. The first edition was in 1966, and it was co-authored with Dominique Schnapper, a researcher at the time active in Italy, and the statistician Alain Darbel).

<sup>8</sup> A leader of the Italian Republican Party and a minister in many governments in the 1960s and 1970s. He was professor of contemporary history at the University of Florence.

TAB. 1. *Translations of Bourdieu's books and articles, by publisher, 1971-1980*

Year	Title	Publisher
1971	<i>Mitosociologia</i> (a)	Guaraldi
1971	<i>I delfini</i>	Guaraldi
1971	<i>La riproduzione</i>	Guaraldi
1972	<i>La fotografia</i>	Guaraldi
1972	<i>L'amore dell'arte</i>	Guaraldi
1972	“Le disuguaglianze di fronte alla scuola e alla cultura”	Hoepli, <i>Sociologia dell'educazione</i> , ed. V. Cesareo
1972	“La trasmissione dell'eredità culturale”	Il Mulino, <i>Scuola, potere, ideologia</i> ed. M. Barbagli (2nd ed. 1978 as <i>Istruzione, legittimazione, conflitto</i> , Il Mulino)
1974	“Le strategie matrimoniali nel sistema di riproduzione”	Il Mulino, <i>Famiglia e matrimonio nel capitalismo europeo</i> , ed. A. Manoukian
1974	“Sociologia dell'Algeria” (b)	Angeli, <i>Antropologia economica</i> , Tentori ed. (2nd ed.: Koiné, Rome 1996; 3rd ed. Meltemi, Rome, 2010)
1975	“Campo del potere, campo intellettuale e habitus di classe”	Il Mulino, <i>Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia</i>
1976	<i>Il mestiere di sociologo</i>	Guaraldi
1976	<i>Gli studenti e la cultura: i delfini</i>	Guaraldi (new edition)
1976	“L'opinione pubblica non esiste”	Il Mulino, <i>Problemi dell'informazione</i>
1978	<i>Campo intellettuale e campo del potere</i> (c)	Lerici
1978	“La casa: il rovescio del mondo”	Faenza editrice (Bologna), <i>Parametro</i>
1980	“Celibato e condizione contadina”	Edizioni di Comunità, <i>Le funzioni sociali del matrimonio</i> , ed. M. Buonanno

(a) A book only for the Italian market, which includes two articles by Bourdieu and Passeron. It has been translated in Spanish in 1975. (b) A partial translation of Bourdieu 1958. (c) A book only for the Italian market, which includes two articles by Bourdieu plus an interview; reissued in 2002 with a new introduction by the editor, Marco D'Eramo.

It is possible that Bechelloni's mediation lead to the translation of a relatively minor, but seminal article, “Champ du pouvoir, champ intellectuel et habitus de classe” (originally 1971, in Italian 1975). This time, the vehicle was a really central one, i.e. one of the most ancient, and probably the most prestigious, Italian journal of sociology, in whose editorial board Bechelloni was now seating (and has been seating until nowadays). As the article offered an early, but much elaborated, summary of Bourdieu's theoretical position in matter of cultural analysis, which also introduced the strategic concept of habitus, we may interpret this translation in such a central place as an important step in the story of Italian reception. As we will see, this was hardly the case. With the translation in 1976 of both *Le metier de sociologue* and

the article “L’opinion publique n’existe pas” (original editon 1971) this impressive, almost frantic program of Italian translations and imports of Bourdieu’s work came to an end, and it was just revitalized by the (partial) translation of *Célibat et condition paysanne* [Bourdieu 1962] in a reader on the social functions of marriage edited by Milly Buonanno in 1980 (the article is an important contribution which has not received the attention it deserves among Italian scholars working on kinship and family. As it is known, it would have been included by Bourdieu as first chapter in one of his last book projects, *Le bal des célibataires*)

You do not need a deep understanding of the mechanisms of intellectual life to acknowledge the worth of this systematic and long lasting enterprise of import and transfer. Surely, it was a great endeavour for a relatively small editorial market as the Italian one, which evidently had, among its necessary conditions, not only a strong belief in the worth of the work, but also an editorial effort strong enough to support the enterprise. This was supplied by a new publishing house, founded in that same 1971 around a young and entrepreneurial man, Mario Guaraldi, who acted as an integral element in the intellectual project launched by Bechelloni and the small intellectual circle around him.<sup>9</sup> Of course, Guaraldi Editore was not only a new but also a small publishing house, one of the many founded and launched in those years following the political-intellectual movement fostered by the 1968. This genesis was at the same time a factor of strength – in terms of engagement and bravery – and of weakness – as a small publisher, whose economic constraints could not sustain scale economies or long-term investments. Indeed, like many other publishers generated by the same intellectual conjuncture, Guaraldi had to go out of business in the 1980s, starting a new life in the 1990s with a different catalogue and editorial mission – much less engaged in political issues and more oriented to exploit market opportunities. However, this is the same *small* publisher which has recently (between 2005 and

<sup>9</sup> Guaraldi Editore was founded in Florence in 1971, with only one book series (“Ipotesi di cultura”), articulated in three sections (“Informazione e cultura,” “Passato e futuro”, and “Presente imperfetto”). This was integrated after few months by two new series, one on psychoanalysis and the other on education. The small group who run the house was composed by the cultural entrepreneur Mario Guaraldi, three young researchers – i.e. the already mentioned Bechelloni, the political sociologist Mario Caciagli, and the historian V. Baldacci – and a few young graphic designers. The first issues had a relatively wide impact on Italian culture, and many of the published books (including the first translations of Pierre Bourdieu, along with those of George Bataille, Ernest Jones, Otto Rank, Geza Roheim) were often discussed in the press. But in 1979 the publishing house, constrained by debts, had to be sold to a new owner for a symbolic price. With a new name (Nuova Guaraldi Editore) and a new editorial policy, the house survived for a decade and then closed. In 1991 Mario Guaraldi makes his second appearance as a publisher with the discovery of the web and of books on demand. This new house – still named Guaraldi Editore – have republished in 2004 and 2006 three of the old Bourdieu’s translations: see Bourdieu [2004b] and Bourdieu and Passeron [2006a, 2006b].

2006) re-edited three of the foundational texts of Bourdieu's intellectual career, *I delfini*, *La riproduzione*, and *La fotografia* – the former two with a new introduction by Bechelloni, the latter with a new introduction by Milly Buonanno. An interesting case, we could say, of cultural reproduction and conservation in the field of publishing, facilitated – we should add – by the almost total neglect in which these early and foundational books had fallen in the 1980s and 1990s, at least in Italy.<sup>10</sup>

The choice of the texts to be translated and proposed to an Italian readership was of course anything but random: its roots are to be found in the intellectual projects developed and pursued by Bechelloni and the research centre he had founded and directed, the CESDI (Centro di Documentazione e di Studi sull'Informazione) as well as in the intellectual background of the Centre's members – sociologists, historians, and political scientists. It is not surprising that none of the works published by Bourdieu as an anthropologist and ethnographer (i.e. *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie*, *Le détachement*, or even *Esquisse de une théorie de la pratique*) found a place in this editorial program – even if we are now told that a translation of the theoretical *Esquisse* had originally been devised, but was aborted because of the unsatisfying impact of the program from both an editorial and academic point of view. Anyway, even if translated at the time, the book had probably appeared as a kind of *hors d'oeuvre* among the others, clearly inscribed in the sociological discipline – and in Italy sociology and anthropology traditionally belongs to two different and distant academic worlds.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Naturally, we cannot exclude that other initiatives were taken, even if not successful and therefore not recorded in published texts.

<sup>11</sup> How Bechelloni was introduced to Bourdieu's work (and his persona), how and why he adopted the French scholar as central reference point for his own political-intellectual project, and how this project was received by the Italian sociologists of the time is retrospectively narrated by Bechelloni himself, without any apparent form of celebration or triumphalism: what emerges from his narrative is a mixture of casualness, cultural good will, intellectual strategy, investment (even personal) and above all failure and delusion. "I came in contact with Bourdieu in 1968, in Paris, in the May of that "fatal" year. I was there "by a chance," coming back from a seminar on the future of the European Parliament held in Royamont, near Paris, and organised by the Club Jean Moulin. Andrea Manzella and Paolo Ungari [two jurists who would become influential intellectuals, and academic scholars in the following years, NdA] were there with me as representatives of "Tempi moderni" (the review of the reformist socialism of the Sixties, edited by Fabrizio Onofri. The French May had begun, and the evening of May, 5 we decided to stay in Paris a few days to see what was happening (...) my brother [who was there with a fellowship as an economic historian] introduced to me a student of Bourdieu... who invited us to read *Les héritiers*, a sociological book which was necessary to read, for him, in order to understand what was happening in the universities all over the world and especially in France." [Bechelloni 2006a, 114-15]. An ex member of PCI, Fabrizio Onofri had founded "Tempi moderni" in 1957 and then a research centre which played in the Sixties a pioneering role working at the boundary between the emerging social sciences and the cultural area of a reformist left. After breaking with Onofri, on the wake of the student mobilization – in the meanwhile arrived also in Italy – Bechelloni contributed to the

As table 1 shows, in the 1970s Bechelloni was not the only scholars who acted as a mediator or importer of Bourdieu’s works in Italy. At least four other actors are worth of notice here. The first one is Agopik Manoukian, an Armenian sociologist working in Italy, well known for his researches on the party system and the Church, conducted for the Bologna-based Istituto Cattaneo. The Institute was one of the first centre for social research founded in Italy, strictly linked to the publisher Il Mulino and the homonym cultural association). Manoukian specialised in the history of kinship and marriage, and included one of Bourdieu’s seminal articles on kinship strategies of reproduction in a reader he edited in 1974 for il Mulino [Manoukian 1974].<sup>12</sup> The second one is Marzio Barbagli, a sociologist who authored one of the first sociological best sellers in Italy (*Disoccupazione intellettuale e sistema scolastico in Italia*) in 1973 and has been working for a long time in both the sociology of education and the sociology of the family. Barbagli included Bourdieu in a reader he edited in 1972, and reedited with a few changes in 1978; this is one of the most influential reference works in the sociology of education ever published in Italy [Bourdieu 1972]. Unfortunately, the chosen article is one of the less known and less influential text authored by the French sociologist, originally published in a book that was intended more as an intervention in public affairs than as a scholarly work (Darras 1966).<sup>13</sup> The reader includes a long series of authors, some of whom were well known (Althusser, Bowles and Gintis, Collins, Boudon, Ralph Turner, Christopher Jencks),

founding of a new Centre, the aforementioned CESDI, with the aim of researching in the field of cultural policies, communication and news. It was at this point that Bechelloni and his partners decided to contact Bourdieu and his Centre, presenting themselves as “followers and imitators, with the double aim of publishing in Italy their major works and of applying in our researches their theoretical and methodological approach” [Bechelloni 2006a, 17]. A turning point in the relationship between Bechelloni and Bourdieu has occurred in 1975-76, after the launch of “Actes de la recherche,” which Bechelloni wanted to send in one hundred copies (made available to him by the same Bourdieu) to his sociological colleagues. Indeed, only one replied and subscribed – a clear sign of what was at the time the impact of Bourdieu’s work among Italian sociologists. This happening, which the same Bechelloni labels as “a disastrous outcome,” affected the editorial plans of the Guaraldi, which cut the project of further translations (among which it was expected also *Esquisse d’une theorie de la pratique*). It is the same Bechelloni, again, who admits his “delusion” for not being asked to introduce the translation of *La distinction*, published by Il Mulino in 1983 (cfr. *infra*). Even if it is always difficult to assess these kinds of data, the fact that Bechelloni was not involved in this editorial endeavour could be easily read as a cue of his troubled or at least weak relationships with the mainstream of the Italian sociological field, strongly positioned in the publishing house Il Mulino and in the homonym cultural association which rules it.

<sup>12</sup> Manoukian abandoned the academic career in the middle seventies, for both personal and academic reasons – which had much to do with the structure (and cleavages) of the Italian sociological field (see *infra*).

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it is a slightly different version of the more famous Bourdieu [1966] – a text published in Cesareo [1972].

and Bourdieu's chapter is placed not among the theoretical perspectives but in a section explicitly devoted to education, inequality, and mobility.<sup>14</sup>

The third one is the anthropologist Tullio Tentori (1920-2003), one of the most active, authoritative and influential representatives of the discipline – acknowledged in its academic autonomy in Italy only in 1969 (Tentori gained one of the two first chairs granted by the government). Tentori included a chapter by Bourdieu on the cultural transformation caused by modernization and colonialism in Algerian economic life in an innovative reader he edited for introducing economic anthropology. Among the texts there were also chapters by Raymond Frith, Maurice Godelier, Michel Gutelman and others, [Tentori 1974]. For a very long time, this has been the only witness of Bourdieu's intensive fieldwork on Algerians available to Italian anthropologists – at least until the translation in 1999 of *La domination masculine*, partly drawn from that research experience (cfr. *infra*). Re-edited in 1996, the reader is still available in its third edition, as one of the long-lived, and presumably best-selling, anthropological textbooks in our country.

The fourth one is Vincenzo Cesareo, at that time a young professor at the Catholic University in Milan, who would become the organizational leader of the Catholic camp in the Italian sociological field. The text chosen in this case is a classic reference in Bourdieu's bibliography, as the first one in which the concept "cultural capital" was officially introduced (Bourdieu 1966). It is also one of the less known among Italian sociologists, due to the limited diffusion of the reader, at least with respect to Barbagli's one, which was favoured instead by a nationally well distributed and academically prestigious publisher like Il Mulino. But more important here is to notice the early encounter between a radical sociology like Bourdieu's and Italian Catholic sociology (even if it seems more a choice for the sake of completeness, or a concession to fashion, than a proof of cultural-political sensitivity). This would become one of the routes of penetration of Bourdieu's social theory of cultural consumption and production in the nineties, more or less grounded in a deep awareness for the potential implications of this choice in terms of coherence and challenge to the wider sources of a claimed "Catholic sociology."

<sup>14</sup> All in all, Bourdieu was not the star in this reader: it was the American Randall Collins, author of two essays, and of few books that the same Barbagli was introducing in Italy through translations in a series he edited in the 1980s for another publisher based in Bologna (Zanichelli). Interestingly, this is the same series which hosted a translation of a book written by Raymond Boudon. This book (*Istruzione e mobilità sociale*) longely influenced Italian sociologists. None of Bourdieu's book was translated in this series. If we consider that Barbagli was to become one of the most influential social researchers in Italy, author of dozens of books on several topics as families, education, migrations, crime, politics, suicide, and sexuality, we can have an idea of the effects this relative marginalization could have produced in terms of intellectual legitimacy.

Again, we have to register the occurrence of a typical feature of the Italian reception, that is an extra-sociological (or even extra-anthropological) mediation. The translation in two parts of what Bourdieu himself considered his late act of devotion to structuralism – which is also one of the most known among his texts [Bourdieu 1970] – appeared in 1978 in an innovative journal devoted to architecture, under the title “La casa: il mondo rovesciato.” This looks like yet another lost opportunity to have a little gem available in Italian fairly soon; Italian sociologists and anthropologists have had to wait for the translation in 2003 of *Esquisse de une theory de la pratique* (1972) where the essay has been included as an Appendix by Bourdieu himself.

In that same year, a booklet (entitled, in a very bourdieusian way, *Campo intellettuale e campo del potere*) was published by a small Southern publisher (Lerici). This work includes two texts by Bourdieu on the cultural field<sup>15</sup> preceded by an introduction and followed by an interview. The editor of the booklet, Marco D’Eramo, is also the author of the introduction and the interview: he was then a young physicist and a political activist, and he met Bourdieu in Paris in the 1970s while studying there. D’Eramo was meant to become a reputed and influential essayist in Italy, the author of well received and much read books on capitalism and urban transformations, and a particularly influential writer in left wing circles (since the 1980s he was also a habitual contributor to the communist daily newspaper *il Manifesto*). As a complete outsider to the sociological field, his knowledge and divulgation of Bourdieu’s tools had no apparent impact on the sociological practices at the time – while he somehow contributed to the updating of literary criticism by introducing Bourdieu’s ecological reading of the novel to Italianist Franco Moretti [see D’Eramo 2002; Moretti 1997]. The new edition of the booklet in the summer of 2002, after Bourdieu’s death, with a new introduction by the same early editor, has probably been much more influential among sociologists, especially the younger and more engaged in political affairs [see for instance Savonardo 2003]. But at that point the French scholar was already well known among leftist readers, especially due to his many contributions to *le Monde diplomatique* which *il Manifesto* circulated in an Italian version.

### *Stage Three: The (Failed) Attempt to Academic Legitimation, 1980-1995*

In the 1980s the work of Bourdieu entered the academic world through few translations instigated – or at least hosted and promoted – by what many observers

<sup>15</sup> One of them is the text already translated in 1975 in the *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*. Based in Cosenza (Calabria), Lerici was at the time the publisher of a journal of politics and cultural debate – in the socialist area – that is *Mondoperaio*, to which the editor of the booklet was collaborating.

and participants consider the most prestigious and legitimated publishing house in the Italian academic field. In fact, in this decade the Bologna-based Il Mulino publisher was working more than any other to import Bourdieu and transfer him to Italian social scientists. Founded in 1954 by a group of young intellectuals and professors at the University of Bologna who organized themselves, formally, as a cultural association (Associazione il Mulino), this publisher played a greatest role in the circulation of social science, and especially sociology, in post-war (and post-Fascist) Italy. Over the years the whole cultural project flourished and the association has grown and expanded from a local to a true national one. Its symbolic capitals grew correspondingly, also thanks to a direct engagement of many of the intellectuals associated at the time to the political affairs of the so called *centro-sinistra*, that is the political alliance of Socialists and Christian-democrats which governed Italy from 1962 until the early 1990s.

Despite this political engagement, the publishing house kept its independence from any direct political influence from political parties. It also took its decisions according to a complex politics of intellectual mediation among the diversified cultural orientations held by its authors, advisors, and managers (in terms of party affiliation or orientation, of religious engagement, of epistemological faith, of disciplinary membership, and so on). According to Bourdieu's models, we can describe Il Mulino as a typical case of a publishing house working in a restricted cultural subfield run by peers, who are endowed with great cultural capital – in fact, since its inception it has been run by a group of academic men (and much fewer women). Also, for more than three decades the executive manager has been a cultural entrepreneur trained as a sociologist<sup>16</sup> – who takes decisions with a long time horizon [e.g. Bourdieu 1992]. Indeed, Il Mulino is exactly the kind of publisher who could foster the intellectual legitimation of a social scientist – especially a foreign one. Indeed, one of the main missions of Il Mulino has always been to introduce and circulate the best available in the social sciences worldwide, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom, and in its more progressive or democratic circles (which at the time could also mean only “not on the authoritarian right,” or “anti-racist,” or “anti-colonialist”).

<sup>16</sup> Dead in 2008, Giovanni Evangelisti was the manager of the publishing house since the mid-1960s. He was a graduate student of Camillo Pelizzi (the Florence-based, and ex-Fascist, scholar who first held a sociology chair in Italy in 1950), and he could be described as the organizational leader of a network of scholars who strongly influenced the editorial policies of the house, especially in the fields of sociology and political science which are, together with history and philosophy, the main areas of activity of Il Mulino. The network was constituted mainly by social scientists who were organised in another branch of the association, the research institute Carlo Cattaneo, founded in 1965 and devoted to empirical social research. As we will see, at the end of the 1990s Evangelisti had enough interest and curiosity in Bourdieu's work to give confidence to a large project of translations I proposed him.



This was a radical innovation in the field of social sciences after the almost complete intellectual domination between the two world wars of nationalist scholars like Corrado Gini, or the heirs of the old Italian positivist school like Alfredo Niceforo, who were still active in the 1950s and located in influential academic nodes (e.g. La Sapienza University in Rome).<sup>17</sup> Since the early 1960s, thanks to Il Mulino activities, Italian readers could find in bookshops and libraries the first translations of influential sociologists like Robert K. Merton, Talcott Parsons, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Peter Berger, Erving Goffman, and later Anthony Giddens, Jon Elster, and Norbert Elias.

In a certain way, it could be said that in the 1980s Il Mulino tried to make profit (a symbolic one more than a merely economic one) from the work done in the previous decade by Guaraldi. The latter was a publisher which for political orientation and even support personnel was at the former's left boundary, even if endowed by much less capitals, symbolic as economic: Il Mulino built upon Guaraldi experience in order to introduce Bourdieu's work among academic social scientists and even philosophers. After *La Distinction*, two other books were chosen to be translated, both strongly attuned with philosophical interest: *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger* – translated in Italian in 1989 with the title *Führer della filosofia?* (a clear commercial concession to the ongoing debate about Heidegger's Nazi sympathies that had entered also the Italian cultural life) and a few years later *Raisons pratiques* – a book of conferences and oral presentations which was suggested for translation by the philosophy group.<sup>18</sup> The latter was meant as a contribution to the philosophy of action, but it was also and mainly imagined as a good introductory text to the whole sociological theory of the French scholar.

Indeed, Il Mulino was not the only Bourdieu's Italian publishers in those years. Among the few others, we find at least three important and influential publisher like Laterza (the old publishing house animated by Benedetto Croce), Bollati Boringhieri (a Turin-based publisher that emerged from a breakout inside Einaudi), and Feltrinelli, the Milan-based publisher which in the 1950s introduced Boris Pasternak

<sup>17</sup> For an overview of this “old” positivist and nationalist sociology – grounded in biology and demography and with racist implications – which was still active in the 1950s see Livi 1958. On Corrado Gini, a complex figure of statistician and demographer with strong interests in sociology, see now Cassata 2006, who correctly discusses also his many international links (all in right-wing or strongly conservative circles). On this season of transition, as well as on the intellectual and academic domination of Gini on the field of Italian sociology (and not only statistics and demography), see now Santoro 2010.

<sup>18</sup> The interest in Bourdieu of Italian philosophers was at the time already witnessed by the “Enciclopedia multimediale delle scienze filosofiche” promoted by the public radio-television system, in particular its educational division, through the publication of two interviews with Bourdieu: *Violenza simbolica e subalternità culturale* (1993) and *Ragione e storia* (1994). Cfr. <http://www.emsf.rai.it/interviste.html>.

in the Western world, discovered Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's *Il Gattopardo*, and worked since the 1960s as one of the main venues for the introduction in Italy of a left-wing, Marxist and post-marxist culture, even in the human and social sciences. Differently from Il Mulino, Feltrinelli is not an academically oriented house: it publishes literature (novels, poetry), and it usually prefers the scholarly works and essays that are devoted to a larger audience than the academic one. It is not surprising that Feltrinelli's interest for Bourdieu begun with *Sur la television* – a booklet originally published by Bourdieu as a political intervention more than a scholarly contribution. The Italian translation of *Meditations pascaliennes* has been probably the most risky – and apparently odd – choice in the overall strategy of import followed by the Milanese publisher. Indeed, we can consider *Meditazioni pascaliane* as the climax of this series of translations aimed to introduce Bourdieu to a high culture readership, possibly but not necessarily academic.

TAB. 2. *Translations of Bourdieu's works in Italy, 1984-1999*

Year	Title	Publisher
1983	<i>La distinzione</i>	Il Mulino (Bologna)
1987	“Osservazioni provvisorie sulla percezione sociale del corpo”	Angeli (Milan), <i>Problemi del Socialismo</i>
1988	<i>La parola e il potere</i>	Guida (Neaples)
1989	<i>Fuhrer della filosofia?</i>	Il Mulino
1990	“I riti come atti di istituzione”	Angeli (Milan), <i>Problemi del Socialismo</i>
1991	<i>La responsabilità degli intellettuali</i>	Laterza (Roma-Bari)
1991	<i>Lezione sulla lezione</i>	Marietti (Casale M., Piedmont)
1991	“Principi di una sociologia delle opere culturali “	<i>L'Asino d'oro</i>
1992	<i>Risposte</i>	Bollati Boringhieri (Turin)
1995	<i>Ragioni pratiche</i>	Il Mulino
1995	“Sport e classe sociale”	Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane (Neaples) in <i>Sociologia dello sport</i> , R. Roversi, and Triani, G. Giorgio (eds.)
1997	<i>Sulla televisione</i>	Feltrinelli (Milan)
1998	<i>Meditazioni pascaliane</i>	Feltrinelli (Milan)

A common feature in all these translations is the lack of editorial concern in introducing and complementing them with a critical apparatus: no editorship nor presentation or introduction add symbolic value to the translated texts. In the case of *La distinzione* the publisher's neglect has been such to misrecognize the author's will and hopes. The publisher did not accept the addition of an introduction requested by Bourdieu (a translation of the introduction written for the American edition) and

he even cut and simplified the text according to editorial needs. Among the cuts there is the whole iconographic apparatus of photos, as well as entire paragraphs – presumably for problems of book-length and pricing. A partial exception to this neglect or even slovenliness is the choice to use the same translator for all the editions: a professional translator, and literate man, like Alessandro Serra, who played a role similar to Richard Nice in the Anglo-American market.

All in all, we can say that the attempt to introduce Bourdieu to an academic readership, and to provide an intellectual legitimation to his work was not successful. As we will see in a following section, very little of this editorial work entered the sociological literature, and it did not drive the education of new cohorts of social researchers. A pedagogical book as *Risposte* (the Italian translation of *Réponses*, a text drawn from lectures and seminars held by Bourdieu at the University of Chicago and the EHESS, and introduced by his student Loïc Wacquant), for example, did not really enter the market of pedagogical texts, with the exception of few universities (like Genoa). Even there, it was usually adopted in courses not particularly influential both for the matter (i.e. the history of sociological theory, a research field which had little to do with the practical teachings for empirical research promoted by the same Bourdieu) or teachers.

#### *Stage Four: Bourdieu Goes Public (1997-2005)*

At the end of the 1990s the publication of short books and interventions, mainly in the Italian edition of *Le Monde diplomatique* (and the radical left newspaper *il Manifesto*) contributed to the transfer of Bourdieu’s work well beyond the academic world – a direction already taken as we have seen by Feltrinelli’s investment in Bourdieu. This kind of circulation has been supported by the production of Bourdieu in these last years. His new series “Raisons d’agir,” *Controfuochi 1* and *Controfuochi 2*, as well as the book on television (already translated in 1997), have been the main texts from which the knowledge of this public Bourdieu spread out, mainly among young political militants and engaged social researchers. Even a text like *Propos sur le champ politique*, drawn from a conference at the University of Lyon, published by the local university press, and introduced by a very erudite text by Philippe Fritsch, has been translated in Italian by a militant publisher, with a politicized title (*Political Proposal. Going to the Left Today*).

TAB. 3. *Translations of Bourdieu's texts, 1997-2005*

Year	Title	Publisher
1997	<i>Sulla televisione</i>	Feltrinelli, Milan
1998	<i>Controfuochi 1</i>	Reset, Milan
1999	<i>Il dominio maschile</i>	Feltrinelli, Milan
1999	<i>Gli usi sociali della scienza. Per una sociologia clinica del campo scientifico</i>	Seam, Rome
2000	“Domande ai veri padroni della terra”	<i>Posse</i> (transl. T. Negri)
2000	“La nuova vulgata planetaria” (with L. Wacquant)	Le monde diplomatique, May 5th
2001	<i>Controfuochi 2</i>	Manifestolibri, Rome
2004	<i>Il mondo sociale mi riesce sopportabile perché posso arrabbiarmi</i>	Nottetempo, Rome
2005	<i>Proposta politica. Andare a sinistra oggi</i>	Castelvecchi, Rome

Among Bourdieu's supporters at this stage there are some well known and highly influential writers on the left like Rossana Rossanda (one of the founders of *il Manifesto*) and the political philosopher Antonio (Toni) Negri – a scholar well known also for his revolutionary and judicial past. This new wave of Bourdieu's translations and circulation has been fostered by his death in the January of 2002, which generated in Italy as elsewhere a flow of articles in newspapers and magazines. Obituaries could be a clue of this extra-academic circulation: among the many articles published in newspapers in the days after his death, only few ones are signed by academicians. Among them we find Luciano Gallino and Alessandro Dal Lago – two influential sociologists who belongs to different generations (pre- and post-1968). However, neither of them could be classified among Bourdieu's followers.

Gallino, one of the *doyen* of Italian sociology, wrote his article on command from the newspaper. An industrial sociologist who adopted and developed a system-oriented approach (a kind of critical re-reading of Parsons), fascinated by biological and cognitive research, Gallino in his early steps as a sociologist introduced (and translated) texts also from the Frankfurt school. But he never presented himself, nor acted, as an admirer of Bourdieu's texts, which in part explains why Einaudi (his usual publisher and reference house) has never invested on the French scholar. Not surprisingly then, his appreciation of Bourdieu as a scientist is relatively weak, and his obituary is focused mainly on the public resonance (especially among the younger readership) of what has usually been read as Bourdieu's recent “political turn.”

TAB. 4. *Pierre Bourdieu in the Italian press, 1995-2002*

Year	Author	Title	Journal
1995	C. Augias	“Bossi, le sardine e il voto”	<i>L’Unità due</i> , May 3
1998	G. Bosetti	“L’abito fa il monaco”	
1998	P. Bourdieu	“Sul dominio maschile. La lotta femminista al centro della battaglia politica”	<i>Le monde diplomatique – Il Manifesto</i> , Sept.
1998	R. Rossanda	“Il caso Bourdieu”	<i>Il Manifesto</i> Sept., 2
1998	F. Gambaro	“Pierre Bourdieu. Il sociologo della discordia”	<i>La Repubblica</i> , Sept. 4
1999	F. Gambaro	“Bourdieu, l’eterno potere dei maschi”	<i>La Repubblica</i> , Feb. 2, p. 33
1999	R. Rossanda	“Il sociologo Bourdieu contro il liberismo”	<i>Corriere della sera</i> , Feb. 20
1999	C. Valentini	“Globalizzazione, tu sia maledetta”	<i>L’Espresso</i> , March 18
1999	P. Marchesini	“Il sociologo della discordia. Pierre Bourdieu”	<i>Uomini contro</i> , supplement to <i>Amica</i>
2000	P. Bourdieu and L. Wacquant	“La nuova vulgata planetaria”	<i>Le Monde diplomatique – Il Manifesto</i> , May
2001	A. Pieroni	“Più che il capitale può l’eleganza”	<i>Corriere della sera</i> , Aug. 21
2002	U. Munzi	“Scompare Bourdieu, l’ultimo Catone rosso”	<i>Corriere della sera</i> , Jan. 25
2002	P. Martinetti	“Bourdieu, gladiatore contro la miseria globale”	<i>La Stampa</i> , Jan. 25
2002	A. Dal Lago*	“Bourdieu, l’ultimo maestro”	<i>Il Manifesto</i> , Jan. 25
2002	A.M. Merlo	“L’artigiano del pensiero che si fa azione”	<i>Il Manifesto</i> , Jan. 25
2002	M. D’Eramo	“Il grimaldello della ragione. È morto Pierre Bourdieu”	<i>Il Manifesto</i> , Jan. 25
2002	A. Tito	“Bourdieu, e l’intellettuale tornò organico”	<i>L’Unità</i> , Jan. 25
2002	P. Fabbri <sup>o</sup>	“Un estroso Mandarino della ricerca accademica”	<i>L’Unità</i> , Jan. 25
2002	S. Serafini	“Bourdieu, sociologo di tutte le battaglie”	<i>Avvenire</i> , Jan. 25
2002	L. Gallino*	“Pierre Bourdieu. Il sociologo della discordia”	<i>La Repubblica</i> , Jan. 25
2002	Ph. Mangeot	“Pierre Bourdieu un intellettuale collettivo” (interview with P. Bourdieu)	<i>Il Manifesto</i> , Jan. 27
2002	R. Bonavita**	“Libri nel campo di battaglia”	<i>Il Manifesto – Alias – La Talpa libri</i> , May 10

\*Sociologist

<sup>o</sup> Semiotician (sociologist by formation)

\*\* Literary historian

As a more militant and engaged sociologist, active in both social research and political philosophy, Dal Lago has been the author of a strong criticism of *La distinzione*, that he read as a defence of high culture against the autonomy of popular culture. Dal Lago also criticised the book on Heidegger. This was accused of offering an extreme structural reading of philosophical creativity unable to explain the specific features and reasons of any philosophical doctrine [Dal Lago 1985, 1989]. Dal Lago partly changed his opinion on Bourdieu only after the publication of *La misère du monde*, and the meeting with a student of Bourdieu, the Algerian and expert in migration studies Abdelmalek Sayad. As a matter of fact, Dal Lago discovered and praised Bourdieu's interest – both intellectual and human – for marginal people and their troubles [see eg. Dal Lago 1995, 17]. For the sociologists already attuned with Dal Lago's early positions against Bourdieu's intellectual project, the nice words written in his memory – and centred on the identification of the sociologist as the last *maitre* of French culture – could surely sound a bit insincere, or at least motivated more by political sympathies than deep intellectual esteem.

Bourdieu has been remembered *post mortem* by one of the eldest and most authoritative Italian sociologist, Franco Ferrarotti, not in a newspaper but in academic journals. Being an early student of Thorstein Veblen's social theory, and the founder in 1967 of a journal devoted to critical sociology (the still living *La critica sociologica*), Ferrarotti has been pivotal in circulating this kind of sociological approach in Italy, mainly through his works on marginal people which made wide use of the biographical method. Even if it was not completely absent from his toolbox, it was only after the publication of *La misère du monde* that Bourdieu's work become a reference to Ferrarotti and his school, mainly located in Rome's university La Sapienza. It is probably this relatively recent encounter which moved Ferrarotti to devote to Bourdieu not one obituary but two. Unluckily, the second and most important one (which was devoted to Bourdieu alone, while the first was also devoted to another recently died scholar, the Nobel prize economist James Tobin) has been published not in Italy but in an American journal: a revealing location, indeed, which confirms after all the weak status still enjoyed by Bourdieu in Italy at the beginning of the new millennium [see Ferrarotti 2002]. Even more enlightening however is the content of the obituary (indeed, more than an obituary, a *post mortem* assessment). A few excerpts would be enough to convey the general spirit of the note:

(...) Bourdieu, especially with the support of historians such as Fernand Braudel (the theorist of the "longue durée"), in a fierce competition with Alain Touraine, was awarded the chair of sociology at the Collège de France, despite the fact that he had published, with Jacques Passeron, *La reproduction*, a book designed to show how the academic establishment in France, through its ties with dominant economic

and political groups was able to reproduce itself and frustrate attempts to change the system. The book had its shortcomings. Its parochial outlook might have been corrected if the authors had read more carefully Thorstein Veblen’s seminal work, *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Businessmen*. Moreover, if the university system perpetually only reproduces itself, then the emergence of the student contestation out of that same system remains to be explained. (...)

Bourdieu’s *La distinction sociale* [sic] gained worldwide attention and has had a lasting influence in left-oriented academic circles. In this study he regards the social function of art, museum attendance, and what appears to be aesthetic appreciation or the purely disinterested enjoyment of art, as nothing but an attempt to be “distinguished” and a cut above the “hoi-polloi” in a mass society. *La distinction sociale* [sic] owes an unacknowledged intellectual debt to Thorstein Veblen, even though Bourdieu extends Veblen’s idea of “conspicuous waste” and the ostentatious display of one’s ability to pay. Veblen’s insight, however, as put forth in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, where he points to the use of classics on bookshelves to make claims to social respectability only for the purpose of competing for status and social prestige is simply repeated by Bourdieu. (...)

In Bourdieu’s image of academic life there is a serious personal contradiction, i.e., it is not acceptable to criticize intellectuals and academics while holding a chair at the Collège de France. Was not he himself a “gatekeeper,” and did he not therefore deserve to be labeled with the ancient dictum, “*de te fabula narratur?*” Once it is recognized that much of his work was mainly a reasoned reaction to what he had seen and experienced at the Ecole Normale and among the intelligentsia, he would seem to have extended his explanations into areas to which they did not apply. Veblen’s first subtitle, *A Study in Total Depravity*, not used in the published version of *The Higher Learning*, might have applied to the Ecole Normale and to many academicians the world over, but does not lend itself to a general theory.

No doubt can be cast on Bourdieu’s intellectual probity, however (...)

Bourdieu wrote *La misère du monde* (Seuil, Paris, 1993) in Studs A. Terkel’s mode, but he never mentions Veblen, again appropriating his ideas without acknowledging his debt. *La misère* nevertheless remains an impressive documentation of century-old ills that bear repetition in each new generation.

In his critique of globalization, Bourdieu breaks no new ground, but simply repeats what has become after Zygmunt Bauman and Anthony Giddens a sort of sociological *vulgata*. The views of many other contemporary sociological critics also seem to show the same weaknesses as Bourdieu... [Ferrarotti 2002].

This is enough, I guess, for having a taste of which kind of reception – and also of reading, and evaluation – Bourdieu has enjoyed in certain, influential, sociological

circles, in Italy but also abroad (the journal after all is an American one).<sup>19</sup> Even if not completely unsound, the criticism advanced by Ferrarotti doesn't recognize the important and original contributions Bourdieu did to sociology, and also his own accounts of his relationship with his predecessors, Veblen among them. This is not the place where to indulge in exegetical or interpretive exercises. It suffices to refer to the international literature on Bourdieu, where these and similar issues are widely discussed and addressed. More important is to consider at their face value the quoted sentences. As the first to gain an academic chair in sociology in Italy, Ferrarotti is not an outsider, nor a unheard speaker (or an unread writer). No wonder that Bourdieu's circulation in Italy encountered troubles, especially among sociologists. But no academic field stands still.

#### *Stage Five (2001 - ...): The Slow but Steady Entry into the Sociological Canon?*

According to my reconstruction and interpretation, the last stage of the trajectory of Bourdieu in Italy began right before his death, with the new edition of *La distinzione* (January 2001) where for the first time after the Guaraldi's translations of the 1970s there was an *Introduction* about the book and the author. The author (and instigator of the re-edition) was a relatively young sociologist (b. 1964), who belongs to one of the first generations who completed a PhD program in sociology in Italy and became a member of the sociological profession only recently, after a five years period as a tenured academic historian. As I'm writing about myself, I would limit my analysis to few information about this re-edition of what is arguably the most influential among Bourdieu's books, and to few initiatives which I took after it in order to bring Bourdieu to the attention of my fellows and contributing to his circulation in the sociological field. Why have I been so fascinated by Bourdieu to decide to act as his mediator in a country that proved to be so recalcitrant to his work? A short auto-analysis would at least suggest three factors: 1) an intellectual interest for topics, like cultural production and intellectual legitimation, which made me particularly sensitive to Bourdieu's lessons; 2) my interdisciplinary biography and education, spent among sociologists, historians, and political scientists (political science being the main subject of my undergraduate studies), in politically differentiated academic groups and circles (left-wing among sociologists, Catholic and sometimes even right-

<sup>19</sup> The charge of unoriginality which is continuously addressed by Ferrarotti resonates with Goldthorpe's [2007]. But see DiMaggio [2007] and Lizardo [2008] for more balanced assessments, which underline the novelty inscribed in Bourdieu's work beyond the appearance of the sociological vulgata.



wing oriented in political science and history); 3) a certain well rooted pleasure in criticizing what I read as doxa and in subverting or at least challenging the institutionalised hierarchies in which I find myself embedded.<sup>20</sup> A list of my concrete, factual attempts to introduce Bourdieu to my sociological fellows would include, at least:

1) the ideation and submission of a large program of editorial translations, in two or three books, which was accepted by *Il Mulino*, but rejected by Bourdieu for reasons of opportunity a few months before his death: as he wrote to me, he was himself collecting many of his articles in a four-volume collection, and he would prefer to wait for them; unluckily, only the first collection (issued as *Le bal des célibataires*) saw the light during his life, followed few years later by a collection of articles and writing on Algerians, edited by one of his students [Yacine 2006]; even if not successful, this attempt contributed to legitimate Bourdieu among a few editors in the publishing house,<sup>21</sup> and to circulate his works among them;

2) the submission of an article (2003) on Bourdieu and the intellectual field for the magazine *il Mulino* when I was a member of its editorial staff. *Il Mulino* is an influential journal devoted to issues of culture and politics, promoted by the homonym association. The article focused on the recent publication of *Science de la science et réflexivité*, and moved from this toward a consideration of the causes of the weak presence of Bourdieu in the Italian cultural life;

3) a review of *Il mestiere di scienziato* in one of the most prestigious sociological journals in Italy, the *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, in that same year;

4) the translation with a preface of the important introduction to the second part of *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie* [Bourdieu 1963]. This appeared in the journal *Studi Culturali*, published again by *Il Mulino*, and one of the first and most influential venues for cultural studies (even cultural sociology) in Italy, which I co-founded in 2007 and have been co-editing since its inception;

5) a special section on Bourdieu in the reviews feature of the same *Studi Culturali*, with reviews of six books recently edited or re-edited in Italian written by sociologists and literary critics (among the books *La riproduzione* and *La fotografia*, and the first translation of *Le sens pratique*, *Les règles de l'art*, and *Esquisse pour un autoanalyse*).

<sup>20</sup> Of course, I'm aware that this could have contributed to make Bourdieu a fascinating hero, and a kind of imaginary alter ego. And I am aware that Bourdieu could be used, in the Italian context, as a tool for forcing generational conflict and change in the academic world, which is a very instrumental use of the author. This is not the place to engage in this kind of analysis, however, and I will not dwell upon it.

<sup>21</sup> Among them I would like to recall Massimo Baldini, editor for sociology at *Il Mulino*, who encouraged me in many of these attempts – while stopping or dissuading me on other adventures too risky or too difficult to try.

6) a long introduction to the new edition of *Ragioni pratiche* (2009), which illustrates the main concepts of Bourdieu's social theory in the light of the most recent literature, and discusses issues as reflexivity and epistemic vigilance;

7) few seminars on Bourdieu's intellectual biography and his work in some PhD programs in sociology (e.g. at the University of Padua, in 2005 and 2009);

8) the editorship of the new journal *Sociologica* as a venue for debating Bourdieu's work, even among his critics (e.g. Goldthorpe), as well as for this symposium on the global circulation of his ideas;<sup>22</sup>

9) the consecration to one of Bourdieu's main ideas of the second volume of the series "Cultura in Italia," an editorial endeavour sponsored by the Istituto Cattaneo, and published by Il Mulino (see Santoro 2009).

It is too early to assess whether these initiatives – intellectual, pedagogical, editorial – will succeed. As they are located in a relatively central academic institution (i.e. the University of Bologna) and a very central place in the publishing field (i.e. Il Mulino), it could be said that the structure of opportunities is favourable. But we should not neglect few weaknesses: one being the fact I am still an associate professor and I have no official membership in any PhD program (in Italy it is required to be a full member of a PhD college to formally supervise thesis; admission is decided through cooptation by elder scholars).

Luckily in these years I was not the only one working on the import and the debate around Bourdieu. Among the most important contributions in this direction is a 2002 book on Pierre Bourdieu and his work by Giorgio Marsiglia, a Florence-based sociologist, who is also the author of a book on C. Wright Mills in the 1970s (published by Il Mulino), and of a few works on the sociology of education which made use of Bourdieu. The book is an impressive reconstruction of Bourdieu's main concepts and sociological tools, enriched by a 20-pages bibliography on secondary sources. However, it has been limited in its impact by its location in a series published by a house dedicated to law and economics. Indeed, the book has had a very limited circulation, and did not probably contribute much to the diffusion or the knowledge or the academic legitimation of its subject.

Two other articles consecrated to Bourdieu have been published in Italian sociological journals in 2002. The first was authored by Gabriella Paolucci, a Florence-based sociologist: she has no evident links with Bechelloni nor with Marsiglia (they work in different faculties and have no collaborations in their curricula), and she is sociologist educated as a philosopher who has been working for a long time on Sartre and Agnes Heller (with whom she studied in New York), and on the sociology

<sup>22</sup> To this list I should add a forthcoming book on Bourdieu for Il Mulino, currently in progress.

of time. Paolucci tried to reflect on Bourdieu’s “scientific project” focusing on the role of sociological reason in unmasking the structures of domination in a few pages published in the Turin-based *Quaderni di sociologia*. The second article was written by a very young scholar, Paola Ravaioli, drawn from her master thesis (tesi di laurea) supervised by myself at the University of Bologna; it was published in the *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* (RIS). This is a critical contribution to Bourdieu’s theory of social knowledge, which accepts in part the criticism made by Elster and Alexander, even if recasting them in a more positive frame of mind. The article – sponsored also by the formal tutor of the thesis who was seating in the editorial board of RIS (P.P. Giglioli, whose name is in Italy strongly associated with Goffman) – was the first to be devoted to Bourdieu in the history of the journal. At its best, the article recognized the centrality of Bourdieu in approaching crucial issues in the epistemology of sociology, like the relation between subjectivity and objectivity, and the theory of action. At its minimum, it showed what could be said about the sociological knowledge moving from a direct engagement with a work like Bourdieu’s, even if criticizing it.<sup>23</sup>

One year later (2003), a second book on Bourdieu has been published by the only Italian student of Bourdieu, Anna Boschetti – who is not an academic sociologist but a professor in French literature. She wrote the book after the death of her master with the precise aim to contribute to the circulation and better knowledge of his work in Italy. All the typical issues debated by Bourdieu, and all his main concepts, are illustrated in very readable terms. An Appendix complements the book, offering the first translations of seminal articles like “Sur le pouvoir symbolique.” Unfortunately, Boschetti is at the same time too engaged with her subject and too little informed about current sociological debates and frontiers of research to offer a really persuasive introduction to Bourdieu’s work and main contributions to sociology, at least for professionalised sociological readers. As a sociologist engaged in my academic and disciplinary field, I would say that the book had no real impact on the field, except maybe for very young and relatively isolated researchers still looking for an academic position. Even her long and informed introduction to the Italian edition of *Les règles de l’art*, published by the Milan-based Il Saggiatore (the Italian publisher of both Jean-Paul Sartre and Claude Lévi-Strauss among the others) was apparently

<sup>23</sup> A few years later, the same author (while still a PhD student) published a very positive review of Lahire (Ravaioli 2005), one of the main criticism of Bourdieu’s theory of the habitus from a cognitive- and cultural- sociological point of view. Similar for inspiration and horizon, even if differently argued, is the review of the *Esquisse pour un autoanalyse* written by another (young) sociologist, a specialist in the sociology of law and communication, who works at least partly in the same intellectual circles [see Brighenti 2006]. A student of immigration and arts but also an active social theorist, Brighenti also translated an important article by Loic Wacquant on the concept of habitus for the new journal *Etnografia e ricerca qualitativa* (see Wacquant [2009]).

unsuccessful in bringing Bourdieu to Italian sociologists, where there are only few specialists in literature – and they are usually more attuned with scholars criticized by Bourdieu as Lucien Goldmann and Howard S. Becker [see e.g. Dal Lago 1995; Turnaturi 2005].

Furthermore, in the last ten years a whole series of new translations and re-editions of Bourdieu's books appeared. These testify the centrality acknowledged to this work (and author's name) by managers or decision-makers in publishing houses, and sometimes even by editors of book series. Among them it is worth recalling the translation of a foundational text like *Esquisse de une theorie de la pratique* in 2003, thirty years after its first edition (and almost twenty-five after its English translation), in a series devoted to "culture and society" edited by the anthropologist Ugo Fabietti. Fabietti cannot be classified as a follower or student of Bourdieu – indeed, the series already included a translation of an influential Abdelmalek Sayad's book on migrations, prefaced by the same Bourdieu [Sayad 2002] and introduced in the Italian edition by Salvatore Palidda, a sociologist who studied in Paris and who returned Italy thanks mainly to Dal Lago. In that same year *Science de la science et réflexivité* (Feltrinelli was published in Italian), followed in 2004 by *Les structures sociales de l'économie* (for the Trieste-based Asterios, a new publisher with inevitable problems of distribution). A classic book like *Le sens pratique* found its Italian way in 2005 (for the Rome-based Armando, and edited by a young and not academically positioned philosopher), the same year in which *Le règles de l'art* (Saggiatore 2005, with an introduction by Boschetti) and the recent *Esquisse pour un autoanalyse* (translated as *Questa non è un'autobiografia*, with a preface again by Boschetti, for Feltrinelli) were published. In 2006 the new editions of *I delfini* and *La riproduzione* marked a return in Italy of texts that were introduced for the first time thirty years earlier. Both prefaced by the same Bechelloni who promoted their original edition, with new short introductory texts, more autobiographical than contextualizing Bourdieu and Passeron's contributions in current international debates, the two books did not increase the establishment of a new season of Bourdieu's reception. After all, Guaraldi is still a small house with problems of distribution, and Bechelloni did not much contributed after the 1970s to the knowledge of Bourdieu, or even to the sociological discipline, focusing more on media and cultural studies than on sociology.<sup>24</sup> In

<sup>24</sup> An early cue for this little impact is the relative failure in terms of audience of the conference (probably the first one devoted to Bourdieu in Italy) organized by Bechelloni in 2005 in the frame of a summer school in communication held in Tuscany, with the contributions of few scholars who made use of Bourdieu in their work: among them the sociologists Roberto Moscati, Carlo Sorrentino, and Luciano Benedusi, and the literary historian Anna Boschetti. On the relative failure of the event in terms of public see the same Bechelloni [2006a].

2009 a new edition, enriched by an introduction, of *Raisons pratiques* was issued by Il Mulino in a series devoted to influential (and best-selling) books, and in that same year the translation of an old article by Bourdieu on religion and sociologists (“Sociologia della credenza e credenze dei sociologi”) appeared as an Appendix to the second edition of a textbook in the sociology of religion. This textbook is edited by the Rome-based sociology Roberto Cipriani, a past student of Ferrarotti, a past President of the Italian Sociological Association (AIS) and one of the current leaders of the Catholic camp.<sup>25</sup>

TAB. 5. *First translations and new editions of Bourdieu’s books in Italy, 2001-2009*

Year	Title	Publisher
2001	<i>La distinzione</i> , new edition	Il Mulino
2003	<i>Per una teoria della pratica</i>	Cortina
2003	<i>Il mestiere di scienziato</i>	Feltrinelli
2003	<i>Sul potere simbolico</i>	Marsilio (see Boschetti 2003)
2004	<i>La fotografia</i> , new edition	Guaraldi
2004	<i>Le strutture sociali dell’economia</i>	Asterios (Trieste)
2005	<i>Il senso pratico</i>	Armando (Rome)
2005	<i>Le regole dell’arte</i>	Il Saggiatore
2005	<i>Questa non è un’autobiografia</i>	Feltrinelli
2005	<i>Le astuzie del potere</i> (ed. Wacquant)	Ombre corte (Verona)
2005	“Introduzione a <i>La distinzione</i> ”*	Angeli, <i>Introduzione allo studio dei consumi</i> , A. Signorelli ed.
2006	<i>I delfini</i>	Guaraldi
2006	<i>La riproduzione</i>	Guaraldi
2006	“‘Fieldwork’ e colonialismo”	Il Mulino, <i>Studi Culturali</i>
2009	<i>Ragioni pratiche</i> , new edition	Il Mulino
2009	“Sociologia della credenza e credenze dei sociologi”	Borla, <i>Manuale di sociologia delle religioni</i> , R. Cipriani ed.
2009	“I giuristi, custodi dell’ipocrisia collettiva”	<i>Kainos</i> (on line journal)

Is this possible evidence of Bourdieu’s final achievement of an academic, institutionally based legitimation in Italy? It is too early to say, even if the temptation to give a positive answer is strong. Relevant books with strong academic credentials like *Homo academicus* and *La Noblesse d’Etat* are indeed still to be translated, while they are already available and largely circulating in other national fields. Also a book in-

<sup>25</sup> The translation, edited by Luigi Berzano (full professor of sociology of religion in Turin) of the famous article on the structure of the religious field [Bourdieu 1971], is not published but available on line as an examination text for students. See <http://www.scipol.unito.it/index.php?page=55&idins=117&s=5&l=A&sede=1&semestre=&cds=>

tended for a large audience (but huge and expansive for translation) like *La Misère du monde*, which we know has been well received among influential Italian sociologists with a critical orientation, is not available in Italian yet. Yet to be known in Italian are also all the seminal books on the Algerian society (with the possible exception of *La domination masculine*, translated shortly after its French edition by Feltrinelli), and the anthological *Questions de sociologie* and *Choses dites*.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, translations are not the only means to import an author. A good indication that something is moving and will probably continue to move in the next years are two other recent editorial enterprises. The first is a collected book aimed to present what the editors label as new social theorists – among whom there is Bourdieu (the others are scholars well known in Italy like Touraine, Giddens and Ulrich Beck). The chapter on Bourdieu is authored by the already mentioned Gabriella Paolucci [2009], who consolidated in this manner her credentials as a student of Bourdieu. Paolucci is also editing a forthcoming book entirely devoted to the French scholar. This is co-authored by a group of scholars, not necessarily sociologists (among them there is Boschetti), engaged in an assessment of the legacy of Bourdieu for contemporary sociological theory.<sup>27</sup> The publisher, the Turin based UTET, is the common denominator of the two books. UTET is a house specialised in classics and encyclopaedias which recently invested also in the field of academic publishing. Therefore it is not a highly legitimated and authoritative venue, (at least when compared with other Italian publishers, like Il Mulino or Laterza), but possibly a visible one for academic sociologists looking for new textbooks.

### **Bourdieu Among (Italian) Sociologists: Research Areas, Academic Groups, and Intellectual Strategies**

How, and how much, have Italian sociologists been making use of Bourdieu's work? Which parts or items of his large *oeuvre* have had more impact on their research practices? How did this impact change over time? Have some academically and/or intellectually identifiable regions of the sociological field been systematically more attuned and interested to Bourdieu's lessons? And, on the contrary, which research areas and/or academic groups have been particularly refractory to them? How

<sup>26</sup> This means that *Fieldwork in philosophy* in Bourdieu [1986], a foundational text for knowing Bourdieu, is still to be translated in Italian.

<sup>27</sup> The present writer has contributed with the chapter on the concepts of capital: see Santoro 2010b. Two foreign authors contribute to the volume with the translations of already published texts. They are G. Sapiro and D. Swartz. The writing of the book has been pivotal in allowing unconnected scholars – who belongs to different academic circles – to exchange ideas and knowledge.

did this pattern of interest (and *disinterest*) affect the readings and interpretations of Bourdieu’s work that circulated in Italy?

Contrary to what the massive import and translation documented in the previous section (and graphically represented, with its ups and downs, in Fig. 1) could suggest, the impact of Bourdieu’s work on intellectual and research practices of Italian sociologists has been relatively small and weak. As we can read in a recent paper on the reception of Bourdieu in Italy, “among the Italian followers of Bourdieu’s sociology, the marginality of this author in the panorama of Italian social sciences is almost a common place” [Salento 2010]. According to Salento, no Italian textbook in sociology or the history of sociology devotes to Bourdieu an attention comparable to that devoted to other contemporary social theorists. Monographic studies are not easy to find, nor there are anthologies. Indeed, it is difficult to deny some truth to statement like these. At present, there are only two books devoted to a presentation and discussion of Bourdieu’s work, both issued at the beginning of the new millennium [Marsiglia 2002; Boschetti 2003] by publishers not specialised in social sciences nor endowed with great symbolic capital in the field. It is less easy to document the presence of Bourdieu in textbooks, both for the difficulty to define what a textbook is (and therefore which are the textbooks) and for the lack of a systematic survey on these texts (or a sample of them).

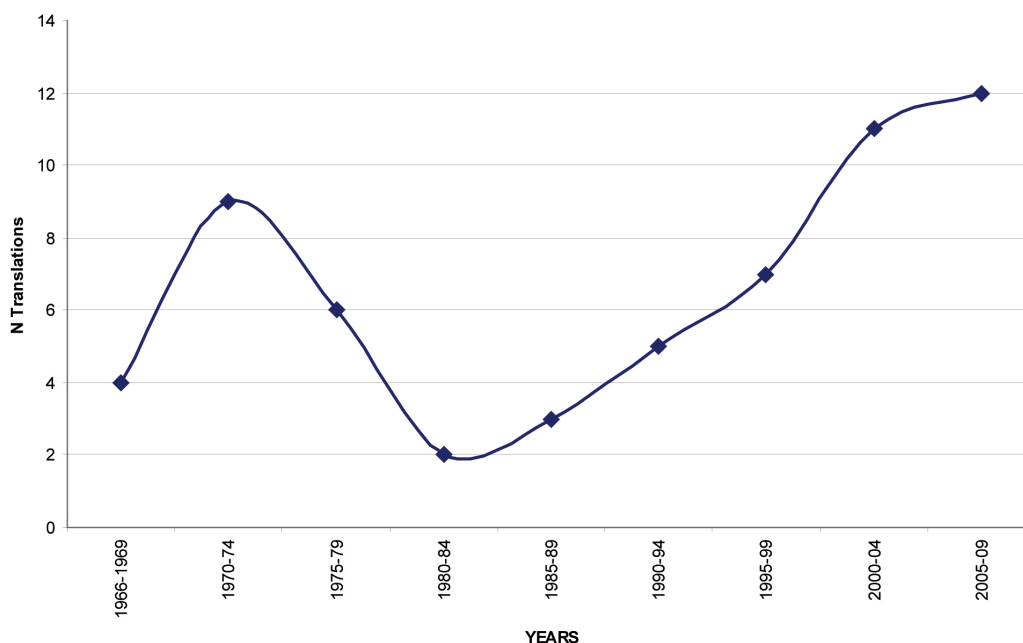


FIG. 1. Bourdieu in Italy: number of translations (books and articles, including new editions of books), for year (1966-2009, five years intervals).

TAB. 6. *References to Bourdieu, compared to Goffman (EG), Habermas (JH), Giddens (AG), Luhmann (NL), and Boudon (RB), in a sample of Italian textbooks (number of pages in which the author is referred to, and when not available, number of bibliographical references*

	PB	EG	JH	AG	NL	RB
<i>Sociology/History of sociology</i>						
Crespi 1985	8	16	35	3	54	4
Izzo 1991	–	8	19	–	9	9
Cesareo 199	–	1	1	7	1	1
Crespi <i>et al.</i> 2000	9	8	19	6	17	4
Toscano 2006 (13th ed.)	15	2	22	19	13	
Barbagli <i>et al.</i> 1997*	2	3	1	3	1	3
Giglioli 2005*	7	10	2	–	1	–
Giovannini 2009*	2	5	–	4	2	7
<i>Methodology</i>						
Corbetta 1999*	–	2	–	–	–	3
Guala 2000*	–	–	–	–	–	2
Marradi 2007	3	–	–	–	–	–
<i>Sociology of culture</i>						
Crespi 1996	20	10	9	7	22	7
Crespi 2003	21	11	6	7	20	3
Sciolla 2002	9	6	3	3	3	6
Sciolla 2007	14	9	3	3	3	6
<i>Economic sociology</i>						
Trigilia 1998	2	–	2	1	–	4
La Rosa 2004	4	–	–	2	1	–
Regini 2007*	3	–	–	–	–	1
Barbera-Negri 2007	–	–	–	–	–	3
<i>Sociology of consumption</i>						
Codeluppi 2002*	3	–	–	1	1	2
Sassatelli 2007	18	6	1	–	–	–
<i>Sociology of education</i>						
Besozzi 1993	4	3	1	–	2	3
Schizzerotto-Barone 2006*	3	–	–	–	–	1
<i>Sociology of science</i>						
Bucchi 2002	–	–	–	–	–	–

\* Number of bibliographical references.



In order to offer some data, not systematically collected but at least grounded on more than mere impression, I have chosen a few textbooks published from the most prestigious publishers in Italy, il Mulino and Laterza, plus a few other texts (among them a very recent one, and a long-living handbook, now at its thirteenth reprint), looking for patterns of citations of a sample of influent contemporary authors: Bourdieu, Goffman, Habermas, Luhmann, Giddens and Bauman. For each textbook I have counted the occurrences of the name in the text, and when an index of names was not available, have counted the number of bibliographical references for each author: a very rough indicator, of course, but not completely meaningless (after all, selected authors are all major writers and have published many books and articles in their career). The results are presented in table 6.

Table 6 offers some empirically grounded cues of the presence of Bourdieu (name and works) in the texts Italian sociologists write having in mind both the status of the discipline, their research interests, their intellectual sympathies and affinities, and their interpretation of students' needs of knowledge. Contrary to what could be identified as an academic doxa, Bourdieu is not a marginalised or a neglected scholar: in the field of cultural sociology he is a well established reference, apparently the most established among the greatest. He is less referred to in general sociology textbooks,<sup>28</sup> even if there is no single pattern here but a double one, according to the orientations of the authors: philosophically oriented authors (e.g. Crespi and Izzo) give clearly much more weight to theoretically sophisticated (and complex) scholars such as Habermas and Luhmann, while more empirically oriented ones (Barbagli *et al.*, Giglioli, or Giovannini) refer more to scholars like Goffman, Giddens or Boudon. In economic sociology, Bourdieu has a small presence – lesser than that of specialists like Colin Crouch or Mark Granovetter, and also than that of general social theorists oriented toward rational action theory (RAT) like James Coleman or John Goldthorpe – but greater than well established sociologists like Giddens or Luhmann. In the field of education there are not great differences between the two French sociologists who have gained international reputation (e.g. Bourdieu, alone or with Passeron, and

<sup>28</sup> A true exception is Fischer [1992], which devotes a whole chapter to Bourdieu's theoretical system and especially the concept of habitus (he was introduced to Bourdieu's theory of practice by Bechelloni; Fischer, personal communication). Unfortunately, the textbook has been written and published in a series intended for social work, and has not circulated widely in the sociological field. A student of Filippo Barbano in Turin, Fischer has been one of the more careful readers of Bourdieu since an early review on education sociology in France published in 1973 [see Fischer 1973]. His critical reading of Bourdieu – as left functionalist, first, and as a not really successful synthesizer of alternative theoretical postures more recently – is however apparent. Currently Fischer, who has for long been teaching sociology in Social work schools and is a specialist in the sociology of education at the University of Turin, looks strongly attuned with Archer's critical realism (and criticizes Bourdieu from her stance).

Boudon). Interestingly, we find a more differentiated situation in the field of methodology, where the alternative between Bourdieu or Boudon looks foundational (as it is from an epistemological point of view).

Looking at the table according to a temporal dimension, it seems possible to identify a pattern of growth in references to Bourdieu [very clear comparing Sciolla 2002 and 2007], even if our data do not permit any firm conclusion on the issue.<sup>29</sup>

In sum, more than marginalization or neglect, as the doxa says, it might be said that Bourdieu's recognition in Italy is not adequate to international standards – where, as I have shown in a previous paper [Santoro 2008a], – Bourdieu's standing is much higher than that of the other scholars investigated, in particular Boudon, whose international visibility (at least as measured by the ISI web of science) is almost inexistent compared to Bourdieu's.<sup>30</sup>

Of course, data in table 6 offer a very rough indication about what really the textbooks make of these authors. We do not know how these references are managed, nor which kind of presentation they give about a book, a theory, or an author. Looking inside these textbook, one can find very different orientations. For instance, in what is presumably one of the best-sellers in Italian sociological courses, the name of Bourdieu is referred to only for *La distinzione* and his research on cultural reproduction [Barbagli *et al.* 1997]: nothing is said about his epistemology, or the sociological study of arts, or even foundational concepts such as habitus. It is true that Toscano [2006] reserves to Bourdieu a specific space, but the chapter devoted to him is also devoted to Giddens and Touraine [Mele 2006], while whole chapters are devoted to Habermas and even to Bauman. Textbooks in the sociology of culture, while offering long discussions of Bourdieu's concepts and contributions, are typically framed in terms which emphasize their *limits* and *contradictions* while recognizing their importance. Just to give an example:

If, on the one side, Bourdieu grants to the symbolic order a central position in the construction of social reality, on the other side he ends up subordinating such a order to the objective structures generated by class divisions. In so doing, he seems to be unfaithful to his initial aim of giving equal relevance to both the subjective and the objective dimensions (...) Deeply analyzed, Bourdieu's theory looks therefore, in the

<sup>29</sup> Consider that also the chapter on Bourdieu as a “new” theorist of action, together with Touraine and Giddens, had been added to Toscano's textbook only in his last edition: see Mele [2006].

<sup>30</sup> A clear demonstration of this pattern is Bagnasco [2007], where Bourdieu is cited only in a quotation by him (and colleagues) of Bachelard, and where Boudon is quoted and used intensively as a source all over the text. In another introductory text authored by an influential sociologist, Bourdieu is quoted only once, with a short reference to *La distinzione*; in this circumstance, Bourdieu is however referred to as “a well-known French sociologist”: see Cavalli [2001, 90].

end, as a more sophisticated version of the structuralist determinism of a Marxian kind: action has, in fact, in such a theory, a subordinated position, as it limits itself to actualize objective cultural schemata which have their ultimate root in the class structures [Crespi 2007, 84].

A closer reading of some of the textbooks sheds light also to a certain approximation in the interpretation (or even knowledge). For instance, in Schizzerotto and Baroni [2006, 110] Bourdieu (and Passeron) are identified first as *sostenitori della tesi della deprivazione culturale* ("supporters of the thesis of the cultural deprivation") [*ibidem*, 110] then as representatives of the theory of cultural capital, according to which "the sons of subaltern classes are not defined as culturally deprived: more simply, they possess a culture which is different from that which prevails at school which, in its turn, identify itself with that of the superior and middle classes" [*ibidem*, 206]. In other cases, an arbitrary selection of readings does not make justice to the author: this happens, for example, when in an otherwise rich and dense textbook on cultural sociology, Bourdieu is presented and widely discussed *only* as the author of studies on cultural consumption and taste, leaving his studies and contributions on the production of art and culture and on cultural markets in the background [e.g. Sciolla 2007]. Bourdieu is discussed as a scholar of consumption in a classic textbook in economic sociology like Trigilia [1998] – while nothing is said about his analysis of the economic field, his concept of social capital, the role of time in economic transactions, and his many empirical studies on the economic modernization of (post)colonial societies [see Swedberg 2003, 2010]. As cognitive sociology is far from being an acknowledged research field in Italy, Bourdieu's contributions to cognitive sociology [e.g. Lizardo 2010] are obviously unacknowledged.

In sum, what is offered to students is a very selective, and sometimes reductive, "Bourdieu": a situation which, of course, is not so anomalous – it was often denounced by Bourdieu himself with reference not to textbooks but even to scholarly works and scientific texts. But, I would add, it is a representation which is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain or accept given the reputation gained by the French scholar in the American and British sociological debate, where his works and ideas are debated in very sophisticated ways and with the aid of even more secondary sources.

Looking now at the uses made of this work in research practices, it does not come as a surprise to find a situation of relative weakness, partly caused by the weak culture of empirical research displayed by Italian sociology, partly generated by a relative ignorance of the range of Bourdieu's contribution, partly accounted by some resistance to adopt models of thought which look, to Italian minds, too unbalanced toward social structure to the detriment of agency. Not Bourdieu, but other sociologists work as enlightening references for Italian scholars.

The first subfield which manifested some interest for Bourdieu has been education, both in sociology and in pedagogy. As we have seen, one of the very first translations (in 1968) was specifically devoted to educational issue, and both *I delfini* and *La riproduzione* – that is, the first two books translated in Italian from the original French – were inscribed in this intellectual area. The first important use of Bourdieu's tools – in particular the concepts of cultural capital and cultural legitimacy – dates back to 1969, and is due to the already mentioned Marzio Barbagli (see Barbagli and Dei 1969). *Les héritiers*, as well as the articles of 1966 on cultural capital, are among the main references of these authors. Focused on the effects on school practices and in the professional culture of teachers of the secondary school reform of 1963, the book has been one of the very first empirical studies conducted in Italy in the field of sociology, in all respects a great endeavour given the state of sociology in Italy at the time. In the early 1970s the sociology of education experienced a boom in Italy as elsewhere, and this contributed of course to the appeal of a work which devoted to education so central a place. After an early discussion by the then young sociologist Lorenzo Fischer in the context of a long review essay on the French sociology of education [Fischer 1973], where Bourdieu and Passeron were criticized for their functionalist bent (even if labelled as “left,” and different from Althusser's), in 1978 the first systematic attempt to provide an assessment of Bourdieu's (and Passeron's) work in the sociology of education was issued, but significantly it was authored not by a sociologist but by a pedagogist and published in a pedagogical journal [Malizia 1978]. In that same year Il Mulino published a book by two young sociologists whose title was directly taken from that of a Bourdieu's article [De Francesco and Trivellato 1978; see Bourdieu and Boltanski 1975]. Another book that recognizes in its very title its debt to Bourdieu's ideas has been then issued in 1984, authored by one of the most influential educational sociologists in Italy, teaching in Rome and coming from a political career [Benadusi 1984], who even later has often made use of Bourdieu's (and Passeron's) ideas and instruments [see for example Benadusi 2001]. Not surprising, after all, as we know that Bourdieu's contributions to education entered the Italian debate very early, at the beginning of the 1970s, through translations of books and articles in well received readers.

Still, even if known and possibly read, Bourdieu's impact on Italian educational sociology was not so great as the translations and the quoted exemplars would suggest. A good indicator of this weak presence is provided by a collective book published in 1987, aiming to offer an assessment of Italian sociology of education [Moscati 1987]. Among its twenty chapters, only two quote or refer to Bourdieu (and Passeron). Among the general sociologists, much more interest is accorded to Boud-

on and Collins – the latter in many respects a competitor with Bourdieu for the idea of a political sociology of education. The combined effect of this competition from both conflict sociology and formalized analysis (based on methodological individualism) has been – as the same Moscati would say<sup>31</sup> – that Bourdieu’s originality as an educational sociologist was generally missed.<sup>32</sup> Representative of the general orientation toward Bourdieu is a recent article by a young educational sociologist, whose title well identifies its objective: *Is it possible to explain inequalities of learning through cultural capital theory?* [Barone 2005]. The answer, of course, is no. Unfortunately, the operativization of the concept of cultural capital followed in the (quantitative) analysis which substantiates the article is such to neutralize from the beginning, in a reductive way, the complexities and subtleties of Bourdieu’s sociological theory, and passes over the most interesting contributions the notion of cultural capital has been able to offer to the sociological debate on school success worldwide [see for instance DiMaggio 2007; Lizardo 2008].<sup>33</sup>

If not education, which research areas could therefore have been receptive to Bourdieu, beyond occasional or superficial ways? Of course, the first candidates as major areas of reception are three areas Bourdieu strongly cultivated after education (usually connecting them, in the same text or project, something which is rarely done by individual practitioners of these specialties, not only in Italy): sociological theory,

<sup>31</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>32</sup> For exceptions to this general pattern, see Cesareo [1976]; D’Alessandro [1985]; Moscati [1999]; D’Alessandro [1991]; Fischer [2003]; Marsiglia [1998]; Pitzalis [2002] (see also Pitzalis *et al* [2009]; Pitzalis [2010]). The latter however studied in Paris, at the EHESS, and published his thesis in French. With respect to the others: D’Alessandro was strongly linked to Bechelloni, before putting aside her career as a social researcher to devote herself mainly to art. D’Alessandro is now a sociologist in Rome but has consecrated herself mainly to art. Marsiglia is also the author, as we know, of one of the two books devoted to Bourdieu ever published in Italian, although we have remarked the weak impact of that book on the Italian debate, its merits notwithstanding. Fischer is among the very few who devoted a whole chapter to Bourdieu in a textbook [Fischer 1993]. Moscati has been one of the first Italian sociologists who met Bourdieu personally, in the early 1970s (during a trip to Paris with Bechelloni), as engaged in similar researches. He met Bourdieu again in 1986, asking him advice for the research on the Italian university he was doing. Moscati’s interest for Bourdieu’s work slowly weakened, however, in the following years, and in any case has been focused always and only on educational issues.

<sup>33</sup> This is one of those typical texts which claim to advance a strong criticism to a scholarly work re-configuring it according to its own tastes, sensitivities and necessities (in terms of data availability). In this specific paper, a case against the theory of cultural capital is raised moving from a re-conceptualization and analytical reduction of the theory (and the CC concept). For an example of indifference or insensitiveness to Bourdieu’s approach see Gasperoni [1996], a book focused on the very Bourdieusian topic of the differential success of students which quotes only once *La riproduzione*, making use of the concept of “cultural capital” without specifying its source (an obvious example of what R.K. Merton would call “integration by obliteration.” Interestingly, the book has been issued by the same Istituto Cattaneo promoting the research from which is drawn Barbagli and Dei [1969].

social inequalities (itself strongly linked to educational sociology of course), and the sociology of culture.

About the first, we can register at least a book by an influential practitioner, the now retired Franco Crespi (already encountered as the author of successful textbooks of general and cultural sociology), who has long devoted a certain degree of attention to Bourdieu's theory, in this case to habitus theory, an attention which we can find also in one of his most important and engaging books, consecrated to the theory of action [Crespi 1999]. We have already seen Crespi's assessment of the theory of habitus, and could only add that Crespi considers it as an exemplar of a more general class of theories, including also Touraine and Giddens (without acknowledging the debt Giddens historically has with Bourdieu's theory of practice). Indeed, Crespi as a theorist coming from philosophy (and in a certain way never breaking with it) has developed his stance building on other intellectual traditions, like phenomenology, existentialism, critical theory, and Mannheim, which make Bourdieu's practical theory of action difficult to digest. And it is significant that in a journal very close to Crespi, *Quaderni di teoria sociale*, you cannot find any text by Bourdieu but can read in Italian translation Jeffrey C. Alexander's long and harsh criticism to Bourdieu – a curious editorial choice given the relatively weak presence of Bourdieu in our country [see Alexander 2005].

Indeed, it would be possible to write a whole history of the interventions *against Bourdieu* instead of those in favour, and this history would probably be not only longer but also full of influential intellectual players. Among them, a special place should be given to Diego Gambetta, now in Oxford but coming from Turin, whose early book, first published in English and then in Italian [Gambetta 1989], moves from a very critical reading of Bourdieu and Passeron's theory of social reproduction, used as a target against which to develop his own analysis of educational differentials, mainly inspired by RAT (and with Boudon and Elster among its inspirers). As one of the few Italian sociologists working in an English speaking university – and a first class one such as Oxford – it is not difficult to imagine how this critical stance could have influenced later practitioners of educational sociology in Italy, strongly oriented in any case toward methodological individualism (if not RAT) and mainstream quantitative analysis – the kind of social analysis which finds its main home at RC28 of the International Sociological Association, for many years under the intellectual influence of John Goldthorpe [for an overview of this kind of research in Italy see Cobalti and Schizzerotto 1994; Schizzerotto and Barone 2006].

Among the social theorists who have devoted attention to Bourdieu is to be counted Alessandro Dal Lago – currently one of the most read and influential (public) sociologists in Italy, very well known for his books on social exclusion, migration,

and recently even art, but author also of books on the social theory of deviance, Simmel, and modernity, as well as an editor of Foucault's translations. As an engaged sociologist (on the left) and a habitual writer in left newspapers (like *il Manifesto*) it is not surprising that he makes use of some of Bourdieu's concepts and ideas – cultural capital, field or social space, symbolic exclusion. Dal Lago's use of Bourdieu however could be described not so much as constitutive of his sociological gaze, but as rather ornamental. Indeed, what is really striking is how little a sociologist who could be considered in some way homologous to Bourdieu (or better to his student Wacquant) has received or followed, or even discussed, his theories. Indeed, as an early student of the Chicago tradition of criminology, a pioneer in importing ethnomethodology in Italy, a micro-sociologist *à la* Goffman (and a frame analysis practitioner), and an occasional practitioner of political philosophy, this is exactly what you can expect, especially considering the limited usefulness of Bourdieu's pessimism or better political realism for an intellectual project which seems oriented more toward gaining a presence in the national public culture than in (national or maybe international) academic and scientific circles.

As I noted, only one book devoted on Bourdieu's social theory has been published by a sociologist so far [Marsiglia 2002]. Based in Florence (but without any concrete link with Bechelloni), Giorgio Marsiglia had previously written on C. Wright Mills, another champion of critical sociology. His book offers a thoroughly comprehensive presentation and assessment of Bourdieu's social theory at large, very well informed and built on a deep knowledge of the international literature. But Marsiglia cannot be identified as a specialist in social theory, and the group of which he belongs – a fully fledged academic school, with a leader (Luciano Cavalli) and followers – and whose members figure promptly in the acknowledgements of the same book, is not attuned at all with Bourdieu as both an author and an intellectual, apart from a well established interest for Weberian political sociology and the charismatic phenomenon.<sup>34</sup> What is more striking about social theory in Italy is that no scholar engaged in this field in some dominant or at least influential position (e.g. Alessandro Pizzorno, Luciano Cavalli, Alessandro Cavalli, Franco Rositi, Franco Ferrarotti, Gianfranco Poggi, Alessandro Ferrara, Loredana Sciolla, Paolo Jedlowsky, Pierpaolo Donati or the late Alberto Melucci – with the only exception of Crespi and possibly Franco Ferrarotti)<sup>35</sup> have ever showed some apparently real interest for Bourdieu and his work, while devoting careful attention to contemporary scholars of less global

<sup>34</sup> As it is demonstrated, among other things, by the absence of any reference to Bourdieu in a textbook recently issued from that same school: see Giovannini [2009].

<sup>35</sup> For an overview of Italian social theory, with brief remarks about almost all these authors, see Sassatelli M. [2007].

impact like the French Alain Touraine and Raymond Boudon (and now possibly Luc Boltanski), the British Anthony Giddens and the German Jürgen Habermas and Niklas Luhmann.<sup>36</sup> And it is revealing that even the exceptions never really engage with this social theory, preferring to a time consuming and comprehensive investigation on the sources and the secondary literature the easier ways of a criticism focused on very specific topics or aspects [see e.g. Ferrarotti 1999, 94-95, where Bourdieu is accused of academism and pedantry, emptying his critical sociology of the original subversive potential].

Even in the field of social inequalities – indeed, more than a subfield a constitutive part of any sociological analysis – the place of Bourdieu looks marginal. At least since the early 1980s, this field has been almost completely hegemonized by mainstream sociological research, that kind of research which has in ISI's RC28 its stronghold – an international research network to which Bourdieu never participated [see Goldthorpe 2007]. The little research on stratification done completely outside this network is generally very local and without much breadth. A partial exception to this general trend is the study of poverty and social exclusion, often based on qualitative data (life histories, interviews, ethnographies), partly sponsored by the *Commissione di Indagine sull'Esclusione sociale* founded (and funded) by the *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri* (i.e. the Prime Minister Office)<sup>37</sup>. Some attention to Bourdieu's lesson as inscribed in *La Misère du monde* and its biographical approach is identifiable especially in research done in Rome by Ferrarotti and his associates, for years engaged in a long lasting research program on marginal lives in the metropolitan space [see e.g. Ferrarotti 1974, 1981; 1999a; Maciotti 1997]. Much more influenced by Bourdieu's general approach – in particular on domination and symbolic power – has been the research program on the urban élites and their reproduction directed in Naples by Enrica Amato [2003] also with Lello Savonardo – author of a whole book on the urban structure of “symbolic power” [Savonardo 2003], at the time a PhD student and currently a lecturer at the university of Naples. Not on poverty but on the “fear of falling” is focused a recently launched research on middle classes and consumption – part of a larger research program on the crisis of middle classes in Italy promoted by the Consiglio Italiano delle Scienze Sociali – which moves from

<sup>36</sup> Contributions to social theory focused on Bourdieu have been typically written in Italy by young scholars, usually not yet academically established, or without a tenure [e.g. Ravaioli 2003; Corchia 2006; Mele 2007]. But see for exceptions – besides the already quoted Marsiglia [2002] – Paolucci [2002] and Paolucci [2009].

<sup>37</sup> For an overview of this kind of research see *Commissione d'indagine sull'esclusione sociale* 2002 and the more recent Brandolini and Saraceno [2007], where one may verify the weak influence of Bourdieu's work on social exclusion in Italian researchers institutionally engaged in this research field.



a truly Bourdieusian framework, even if partially modified to adapt it to both the contemporary Italian setting and the kind of ethnographic, micro-level approach this project tries to adopt [Sassatelli, Santoro, and Semi 2008].

Indeed, there has been a relatively large debate in Italy on *Distinction*, since its first publication in French, to which even very influential scholars such as Franco Ferrarotti participated [see D’Alessandro 1980; Ferrarotti 1980].<sup>38</sup> Not surprisingly – given the presence of Bechelloni in the editorial board of the journal, and in those years also in its editorial staff, – RIS has been a major venue of this debate [Boschetti 1985; Dal Lago 1985; Lucà Trombetta 1985]; it is noteworthy, however, that only a student of Bourdieu praised the book, while the other commentators were critical, even harshly critical (as Dal Lago). Independently from this early reception, *La distinzione* has surely been a successful book in Italy, and could be classified as the most debated, and still the most read, of Bourdieu’s books in this country [see also De Paz 1984; Santoro 2001; Sciolla 2007], continuously reprinted after the first edition in 1984, and today available in a slightly revised edition published in 2001.<sup>39</sup>

As expected, it is the sociology of culture and of the arts that mostly experienced an influence from Bourdieu, at least since the early 1990s, when a sociological enterprise devoted to cultural life and processes began to flourish. But we have to make a double digression at this point. The first one is about the establishment of a sociology of culture in Italy, something that occurred relatively separately from Bourdieu’s work and lesson, and much more on the wake of three main lines of research: the study of media and communication,<sup>40</sup> the study of everyday life, and in some way the study of the so called new social movements.<sup>41</sup> Not surprisingly, among

<sup>38</sup> Also this early interest of the *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* for a book just published by Bourdieu has been probably mediated or favoured by Bechelloni. Consider that the latter is also the author of the Preface to Verena D’Alessandro’s first book, fruit of a research period in Paris [D’Alessandro 1985].

<sup>39</sup> Unluckily, I am not able to show figures about the diffusion of the book, as the publisher is not yet available to make them public. Suffice anyway to say that since 1984 the book has been reprinted many times, and has been republished in 2001 in a series devoted to a wider audience. Currently it is used as a reference book (in the reading list) for students in two dozens courses in Italy. Even in the 2001 edition the translation is incomplete, and the whole iconographic apparatus is missing. A new edition, with an integral translation and pictures, is among the projects of the publisher.

<sup>40</sup> On whose history and main trends from its origins to the end of the eighties see Mancini and Wolf 1990.

<sup>41</sup> A comprehensive review of research and interests – as well as influences and idiosyncracies – in this field is found in Jedlowsky and Leccardi [2003], however unbalanced toward the sociology of everyday life and with no references to the sociology of the arts. Bourdieu is here quoted for just three texts: *Distinction*, *Reproduction*, and *Esquisse d’une theorie de la practice* (still to be translated at the time).

the early practitioners of media studies in Italy we find scholars already encountered in these pages, as Bechelloni [1974] and Rositi [1971] – the former moving from the concept of “cultural field,” the latter more catholic in his references, and surely less attuned with Bourdieu’s lesson. For long marginalized and almost not existent has been the sociology of art – and even among the very few works produced in this area Bourdieu has been usually marginalized (for an exception see De Paz 1976).<sup>42</sup> So, it is again not Bourdieu’s long lasting research in the sociology of culture which intellectually inspired and drove the constitution of a speciality devoted to culture in Italian sociology – as in some way happened in the United States – but scholars already well received in the discipline as Habermas, Goffman,<sup>43</sup> and even Touraine,<sup>44</sup> as well as a few cultural anthropologists who gained some fellowship in Italy also among sociologists (like Mary Douglas, and to a lesser degree Clifford Geertz).

The second digression. As in other countries, in Italy too Bourdieu has been in part introduced by his students, who acted as divulgators or instigators (for translations, reviews and so on). Differently from other countries, in Italy only one scholar gained a reputation as a Bourdieu’s student, Anna Boschetti, who published in 1984 – one year before her invited comment on the Italian translation of *La distinction* in RIS – the Italian edition of her dissertation on Sartre, with a Foreword by Bourdieu. Two features are to be underlined about this episode. The first is that the book was published by a small and peripheral, even if well known, publisher, with a strong political connotation on the left. This was not an asset in a period in which Italian sociology was trying to become more “scientific” loosening its links with Marxism and, in the end, with any form of critical theory. The second, and more relevant, is that Boschetti entered the Italian academic field not as a sociologist or even social scientist but, as we have seen before, as a French literature scholar. Her academic role had profound consequences on her ability to act as a mediator in the sociological field. At the same time, even among Italian sociologists she was reputed as the main interpreter and expert of Bourdieu for a long time – a reputation

<sup>42</sup> See Ferrarotti [1986] for a clear example of marginalization of Bourdieu even in a field he has much contributed to. Among sociologists of literature in Italy, usually educated in literary studies more than in sociology, authors like Lucien Goldman and Robert Escarpit are probably still more central than Bourdieu.

<sup>43</sup> Goffman arrived in Italy with the translation of *Asylums* in 1968, and went on with a series of translations (almost) all for il Mulino, sponsored by P.P. Giglioli, who for a while had been his student at Berkeley. Goffman entered the world of catholic sociologists in the 1990s [see Bovone and Rovatti 1992].

<sup>44</sup> Touraine has been a reference point for both sociology of everyday life and scholars of social movements (like Alberto Melucci, who studied with him, and even Mario Diani, a student of Melucci’s). His book on the post-industrial society was published by il Mulino in 1974. On Touraine’s reception in Italy see also *infra*.

which gave her the legitimacy to write an obituary in RIS after Bourdieu’s death in 2002.<sup>45</sup>

Looking at the reception and uses of Bourdieu’s ideas and concepts in the sociology of culture, we should notice at least the following. In the field of art sociology, a Bourdieusian perspective (partly complemented with neoinstitutionalism and in some way even with Howard S. Becker’s idea of an art world) has been adopted by this writer for the study of popular music and of the literary field [Santoro 2000; Santoro 2002; Santoro 2003; Santoro 2006; Santoro 2010; Santoro and Sassatelli 2002; Santoro and Solaroli 2007], as well as by Maria Antonietta Trasforini in her study of women artists and of the field of art galleries [e.g. Trasforini 2002, 2007].<sup>46</sup> In the field of fashion studies and lifestyles many studies are to be quoted conducted at the *Centro studi sulla produzione culturale e la moda* founded at the beginning of the 1990s at the Università Cattolica, Milan, and directed by Laura Bovone, who alone or with her students and colleagues has developed a wide program of research on fashion industry, metropolitan life, material culture, and communication spaces [see Bovone 1993; Mora 2001; Bovone *et al.* 2002]. Here the main category drawn from Bourdieu’s work – although originally through a British mediation [Featherstone 1991] – is that of the “cultural intermediary” [Bourdieu 1979]. On lifestyles – moving also from an assessment of Bourdieu’s concepts – the recent work by Luigi Berzano with Carlo Genova could be mentioned, focused on youth and religious participation

<sup>45</sup> The story of this obituary throws some light not only on the complex and apparently contingent ways in which texts are produced but also on the subtle and not linear ways in which an intellectual trajectory could be produced and/or remembered. To my knowledge, the first person to be asked by the RIS’s board to write the obituary was a young scholar, Paola Ravaoli, who recently had finished her undergraduate studies in Bologna with a thesis on Bourdieu’s social theory (*de facto* under my supervision), and who had been publishing an article on the same journal drawn from that thesis [see Ravaoli 2002]. Understandably, she did not consider herself sufficiently legitimated to write such a symbolically charged text as an obituary for a highly reputed scholar. Then the journal’s editor of the time (who knew little it seems about Bourdieu and his Italian following) asked me – probably after a suggestion of someone in the board – to write that text. I declined, for similar reasons (especially as I never personally met Bourdieu), and suggested the name of Anna Boschetti, who accepted. Anyway, conscious of her marginal role in the sociological field, a field she did not directly participated to, she asked me to read her text and to discuss it with me before sending for being published. Of course, as she was well aware, this obituary could contribute to the legitimation of Bourdieu among Italian sociologists less than if the author had been a sociologist, possibly a well reputed and influential one. But no one from this elected circle was in the minds of RIS’s editors at the time – simply because no one was there. It is worth noting that Bechelloni was still seating in the scientific board of the journal. But for one or another reason, he was not asked to write this obituary. On the importance of obituary for the social production of cultural memory see Fowler [2007] – who of course builds upon Bourdieu’s reflections and analytical uses of obituaries as sociological sources [Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu 1989].

<sup>46</sup> Together, Santoro and Trasforini have also directed a two-year long research project on the fields of cultural production in Bologna, for the Istituto Cattaneo. See Trasforini [2003] and Santoro [2002].

[Berzano and Genova 2008]: this also shows the impact of Bourdieu in the camp of “Catholic” sociology (in this case based at the University of Turin). Recently some works on gastronomy, on journalism, and on the philosophical field which make wide use of Bourdieu’s toolbox have been done, or are being done, at the Faculty of political sciences in the university of Milan [e.g. Domaneschi 2009; De Benedittis 2010; Solaroli 2010], in part as an effect of the links between this institute and the Catholic university, in part due to the impulse by one of the first Italian scholars who moved from a reconsideration of Bourdieu’s theory of taste for the empirical study of consumption as situated practice [Sassatelli 1995; 2004; 2007; see also Leonini and Sassatelli 2007].<sup>47</sup> At the intersection of culture and economic sociology, the study of consumption has been cultivated in small but very active academic circles. Beyond the aforementioned Roberta Sassatelli, author of studies on cultural consumptions and sport [e.g. Sassatelli 2000; 2010; Santoro and Sassatelli 2002], we should recall at least – because partly adopting insights directly taken from Bourdieu’s *Distinction* – Gerardo Ragone and Enrica Amaturò at the University of Neaples [Ragone 1985; Amaturò 1993; Amaturò and Palumbo 1991; Amaturò *et al.* 1987a; Amaturò *et al.* 1987b].<sup>48</sup> A promising use of Bourdieu, especially his concept of symbolic capital, has been attempted also in the sociology of (post-fordist) work [Chicchi 2003; see also Giannini 2002].

Partly linked to consumption, or at least like the latter a fruit of the recent cultural turn, the sociology of the body is another research area which has been

<sup>47</sup> The trajectory of Roberta Sassatelli is somehow exceptional with respect to others scholars on consumption, as she studied (MA) and taught for many years in the UK before returning to Italy – where she earned her PhD in an international institution as the European University Institute. Her work is theoretically situated at the intersection of three authors: Bourdieu, Goffman, and – at least in an early stage – Foucault. She is one of the founders of the journal *Studi Culturali* (since 2007). See also, as proof of her interests and work in the field of (post-)bourdieusian cultural sociology, Santoro and Sassatelli [2009].

<sup>48</sup> A graduate in economics, Ragone has been working on consumption since 1969. A professor of economic sociology at the University of Pisa and then Neaples, he is also the author of *Stratificazione e mobilità sociale*, a chapter in the successful textbook edited by Toscano [2006], where Bourdieu is referred to both for his theory of reproduction and his work on consumption and distinction. However, as the same scholar admits, it is Veblen more than Bourdieu the most influential source for his work and those of his collaborators (personal communication). An early collaborator of Ragone [see Ragone and Amaturò 1979], Enrica Amaturò has for long worked on the cultural processes linked to consumption, with a special attention also for methodological issues in the study of qualitative variables, an interest which has driven her toward the French statistical school of the *Analyse des données* [see Amaturò 1989] and then toward network analysis. Following a typical Bourdieusian framework, Amaturò *et al.* [1987b] is one of the very few empirical studies done in Italy in the recent past focused on the interior of a person’s home interpreted as a means for the pursuit of social and symbolic profits. The ongoing research on the middle classes directed by Sassatelli, Santoro and Semi focuses its attention also to this issue, through a comparison of two neighbourhoods in two cities (Bologna and Milan), and a more direct engagement with Bourdieu.

strongly influenced by Bourdieu. An early text on the social perception of the body has been – as we have seen – even translated in Italian when this specialty was still a novelty. Intersected with the study of commercial culture [Sassatelli 2000; Sassatelli 2010] or with gender studies [Trasforini 1997; see also Piccone Stella 2001] the sociology of the body has offered an important, albeit small, venue for the reception of Bourdieu even in Italy [e.g. Stella 1996]. Even in this research area, however, it is possible to find recent texts (also textbooks) which make no reference to Bourdieu's insights and contributions [Borgna 2005].<sup>49</sup>

As suggested, the sociology of religion has been another subfield in which Bourdieu's lesson has been received, at least by a few scholars, among them Gustavo Guizzardi [1979a, 1979b] and Luigi Berzano. But even here other intellectual traditions have for long hegemonized the field – from the phenomenological one (Berger and Luckmann) to, more recently, the rational economic one (e.g. Stark, Iannaccone, etc). As we have seen, only recently a Bourdieu text has been included in one of the most used textbooks [Cipriani 2009]. Anyway, the concept and the perspective of the religious field has been discussed in other authoritative textbooks [see Acquaviva and Pace 1998, 58-60]. The publication of an engaged obituary in a specialised journal in this subfield could be read as a signal of positive reception [Squarcini 2002].

As one of the most absorbing research field, especially for young scholars, the sociology of migrations could be a good testing bench for assessing Bourdieu's reception among the younger generations, especially because of the many works done by the French sociologist and anthropologist on Algerian society and on social suffering. Indeed, we have to recognize that in this area Bourdieu's impact has been weak, and mainly mediated by the work of one of his first students, the Algerian Abdelmalek Sayad, which has been translated in Italian since 2002.<sup>50</sup>

Completely out of Bourdieu's range in Italy have been the fields of the sociology of science and of political sociology. No reference to Bourdieu's idea of the scientific field is in one of the very first textbooks written by an Italian sociologist in this research area [Bucchi 2001]. According to my information, since then the situation

<sup>49</sup> A similar condition could be found in the sociology of sexuality, including homosexuality, where Bourdieu is received and used in some quarters [e.g. Trappolin 2008], but remains totally neglected in others [Barbagli and Colombo 2007].

<sup>50</sup> No reference to Bourdieu appears in two of the most diffused textbooks, Ambrosini [2005] and Zanfrini [2004]. In one of the best seller in this research area [Barbagli 2001], now at its third revised edition, one should work hard to find any influence from Bourdieu's epistemological and methodological insights and warnings (about the construction of the object, or the uses of statistics, for example): and Barbagli, as we know, was one of the early importer of Bourdieu in Italy as a sociologist of education. How much (or better, how little) Bourdieu is currently present to Italian scholars of migrations could be "measured" checking the bibliographies of the now five volumes of one of the most prestigious and influential series published in Italy in this area, *Stranieri in Italia* (Il Mulino).

has not changed and Italian sociologists of science and technology – a relatively large population composed mainly of PhD student and young researchers, and organised in an association – continue to resist any direct engagement with Bourdieu's challenges to the mainstream in this field.<sup>51</sup> As for the last research area, political sociology is in Italy mainly devoted to electoral studies and to the study of political classes or elites – mainly cultivated through quantitative analysis of recruitment flows and demographic composition. As strong consumers (and producers) of opinion surveys, Italian political sociologists could only be cold with respect to a sociologist who very early denounced the epistemological vacuity of this kind of surveys, and the sociological relevance indeed of the social and cognitive process of opinion making: a reflexive conversion that political sociologists have yet to make, in Italy as elsewhere.<sup>52</sup>

Just a bit more open to Bourdieu seems to be the sociology of law, in Italy – like elsewhere – a field that is somewhat separated from the rest of the discipline, and mainly cultivated by jurists: among the few who have used a Bourdieusian frame of mind, especially linked to the adoption of the idea of the juridical field, are Santoro [1996; 1998; 2004] on the field of the legal professions, and Salento [2003b; 2003a; 2009] on the field of commercial law.<sup>53</sup>

An overview, or better a tentative map, of the uneven distribution of Bourdieu's impact among Italian sociologists, distinguished for key concepts and research areas, is offered in table 7. As any tentative scheme, it is to be read as an approximation to the real life of research practices, and as a first step toward a more detailed and empirically grounded assessment.

<sup>51</sup> One can have a taste of the feeling of extraneity experienced by Italian sociologists of science (and technology) with respect to Bourdieu's ideas and approach by reading Mongili 2010, itself an invited chapter for a book aimed to introduce Bourdieu to an Italian audience. This is only relatively surprising, however, considering the harsh criticism Bourdieu addressed to the main references of this research field, e.g. Latour and the whole Edinburgh school, who are the favourite references also of most Italian scholars.

<sup>52</sup> For an overview of the field see Biorcio [2003], where Bourdieu as expected is never quoted nor referred to. This contrast strongly with the situation in France, where the impact on political studies (both sociology and political science) of Bourdieu's work is long lasting and still rising. For an exceptional reference (from a sociologist who has known the political field as an insider but who has worked professionally on other topics) see Balbo [2001].

<sup>53</sup> But see also, for an enlightening evidence of the productivity of Bourdieu's social theory for the study of law, Nisio [2006], published in one of the most ancient, respected and authoritative journals in Italy devoted to the history of law and legal thought. More recently, a plea for Bourdieu's contribution to the sociology of law has been advanced by Brindisi [2009].

TAB. 7. *Bourdieu’s key concepts: a tentative map of their uses in Italian sociology*

Concepts	Research areas/specialties								
	Edu- cation	Inequal- ities	Religion	Art / fashion	Politics	Economic (incl. con- sumption)	Law	Gender / body	Social theory
Reproduction	X	X							
Capital									
- cultural	X			X			X		
- social		X				X	X		
Habitus								X	X
Practice		X		X		X		X	
Field			X	X		X	X		
Symbolic power			X	X		X	X		

### Looking for an Explanation

As we have seen in the previous sections, the reception of Bourdieu’s *oeuvre* in Italy has been precocious, long lasting, and structurally weak at the same time. The translations of his books are dispersed in a host of different venues – almost twenty publishers, many of which are very small and with little symbolic capital – and did not generate a steady and cumulative stream of research. The weak appropriation of Bourdieu’s name and work is apparent in textbooks: references to his concepts and ideas are rarely found, and he is usually cited for his early work on reproduction and for his research on cultural consumption. For many Italian sociologists Bourdieu is still the author of *Les héritiers* or, at best, of *La distinction* – a book which is widely known, but did not inspire any research endeavour in Italy for a long time. When Bourdieu appears in textbooks, he is usually presented and discussed in a critical vein, where on average the limits are weighted more than the virtues and the positive contributions. For the readers – students or scholars – it is difficult to be aware, from this kind of treatment, of the relevance of Bourdieu in the international literature and debate, and his impact on current research practices. Bourdieu, Boudon, Luhmann, Touraine, Beck, or Bauman are presented as scholars at the same level, with the same relevance and audience – when we already know this is not what happens in other national sociological fields.

Why did Bourdieu as an author and especially as a social thinker has encountered so many difficulties in Italy? Why has he been, and partly still is, so poorly

received (read, known, used, debated) by academic sociologists, especially by those of his own generation? Why despite the several early translations, his import has been so troubled and relatively inconsequential, while the success he was enjoying in America and the United Kingdom, usually the reference points for Italian sociologists, was evident? How can we make sense of the specific patterns in which the reception of Bourdieu occurred in Italy, i.e. the specific configuration of research fields and academic groups which sustained this reception or, on the contrary, hampered it?

In order to answer these questions, we need to consider that intellectual fields are different in different places and times, and that history is the best way to approach these differences. We have to look for possible explanations of this pattern of reception in the history of the Italian sociological field. This history is relatively recent from an institutional point of view, even if it has deep roots in the Italian academic and even in the political culture, as remote as the Nineteenth century's positivism and socialism [see e.g. Barbano and Sola 1988]. At the same time, it is possible to read any story of intellectual reception as a way to analyze the receiver field – in this case Italian sociology. Thus the direction of the investigation can be inverted: what does this trajectory tell us about the features – or the peculiarities, or the history – of sociology and the sociological field in Italy? Which lights (and which shadows) does the story of Bourdieu's import in Italy throw on the structure and working of the local sociological discipline?

What follows is a sketchy exploration of the issues that questions like these can raise. At this point of my research I have only suggestions and hypotheses, which need to be further tested and documented.

As Lamont [1987] has noticed, in the attempt to generalize from her case study of Derrida's reception in America, the intellectual legitimation of any theory in different settings (especially a social or interpretive theory) seems to depend on its *adaptability* to specific environmental requirements. These could facilitate a fit between the work imported and the specific features – both intellectual and institutional – of the cultural market. This fitness is also important because the *attention space* [Collins 1999] – that is the possibilities for an idea to be noticed and assessed – is limited in any intellectual field, and if the latter is already populated by many ideas or theories, these will find hard to be noticed and discussed. At the same time, in order to be spread, a foreign work would require the interest of renowned scholars who can incorporate it into their own work, presenting it to the new audience as something important and worth reading (Lamont 1987; but see also Bourdieu 2002). This means that a new theory can enter an already well established cultural market (or field), only if it is supported by scholars endowed with a high cultural capital.



Neither of these conditions have been fulfilled during the long history of Bourdieu’s diffusion in Italy, at least until the end of the 1990s. With respect to the second condition, we should always remind that no academic sociologist in Italy could really be considered as a student, i.e. a pupil, of Bourdieu. Anna Boschetti is the only Italian student of Bourdieu who entered the academic system, and she is not a sociologist but a student of French literature. This makes the Italian case different from the Finnish, the Brazilian, the German and even the American one – where a very close pupil of Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant, occupies an influential position at University of California, Berkeley. Looking closely at the Italian early followers of Bourdieu, we immediately discover that all the authors who first encountered and supported his work were either young sociologists on their way toward intellectual and academic legitimation (e.g. Barbagli) or other kind of scholars – including Bechelloni, who entered the sociological field in 1973 after a degree in history and a stint of political-cultural engagement, but only as a *incaricato* (i.e. a professor without a chair) in a peripheral university of the South (Bari, in Puglia). Milly Buonanno was the only one with a formation in sociology in the original group which promoted the translation of Bourdieu’s works through the publisher Guaraldi. However, she graduated with Franco Ferrarotti with a thesis on George Gurvitch, an author who was antithetical to Bourdieu in several respects. And likewise Bechelloni, at that time Buonanno did not hold any position in the academic system.

The authors of many presentations or introductions to these translations were not academics but free and usually radical intellectuals acting as social, cultural, and even film critics (like Goffredo Fofi). Marco D’Eramo was not a sociologist but a graduate in physics who would become not an academic but a social critic, writer and journalist. Agopik Manoukian left the academic world in the same years he introduced Bourdieu as a sociologist of the family. The only academic sociologists who associated their name to Bourdieu in those years were therefore Barbagli and Cesareo – both editors of readers in the sociology of education, and at that time just in their thirties. We should also add Franco Rositi, in his thirties as well, invited author of a Preface to *Il mestiere di sociologo* [1976]. But Bechelloni, who commissioned it, has recently described it as “sbrigativa e liquidatoria” (i.e. rushed and derogatory).<sup>54</sup> In the following years, neither Barbagli nor Cesareo proved to be much interested

<sup>54</sup> Indeed, in 1976 a second edition of *I delfini* was issued (with the subtitle *Gli studenti e la cultura* as the new title), introduced by a long essay by Giovanna Ceccatelli Gurrieri, then a young sociologist of education (she is a student of Antonio Carbonaro, one of the first academic sociologist in Italy, specialised in industrial sociology) who was working on education and political issues [see Ceccatelli Gurrieri 1975; Ceccatelli Gurrieri 1976]. Unfortunately, even this choice *inside* the academic world was not felicitous, as Gurrieri’s career has been relatively slow and her position in the sociological field a marginal one, especially out of Florence.

in Bourdieu, because of the lack in that cultural and institutional adaptability that Lamont underlines. But there is another a factor, or a set of variables, which Lamont has not underlined, even if she seems implicitly sensitive to. I am referring to temporality, that is the particular “structure of the conjuncture” – as Marshall Sahlins [1985] called it – which can favour or obstacle the turning of any happening into an event, where the event is something not episodic and ephemeral but a veritable transformation of structures [Sewell 2005].

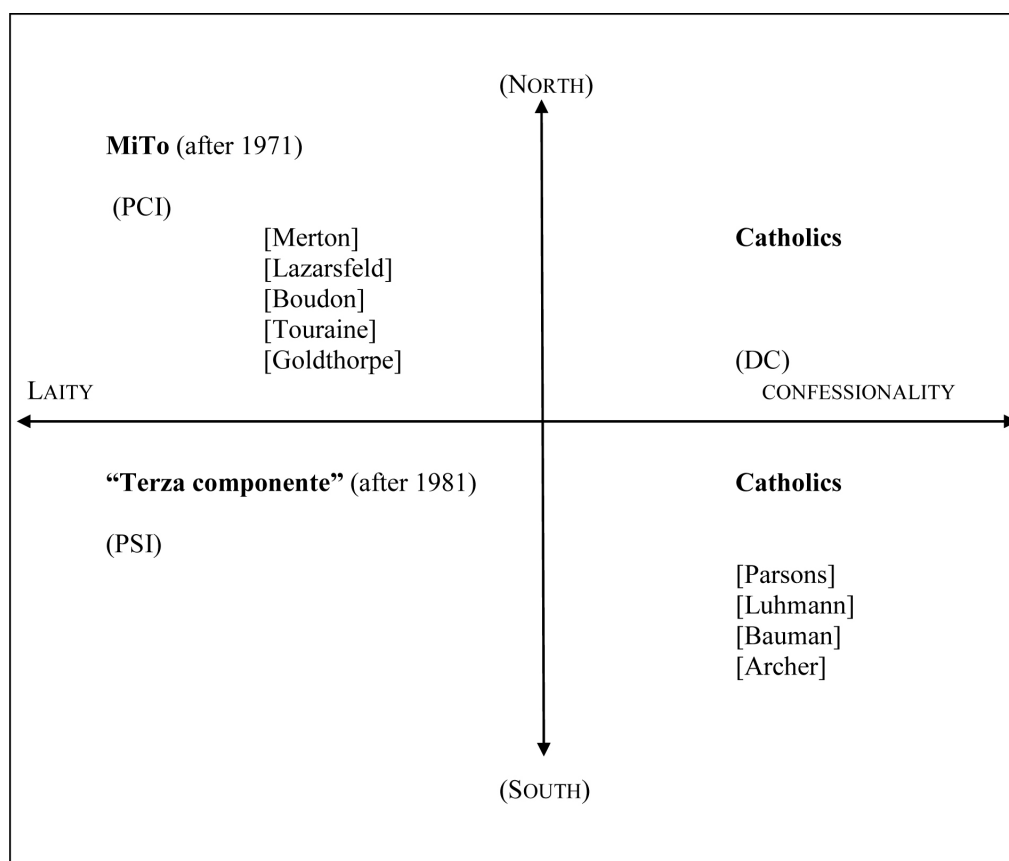


FIG. 2. The sociological field in Italy since the 1960s.

Let us consider the issue of adaptability first. As we have already recalled, sociology arrived late in Italy with respect to both France and the United States, at least from an academic point of view. The first chair in sociology has been recognized by the Italian government in 1950, when the chair in history and doctrine of fascism held by Camillo Pellizzi in Florence, was transformed into a chair in sociology. The first appointment after a public competition in sociology goes back only to 1961 – in Rome, with Franco Ferrarotti. Therefore the sociological field emerged only in the 1960s, mainly around few scholars who acted as poles: Pellizzi in Florence, Ferrarotti in Rome, and then Filippo Barbano in Turin, Luciano Cavalli in Genoa, Achille Ar-

digò in Bologna, Alessandro Pizzorno in Ancona, and so on. In looking for reference points, it was almost inevitable that these scholars choose the most influential American sociologists: Robert K. Merton, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Talcott Parsons entered the Italian sociological debate through few important translations and the establishment of links between Italian universities and American universities, especially Columbia and Harvard. The reception of these scholars was not however equally distributed: some scholars found more congenial Merton and Lazarfeld, which means the tradition of middle-range theory and empirical research, while others tended more towards Parsons and his grand theory. Interestingly, this distribution was not random but it was inscribed in the first structuration of the sociological field around two great poles: a lay pole, on the left, and a Roman Catholic one, on the right (see Figure 2).

Therefore a first and still enduring tension organised and drove the emerging Italian sociological field in those early years (approximately 1960-1964): this tension would be institutionalised in a true cleavage between two so-called “components,” or better “camps”: the Catholic camp (with the full leadership of Ardigò and at least two strongholds: the Catholic University in Milan and the Faculty of Political Science in Bologna), and a less organised and more polycentric camp of lay (usually left-oriented) sociologists. It is not surprising that Parsons – with his stress on social integration and the importance attributed to value systems – was appealing to the Catholic camp more than to the left-oriented one. It is less evident why Merton and Lazarfeld were so alien to this same Catholic camp: the most promising explaining factor is probably the stronger philosophical orientation of these early Catholic sociologists, who were still influenced by Luigi Sturzo’s philosophical sociology, and still sceptical about the extension of scientific programs and tools to the study of human life and culture – including of course religion. Anyway, empirical research was not alien to the Catholic camp, especially thanks to the socio-psychological research conducted in father Agostino Gemelli’s Laboratory at the Catholic University, and then at the new Institute of Sociology directed by his student Francesco Alberoni (a physician turned psychologist and then sociologist, who specialised in the study of mass culture, consumption and collective behavior; Gemelli was the founder of the Catholic University, in 1923).

As we know, Bourdieu and his work first arrived in Italy in the second half of the 1960s (and especially after 1968), just few years after that this binary organizational structure was established. It is not difficult then to understand how this young French sociologist could have been read by the occupants of the leading positions in the sociological field: i.e. as a challenger and potential destroyer of what was still in the making (which was the object of strong political and symbolical investments, if not economic). As it is well known, in the 1960s Bourdieu made the case for a truly

European sociology, which needed to be autonomous or at least not so dependent from the American one, represented by people like Parsons, Merton, and Lazarsfeld. Bourdieu personally met Lazarsfeld in Paris, when the latter was travelling across Europe teaching survey techniques and the language of variables to European sociologists. Not surprisingly, Boudon was selected over Bourdieu as Lazarsfeld assistant at the Sorbonne – and Bourdieu is said to have neglected Lazarsfeld's lessons and seminars, because he was sceptical of his methodological tools and perspectives.<sup>55</sup>

From this perspective, what Rositi wrote in the short preface to *Il mestiere di sociologo* is something which looks very precious in accounting even *nowadays* for the very limited reception of Bourdieu in those years:

In Italy, whoever does the “trade of the sociologist” and reads this anthology [that is *Il mestiere di sociologo*], will probably have to reflect on the disproportion between this very sensitive “epistemological vigilance,” which the authors profess and to which they invite, and the small amount of sociological research that in this manner would be watched over. We think it would have been better if the volume were translated a few years ago. In this manner, it would have anticipated the diffusion of a repertoire with great cultural richness, of precious texts – and of a witness about which is the width of the methodological issues which mark the sociological tradition, so disproving those who still have an interest in thinking it as a naïve science. But the most important vantage of an earlier translation, even of a few years, would have been this: it would have happened in that short period in which among Italian sociologists there was a reprise of the methodological debate.

This would have contributed – Rositi suggests – to release the Italian debate from its fixation around two main issues, i.e. the problem of financial sponsorship and that of political neutrality, while so little attention was paid to the important issues of epistemological neutrality or commitment which are so central in Bourdieu and colleagues' thought. In other words: Bourdieu arrived in Italy just after Italian sociologists made their choices in terms of international intellectual referents and epistemological dilemmas. It was not thus a good conjuncture for a new entry, especially if this was critical toward those referents and insisting on other dilemmas.

The events that happened after 1976 did not change the situation, but it actually made it worst. After the great mobilization of the 1970s and the exposure of social

<sup>55</sup> On Lazarsfeld methodology as an imperialistic weapon in the field of science, and on his whole intellectual project, see Pollak [1979], who adopts the tools of sociology of knowledge and of the intellectuals to sociologize the sociological methodology of Lazarsfeld as well as his career. Lazarsfeld's impact has been apparent and immediate also in Italy mainly thanks to Vittorio Capecchi, a left-oriented sociologist located in Bologna, who has been the Italian counterpart of Boudon in Lazarsfeld's European tour. Capecchi is also the editor of the first book in Italian by Lazarsfeld (a 700-page collection which introduced all the most important writings on methods and the sociologist' role, with an over 100 pages introduction by Capacchi himself [see Lazarsfeld 1967]).

science to the political conflicts and stakes of that decade, Italian sociology worked hard – as other national sociologies – to shake off any suspicion of ideological commitment, looking for a new and strictly scientific legitimation. This work of de-politization and de-ideologization was particularly intense in the camp which was more involved in the political mobilization, i.e. the lay camp.<sup>56</sup> Because of his strong association with 1968 and the radical, critical social theory, Bourdieu was far from being a good horse to ride. This decoupling was evident in the case of Barbagli, who is possibly the first Italian sociologist making a wide and strategic use of Bourdieu’s tools in his studies on the school system and the teaching profession. As one of the first of his generation (b. 1938) to enter the academic system (in 1969), Barbagli early became a reference point for many peer colleagues, as well as younger sociologists wishing to entering the system. Bourdieu’s reputation was affected by the fact that Barbagli slowly but clearly left Bourdieu aside, preferring in the following years scholars like R. Collins or even J.H. Goldthorpe as theoretical references in his subsequent studies (only in part, indeed, focused on school, and ranging from family to social mobility, from crime to immigration).<sup>57</sup>

In this conjuncture, it is indicative that a French scholar like Boudon was identified as a bearer of scientific legitimacy just by the more leftist sociologists, regardless his conservativeness. Boudon’s penetration in Italy had begun in 1970 with the translation of possibly the less persuasive and weakest of his several books. This is the little methodological textbook which has been a must in Italian courses in this field for at least three decades. With the publication of *Metodologia della ricerca sociologica* – a book, as the same promoter of its translation told me, “which could have been written by anyone” (Barbagli)<sup>58</sup> – Boudon started a steady career in Italy which

<sup>56</sup> An enlightening document in this transition phase is Ricolfi and Sciolla [1980], which begins with a long, detailed summary of Bourdieu and Passeron’s arguments only to strongly argue for their limits. In the following years such attention, as much as it was critical, would have become rarer and rarer and finally disappear. See also Cappello, Dei, Rossi [1982], a book from a conference held in 1980, where Bourdieu and Passeron’s ideas are still in the air through Passeron [1982].

<sup>57</sup> To be sure, Barbagli left sociology of education as his main research area, moving to sociology (or better, social history) of the family and to the study of social mobility in the eighties. As Barbagli himself told me, he has been always driven in his choice of references (even theoretical ones) more by his objects of study than by a predetermined belief in the absolute value of one paradigm above the others. As Bourdieu contributed also to the sociology of the family, and to social mobility, I suggest that Barbagli’s neglect of Bourdieu after the seventies has something to do also with other, and deeper, reasons, linked to the changing cultural (or even ideological) structures of the Italian sociological field.

<sup>58</sup> The translation has been promoted by two sociologists based in Bologna (the already quoted Barbagli and Arturo Parisi) and offered also an antidote to the kind of militant social research epitomised by books like *Come si fa ricerca* by G.A. Gilli (a collaborator among others of Franco Basaglia, the leader of the anti-psychiatric movement in Italy) which was sponsored and used by the most critically oriented and politicized sociologists of the left. Boudon’s textbook was therefore

had its highlights in the eighties and nineties and which only recently seems to have shown signs of tiredness. Differently from Bourdieu's, Boudon's Italian career was favoured by very central publishers and scholars.<sup>59</sup> As it is not possible to be with Boudon and with Bourdieu at the same time – because of their strong and apparent epistemological divergences, but also, I suggest, because of their different styles of writing – Boudon's success in central places has meant a corresponding marginality of Bourdieu. This marginality – if not a neglect – is more apparent in some circles than in others, as we have seen.

Indeed, we can guess from this brief account about the early reception (end of Sixties-mid Seventies) that Bourdieu was not Marxist enough to be accepted among the most persuaded Marxist sociologists, and too much Marxist to be accepted by both the Catholic sociologists and those leftist sociologists who wanted to distance themselves from any suspect of (dogmatic) Marxism. Even among the Marxists, we should note, the idea of science usually shared by sociologists was deeply embedded in neopositivism, whereas the French influence from epistemologists as Bachelard and Canguilhem was and still is negligible, regardless of their Italian translations (even Foucault, who come from the same epistemological school, had no real impact on Italian sociology).

We have therefore entered the realm of epistemological factors, which are possibly the most important ones – although I would insist that ecological and especially network factors are equally causally relevant in accounting for the patterns of Bourdieu's reception. Here I will provide just a few insights.

My first suggestion is that sociology and holism are traditionally feared and scorned in Italy, probably as a consequence of the heritage of a strong tradition of individualism and historicism (from Beccaria, but possibly even earlier from the Renaissance with Machiavelli, to Pareto and Croce). It is well known that even Durkheim had a difficult reception in Italy in the Nineteenth century (Tarde was more influential at that time), and has been long misunderstood even by Italian positivistic sociologists

already conceived of at that time as an antidote to an ongoing political drift. Interestingly, despite his critical bent, Gilli never showed interest for Bourdieu's work and approach, not even in his more recent works [see for example Gilli 2000].

<sup>59</sup> Since 1970, the publishers of Boudon in Italian have been il Mulino (eight books), Einaudi (one book), Zanichelli (one book), Mondadori (one book) – that is two of the most prestigious and two of the most popular, and commercially-oriented, ones. Among the promoters of these translations were sociologists with high symbolic capital like (Marzio Barbagli, Arnaldo Bagnasco, Alberto Martinelli, and Loredana Sciolla.) The reception has not been always positive: see Marradi [1981] and Rossi [1982], who however are just few critical voices amidst many favourable. Anyway, the reception of a foreign author could occur even if critical: the simple fact that scholars worry to criticize him is already a sign, and a form, of reception. For many years, and in many research fields, Bourdieu has not been quoted, referred to, nor criticised at all.

[see Mangoni 1982]. Even today it is hard to find someone who identifies himself as a Durkheimian in Italy – while it is common to hear of Weberian, or even Simmelian, sociologists.<sup>60</sup> Of course, Durkheim is just *one* of the influences on Bourdieu – and sociology is clearly not the label that Bourdieu would choose to describe his own intellectual project, always oriented toward overcoming the antinomy between structuralism and individualism, objectivism and subjectivism, etc. But we can suggest that Durkheim has long seemed the dominant influence on Bourdieu in Italian eyes, together with Marx – and both opened the way for an identification of Bourdieu with structuralism, determinism and holism.<sup>61</sup> Holism was accepted in a systemic or organismic fashion [an influence going back to the heritage of the Catholic don Luigi Sturzo, and of the nationalist statistician Corrado Gini, the only academic scholar interested in sociology who gained international visibility during the fascist regime: see Santoro 2010]. In the 1970s and 1980s, this produced a sociology as a (meta)theory of integration and consent (e.g. Parsons, Luhmann, or even Alexander) instead of a theory of conflict and dominance (say, from Weber to Bourdieu). This long-lasting feature of the Italian sociological tradition could help in explaining the success of other contemporary French sociologists (like Touraine and Boudon),<sup>62</sup> much more inclined to subjectivity and individuality as a basis for (even collective) agency. As we noticed, the harsh criticism to a supposed over-structuralism and determinism of Bourdieu's sociological theory has been a leitmotiv in Italy, repeated in the leftist as well as in the Catholic camp.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Among the few, it is worth naming Pizzorno, who defines himself as a follower of holism. Nevertheless he never focused his scholarly attention, at least in public, on Bourdieu, preferring to address as a foil the classics of liberal social and even political thought (but he debated and helped to circulate in Italy the work of Ralph Dahrendorf in the 1960s, and later of James Coleman, who was his dear friend). However, I have good reasons to think that his appreciation of Bourdieu goes far beyond what his silence would suggest to Bourdieu's critics. Interestingly, in Italy the identification of Goffman as a Durkheimian sociologist (originally advanced by Randall Collins) has been very successful; but it is also apparent that Goffman entered the Italian sociological debate as a representative of microsociology and of himself – not to mention his uses as a critical sociologist from the antipsychiatric movement (many early translations of Goffman have been introduced by the influent psychiatrist Franco Basaglia).

<sup>61</sup> For an explicit, and recent, statement in this sense see Donati [2009, 217-19]. In 1988, the same author labelled Bourdieu a "marxist structuralist," pointing to the "disastrous effects" of what he read as Bourdieu's «iperfuncionalist» approach [Donati 1988, 83-84]. Donati is one of the leaders and the main theorists of the Catholic camp.

<sup>62</sup> We should not forget that Touraine has also been a main reference for movements studies, one of the most successful Italian research traditions (with Alberto Melucci, and his early student Mario Diani).

<sup>63</sup> According at least one of my interviewee, it was on the contrary the Weberian legacy – very strong in *Distinction* – which prevented a good reception of this book, in a period when Italian sociologists were still looking for, and reasoning in terms of, classes. However, I find more persuasive the opposite argument of a supposedly weak Weberian legacy, hidden or smashed by the more visible

To this first, highly visible, epistemological factor we should add a second less apparent one: i.e. the limited usefulness of Bourdieu's work for policy planners and decisors. Bourdieu was at the same time too realistic, too party-free, and too utopian to be of any help for Italian sociologists in order to effectively play two of their preferred roles (or games) – the organic (party) intellectual and the prince adviser.<sup>64</sup> It is not by chance that this same diffused policy orientation has grounded Boudon's reception. Boudon was a sociologist whose work (on values and the crisis of values) and whose methodological recommendations (in terms of individual unities of analysis, suggested statistical tools, analytical strategies as the model of the unexpected effects and the use of game theory) would be immediately transposable into research projects. These could be more easily understood by public agencies, for their apparent (but not always solid nor ideologically-free) scientific look.<sup>65</sup>

Apart from this epistemological issue (perhaps ontological, as it is actually the idea of human reality and of human will on stake here), other more contingent features should be underlined in this search for an explanation of the weak status and presence of Bourdieu's sociology in the Italian debate. First, we should consider the issue of competition among different theories. On the left (or lay) camp, a political sociology of education and culture was supplied by Randall Collins, who had a profound impact on Italian sociology and especially on its professional socialization in the 1980s (Collins' textbooks have been often translated and widely used: see e.g. Collins 1980, 1987, 1992). Concepts like cultural capital or a structural analysis of symbolic production were already been imported in the mid 1970s mainly through this American sociologist, therefore in some way Collins limited the space for a sociology like Bourdieu's one. Even the idea of a genetic structuralism, i.e. of structuration, entered the Italian debate not directly from Bourdieu but through the mediation of Anthony Giddens (also for political interests being him recognised as a guru of the Labour), who strongly affected Italian leftish sociology in the early 1990s.

Second, we should consider some specific features of Italian sociological work. Here I would suggest that some potential causes of Bourdieu's neglect can be found in the typically Italian weak integration between theory and research, that is one founding feature of Bourdieu's work. Social theory (philosophical) usually goes vs.

influences of materialism and structuralism (i.e. Marx and Durkheim). In the eighties, Weber was already accepted in the sociological field, as it is demonstrated by the several books published on him and by the success of a truly Weberian sociologist like Randall Collins.

<sup>64</sup> I could add that to the Italian sociological readers, his invocations for a scientific community of intellectuals as guarantee of the universal truth sounded irremediably a naive and weak basis on which to elaborate, even discuss, concrete policies of academic governance.

<sup>65</sup> The political implications (conservative, liberal) of Boudon's work have not been discussed long or are maybe not clear even to his followers.



social research (statistical), the two only rarely merging together. If we also consider the overproduction of theory (or something which goes under this name) and the relative weakness of empirical social research – which Rositi already pointed out in 1976 – we can have an idea of how a sociological work like Bourdieu’s one, which is theoretical but strongly based on empirical data, could be received. In empirical social research, the use of survey techniques (a Lazarsfeld’s heritage) and official statistics (taken at face value) has been dominant for decades, with no interest for the analysis of the social processes of statistics production or for the structures of meaning which are hidden behind frequencies and correlations. The new champion of this kind of quantitative sociology is John Goldthorpe – mainly because he was already disposed to a neopositivist conception of science and to the methodological individualism, in Boudon’s or Elster’s style.

In the camp of a critical or radical sociology, we also have to take into account that the Italian tradition of social theory [from Machiavelli to Gramsci: see Levine 1990] is built on the idea that there is a hidden reality to be revealed by those who are able to see beyond the veil: what Bourdieu calls symbolic violence very closely resonates with ideas such as Machiavelli’s *astuzia* or *inganno*, Mosca’s *formula politica*, Pareto’s *derivazioni*, and, of course, Gramsci’s *egemonia*.<sup>66</sup> Many commentators, even in Italy [e.g. D’Eramo 2002], consider the dominant/dominated distinction as the foundational category of Bourdieu’s work; but we can imagine how “familiar” this would sound to cultivated Italian ears, well acquainted with the Machiavellian tradition of social and political theory. This could suggest a more favourable reception in Italy of a French proposal which might sound very “Italian,” but can also suggest the opposite hypothesis: it was difficult for Italian scholars to see what Bourdieu could offer which was not already in their heritage, with the aggravating circumstance of an intricate writing style and a vocabulary full of neologisms. In other words, it could have been easy for Italian readers to dismiss Bourdieu as a French late comer in a very well known line of thought, a thought which – above all – did not prove to be particularly good as a basis for the scientific legitimation of the discipline (in Italy, neither Pareto nor Gramsci have been identified as possible sources for the foundation of a modern sociology, and their study has long been territory of historians of ideas rather than sociologists). Of course, this would have been possible only after a superficial reading, and without any engagement from the reader with the French epistemological foundations of Bourdieu’s sociology, nor with any effort to appreciate the concrete research practices invented or applied

<sup>66</sup> A concept whose closeness to Bourdieu’s ideas more than a scholarly reader has detected: see e.g. the famous interview to Bourdieu by Axel Honneth *et al.* now in Bourdieu [1987a].

by him to translate and make these general ideas at work in modern disciplinary forms.<sup>67</sup>

A bit surprisingly, the crisis of the Parsonian paradigm in the Catholic area (the notion of an “empty field” could be useful here) opened the hunting for new sociological reference points, leaving a relative freedom to choose what was useful for specific intellectual projects. As the study of culture is, understandably, a traditional topic of Catholic sociology, it is not strange that Bourdieu, one of the main scholars working on this topic, has been selected by some authors as an important reference for studying subjects like fashion and arts (mainly through the British mediation of both the sociological world around *Theory Culture & Society*, and – a bit paradoxically – the more Marxist oriented Birmingham Cultural Studies), or even religion. Of course this was possible only after a re-reading of Bourdieu in less materialistic terms [see e.g. Mora 2000; Bovone and Lunghi 2009, esp. the introduction] and a very selective appropriation of his work (mainly the concepts of cultural intermediary and, later on, of symbolic capital, and reflexivity).

What about the fortune of Bourdieu in the laity pole? In order to answer to this question we should consider the steps that the lay camp made in order to differentiate itself after the early seventies. The first one was the constitution of an academic group – labelled MiTo (i.e. Milan and Turin, as the greatest part of their members were associated to these two big universities in the North of Italy, even if an influential group was also located in Bologna). The second one was the formation, in the early eighties, of a new group, the so-called Third Component, who was and still is appealing above all to not-Catholic sociologists in the South and not willing to stay in MiTo – or even not really accepted by the latter. Political, geographical, interpersonal but also scientific-intellectual factors can partly account for this split inside the lay camp (see Fig. 2). Apparently the so called “Third component” has been more open toward

<sup>67</sup> Two possible exceptions to this general pattern have been Ferrarotti and Capecchi, who have been acting as critical sociologists from central academic (and even intellectual) positions since the early 1970s. But Ferrarotti is also a student of Merton, and his work has been much more influenced by American sociology (Veblen was the subject of his first studies in the 1950s); his discovery of, and interest for, Bourdieu dates back to *La Misere du monde*, for its reasoning with the program of biographical research he has long cultivated; however, in the second edition of his textbook on biographies Bourdieu is just a name among others. He was probably too holist and structuralist for a school centered on agency and subjectivity. Ferrarotti also took position against what he read as the institutionalization of Bourdieu’s critical posture, mainly apparent after his election at the Collège de France [Ferrarotti 1999b; Ferrarotti 2002]. The same could be said in the case of Capecchi, another influential critical sociologist in Italy (founder and editor of the journal *Inchiesta*); but as we know he has been also *the* Italian student of Lazarsfeld, who made him a good friend of Boudon (even if a conservative one); his interest for mathematical sociology and formalization did not help his frequentation of Bourdieu’s work; his critical sociology is more a relatively loose (or fuzzy) public enterprise than a research program firmly grounded on epistemological principles and reflexively cultivated research practices.

a recognition of Bourdieu's lesson and stature in all these years (at least, since its birth in the early 1980s). Here (or in its nearby) we find historical supporters of Bourdieu as Bechelloni and Buonanno, authors of whole books on Bourdieu as Giorgio Marsiglia, users of Bourdieu's tools as Gerardo Ragone and Luciano Benadusi,<sup>68</sup> and younger scholars of Bourdieu as Vincenzo Mele, Luca Corchia and possibly Angelo Salento.<sup>69</sup> It is not easy to explain why this camp has proved to be more receptive to Bourdieu. I would suggest two mechanisms (beyond the possible mechanism, but probably even less cogent, of political sympathy from a socialist and reformist position, which is clear in the case of Bechelloni and maybe of Marsiglia<sup>70</sup>): one has to do with the epidemiology of ideas (Sperber 1996), the other with the organizational dimension.

The first explanation focuses on the free sliding of ideas through social networks but only inside each camp, that is free from the barriers generated by the articulation of the sociological field in three different and rigidly separated camps. As Bechelloni and Buonanno moved toward the Third component, their cultural capital (which was also composed by their work for and on Bourdieu) entered that camp, and could move freely in its territory. At the same time, the cleavages rendered more difficult the diffusion of Bourdieu's thought outside that camp. At the same time one of the other camps, the MiTo, elected Boudon as the (French) reference for its epistemology, and was still considering Touraine as an important reference for epistemological and even political affinities. Therefore the picture of the situation of relative segregation which has marked the Italian reception of Bourdieu becomes clearer. Another factor which is worthwhile to discuss has to do with the social organization of the Third component: contrary to the MiTo, which is organised like a sect (in Weberian terms: you enter it through a selection based on your attributes and the witness of faith), the Third component is very open, and it is composed by people who did not enter or even decided to exit the MiTo camp. This organizational feature accounts for the wide range of topics and references which characterize this component – much wider than the MiTo's.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Whom a Mexican scholar has identified as a "socialista amigo de Craxi" [Jimenez 2005, 139]. It is well known in Italy Benadusi entered the sociological field after a political career.

<sup>69</sup> More difficult to locate in the field a recent mediator and promoter as Gabriella Paolucci, who has relationships with scholars both in the MiTo and in the Third Component (not in the Catholic camp), but cannot be firmly ascribed to any of them. Like others followers of Bourdieu she could be identified as a "maverick" [Becker 1982] – even if, as I shall say, she teaches and does research in a relatively central University, which is also one of the historical bases for the reception of Bourdieu in Italy, i.e. Florence.

<sup>70</sup> At least as a student and a member of Luciano Cavalli's academic group. L. Cavalli has been engaged with the PSI since his youth, even working for socialists cultural enterprises.

<sup>71</sup> On top of these I would suggest another mechanism, a local one, which has to do with the curious role played all these years by the University of Florence. For example Barbagli and Marcello

The most recent history of the Italian sociological field – at least since 2001, one year before Bourdieu’s death – shows a return of interest in him, or better a renewed, and, for the first time, a sustained interest for this French sociologist who, meanwhile, has become the most quoted and referred to sociologist in the world. It is probably too early to offer an explanation for this new pattern of growth. But few insights could be easily suggested. The first is that in the last twenty years there has been a great generational change in Italian sociology, partially linked to a new wave of entries into the academic system, partially due to the introduction in Italy of a third level degree of high education, the PhD. It is a matter of fact that all the younger scholars currently interested in Bourdieu come from a PhD education, that is a stronger professional socialization mainly based on research. At the same time we register an expansion of the sociological field to research areas relatively new in Italy and therefore relatively free of intellectual domination: art, cultural processes (education and family excluded), communication, religion, time, consumption, the body: in all these research areas the name of Bourdieu and the importance of his work

Dei, in the mid of the 1960s very young researchers who graduated in Florence and kept working there, were early Bourdieu’s supporters. Together with Bechelloni (coming from the same academic studies, i.e. a political science degree, of Barbagli and Dei, and working in Florence as a free scholar in the early seventies, then again in Florence as a professor of sociology in the 1980s after a period in the South of Italy, including Naples), Ceccatelli Gurrieri, Marsiglia and Paolucci, they make a quite numerous sample of Italian Bourdieu’s supporters who have worked or are still located academically in Florence. Is there some special reason for this? The information I have been able to collect till now suggests that they are all independent cases of individual reception. Indeed, I would suggest that this is a case where we should explore the possibility of an *effect du champ*, in this case a local *champ* (field). Barbagli and Bechelloni had strong links in the early 1970s, with Barbagli attending the editorial meetings of Guaraldi, and giving his advises on books. I suppose this early interest by Barbagli fuelled Bechelloni in his investment on Bourdieu. As a matter of fact, Bechelloni himself did not insist on Bourdieu after even Barbagli changed his mind – and the end of Guaraldi in 1980 closed the whole issue for at least twenty years, during which Bechelloni (and Buonanno) worked more on media studies and communication than on strictly sociological issues. Marsiglia begun his book on Bourdieu at the end of the 1990s, and after a long period of interest for his work as both a sociologist of education and a teacher of the history of sociology. At that time he did not feel necessary to consult with Bechelloni, who was working in his same department, but was a member (maybe a leader) of a different academic subgroup or circle in it. Of course, Marsiglia was well aware of the work done by Bechelloni in the 1970s in order to import Bourdieu in Italy. But he decided not to quote him in his book (making a scholarly mistake, he would say now). He focused instead on more theoretical issues linked to the direct reading of Bourdieu’s work and to a large research of the international secondary literature. The case of Gabriella Paolucci is again different. Coming from philosophy, and working as a sociologist in the same university but in a different department, she discovered Bourdieu alone in the new millennium while working on biographical approaches (social time is one of her main research lines). She had nor has any direct relationships, i.e. interactions, with Bechelloni or Marsiglia, but had enduring work relationships with Giovanna Ceccatelli Gurrieri. Could we therefore say there are no objective relationships among all these actors? My suspected answer – which takes seriously the idea of “field” – is: yes, there are, but I have not enough data yet to sustain this hypothesis, which I only offer the reader as an innocent puzzle.

is widely acknowledged. Also we cannot leave aside the impact of internet and in general of mobility facilities: this has meant more and widely diffused exchanges with other intellectual centres, more opportunities to cultivate links with foreign scholars in Britain, America, and even the Netherlands (where Bourdieu has already achieved a high visible position).<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusions

From my reconstruction, which although somewhat extended is still in progress, the failure of Bourdieu’s recognition in Italy looks clearly as a typical case of overdetermination. There are lots of reasons why Bourdieu would find difficult to be received in this country, given the history, the structure and the working of its sociological field. We can synthesize them as: 1) social structural factors, both ecological and network-based; 2) temporal factors;<sup>73</sup> 3) epistemological and philosophical (or strictly cultural) factors.

With reference to ecological factors, it is worth recalling the dispersion of many academic and intellectual centres, and the cleavages among more or less organised academic circles: this generates segmentation and segregation of the sociological field according to extra-disciplinary factors (academic-institutional and political-cultural ones). About network factors, I would recall the weak position, marginality (if not

<sup>72</sup> The concept of “adaptability” [Lamont 1987] can be analytically refined through Schudson’s considerations on cultural influence (the now famous “five R’s”): retrievability, resonance, rhetorical force, institutional retention, and resolution [Schudson 1989]. Applying these concepts to Bourdieu’s case, we could say that the retrievability of his work has been since 1971 relatively wide, but that this resource (i.e. the availability of his texts also in Italian translation) has been severely weakened by the little resonance of his work with epistemological models dominant in Italy (where the French school of epistemology is still relatively unknown), the small rhetorical force of his complex and tortuous writing (which doesn’t favour its reading), the low resolution of his work (which doesn’t afford easy instrumentalization and practical application, nor translation in policy recommendations) and above all by the lack of any real institutional basis (condition for retention). Indeed, no specific research centre, no research group offered an institutional footing for the promotion of Bourdieu’s work and conceptual framework in Italy – apart from the CESDI, the extra-academic centre founded by Bechelloni in 1969 but substantially disappeared after the mid seventies, and the publishing house Guaraldi, closely linked to CESDI and exhausted in the same decade. Even the dispersion of Bourdieu’s Italian publishers after 1983 contributed to the relative deinstitutionalization of his presence in the Italian intellectual field. An interesting case to be considered in this context is the journal *Liber. Revue européenne des livres*, which Bourdieu founded in 1989 and has been published from the start in Italian edition, as a supplement of *L’Indice* (till 1997) and then the magazine *Reset*. The impact of this publication – a journal devoted to book reviews – on the Italian sociological field has been negligible, as I got confirmation from my research: none of sociologists involved as interviewees ever quoted the journal. However, the issue is worth of a specific investigation.

<sup>73</sup> For the relevance of temporality in social and cultural life see Abbott [2001]; see also Sewell [2005].

outsider status) and even the fable reputation of many of the early promoters or sponsors, coupled with the indifference or even opposition of the elite of the discipline, who acted as opinion leaders in the field (people who entered the profession in the 1960s like Ardigò, Gallino, L. Cavalli, Crespi, the younger A. Cavalli, Bagnasco, Barbagli, Donati – who entered in the 1970s – and even the younger generation who entered in the 1980s – like Sciolla, Dal Lago and Trigilia etc.). We also have to add the absence (contrary to Goffman or even Luhmann) of a pupil of Bourdieu among Italian sociologists – and therefore the lack of a motivated and strongly legitimated supporter of his work and name.

Even the time order, the sequence of events which have structured the process of intellectual import, have not been the most fitting: too late in the 1970s, as Italian sociologists already had chosen their references in the 1960s (Parsons, Merton, Lazarsfeld); too early in the 1980s when *La distinzione* was published (as Italian sociologists were still to discover the cultural turn and the sociology of consumption); we can thus say that the structure of the conjuncture (Sahlins) was not favourable until the end of the 1990s, when a new generation of scholars had enough force and power to try a new and independent import, and to take profit from the wave of cultural sociology that finally imposed itself in Italy<sup>74</sup>. None of them could be isolated as the most important (we may talk of structural causation). All of them conjured to prevent Bourdieu to become a French dominant sociologist in Italy.

As for the epistemological factors, the most compelling has surely been the resistance, well rooted in the Italian sociological (but not only sociological) tradition, against any theoretical stance which can be suspected to limit the intellectual (and moral, I suggest) celebration of (individual) agency as a relatively free instance of choice. Anything which smells of determinism, holism, structuralism seems to sound problematic and unsatisfying to Italian tastes: at least, this is what a reading of the Italian debates and textbooks through the lens of Bourdieu's reception would suggest. But also the issues deriving from what looks to many readers as a weak policy usefulness of Bourdieu's approach have been relevant to the epistemological front, together with the lack of a clear vision of what the better society would be from the point of view of critical sociology. In sum, too little prophetic for someone, too little technocrat for others.

There is another epistemological factor accounting for the troubles Bourdieu encountered in being received by Italian sociologists – a factor which I would emphasize in these Conclusions. As some scholars have realized, Bourdieu's framework,

<sup>74</sup> For an account of this slow penetration, and a witness, see Santoro [2007]; Santoro and Sassatelli [2009].

and his whole conceptual apparatus is strongly historical: not only his perspective is a *genetic* structuralism but historicity a crucial dimension of all his work – the reproduction vulgate notwithstanding [see Sewell 2005; Gartman 2007; and above all Steinmetz 2010]. But history is far from being an usual topic or issue for Italian professional, academic sociologists. As a speciality, historical sociology is almost inexistent in Italy, and the flow of scholars and even students from history and sociology as disciplines is truly exceptional (I am possibly the exceptional case which confirms the rule). It is not by chance that all the main followers of Bourdieu in the US work mainly or usually as historical sociologists (e.g. DiMaggio, Calhoun, Brubaker, Szelenyi, Steinmetz etc.), and that even in France Bourdieu is read, praised and used by historians as well as by sociologists [e.g. Bourdieu and Chartier 2010]. In Italy the little debate on concepts like *habitus* or *field* have been fuelled by sociologists with a strong philosophical bent or working on very contemporary issues, with a limited time horizon and little sensitivity for temporality. It is not surprising that they have missed to understand how the concepts work in concrete research practices, and that they have usually accused Bourdieu for slipping in a tautological mode of thinking. Indeed, the tautology is more apparent than real, and could easily be overcome if a temporal thinking is inserted in the analysis (recall that Bourdieu began his intellectual career with a study of Husserl's idea of temporality, and that time is central in his understanding of modernization in Algeria, the literary and academic field, and the state)

Still, the Italian circulation of Bourdieu's work has been deprived of a powerful intellectual vehicle, i.e. trans-disciplinarity, as it is shown by the generalized delay of its reception and still current marginality in Italy (in this respect much like France) of a trans-disciplinary field like "cultural studies," well established in both the British (where it was born) and the American academic world. The same vehicle was instead highly instrumental for the import and the framing, of Bourdieu in the Anglo-American world [e.g. McRobbie 2005]. The transatlantic importation of Bourdieu happened in the same period in which in America a new field of cultural sociology was under construction, gaining new followers and a stronger influence on the whole discipline year after year [Smith 1998; Santoro 2008]. Such contingency has not been without consequences for the identification of his work. But this process of intra-discipline transformation has been much less consequential and visible in other parts of the world, Italy included, where the American cultural sociology had to overcome the long lasting influence of the European cultural theory, centred on the names and works of philosophically oriented scholars like Habermas and even Baudrillard. Moreover, the status of (cultural) anthropology as a discipline is much different in Italy from Britain and America: in these latter countries it is an historically vibrant,

influential, and densely populated intellectual field. In Italy instead it is just a small and little visible community, mainly based in literary faculties, with very few relationships with the other social sciences, sociology included.<sup>75</sup> The combined outcome of these processes and features is that the name of Bourdieu and the image of his work in Italy is much less associated with “culture” and “cultural analysis” – and still more with a structural kind of sociology and social class analysis with a Marxist aura – than they are in the Anglo-American world.

Despite the fact that the Italian translation of the foundational books of his intellectual project – like *Les Héritiers*, *L'Amour de l'art*, *La Photographie*, *Le métier de sociologue*, *La Reproduction* – took place well before American sociologists discovered him [see Sallaz and Zavisca 2008], and almost two decades in advance with respect to their English versions (with the relevant exception of *La Reproduction*, already translated for the Anglo-American market in 1977, but still five years after the Italian edition,) the Italian readers have not experienced a deeper and wider knowledge of Bourdieu. They had to wait until 2003 to have the equally if not more foundational *Esquisse de une theorie de la pratique* translated, whose English (revised) edition was issued in 1977 (as *Outline of a Theory of Practice*). They also had to wait until 2005 for the Italian version of *Le Sense Pratique*, which had been translated in English already in 1990. This means that Americans and Italians received the same Bourdieu in different ways: in the United States he was acknowledged first as an anthropologist and social theorist and only later as an empirical sociologist, while in Italy he was viewed originally as a (critical and empirical) sociologist and only subsequently (and also very recently) as the author of ethnographical works and of a full social theory built on the concepts of practice, *habitus*, field, capital(s) and reflexivity.

An even impressionistic comparison between Italy and America (or Britain, for what matters) would clearly show how the same author could enjoy – while a similar presence in bookshops and libraries, but presumably with a very different reception story – a radically different intellectual status and a different meaning in the (apparently) same (academic, or disciplinary) field. While he is highly reputed and influential among social scientists in the United States and the United Kingdom, he is still marginal and suspect in Italy – here Bourdieu's name has had more currency in the media field (newspapers and magazines, especially but not exclusively left oriented) and in small engaged intellectual circles than in the specific sociological field.

<sup>75</sup> For the reception of Bourdieu among Italian anthropologists see, e.g., Giglia [1996]; Dei [2002]; Faeta [2007]; Faeta [2008]; Palumbo [2003]. The first translation promoted by an anthropologist is to be found in Tentori 1974. As we have said, however, the first translation of the most influential among Bourdieu's anthropological texts dates back to 2003, devoid of any introduction or presentation, more than 30 years after its original publication [see Bourdieu 2003].



As we have noticed, things are slowly changing also in Italy, where a younger generation and the (delayed) impact of international intellectual dynamics are currently creating the social condition for a wider circulation of Bourdieu's concepts, ideas and works. Even in the younger generation of Bourdieu's followers, however, we can identify a large presence of intellectual mavericks or people coming from or still following eccentric trajectories (i.e. a trained sociologist who become an academic historian before coming back to sociology; a sociologist studying and lecturing in the United Kingdom before coming back to Italy; a philosopher who became a sociologist and was educated in an European institute of research training; a graduate in law who enrolled by chance in a sociology of law PhD program and then entered the sociological field etc.). This is not surprising if we consider the organization of the sociological field, where the physiological tension among intellectual generations is distorted by tensions pertaining less to the scientific game and more to the political or bureaucratic fields.<sup>76</sup> This is after all the great problem of the Italian sociological field: to have interiorized and internalized (even in the habitus of many of its agents) a system of cleavages and tensions, of visions and divisions, which do not favour the generational change but tend to the reproduction of the field in its early structures and forms.

For reasons which are partly contingent and partly generated by the same working of the field (e.g. the introduction of PhD programs, "deep" intellectual continuities between masters and students, the recent resurgence of a radical, critical attitude even inside sociology etc.), few of these younger scholars have been able to find a position in central regions in the field, in terms of academic hierarchies and publishing opportunities: this is a case that Neil McLaughlin would define as "optimal marginality" [McLaughlin 2001]. Bourdieu has worked as a double resource for them: a reassuring exemplum (marginality could be a sign of election in a context unable to recognize true intellectual values) and an instrument, or better a weapon, for the intellectual game. We can expect in the future a greater impact with regard to Bourdieu's academic legitimation and penetration in the local sociological field from their work – in terms of writings on Bourdieu, applications and extension of his tools, and promotions of his works even at the international level.

<sup>76</sup> The split between North and South has to be read not only from a geopolitical perspective, but also as referred to different cultures of work and employment (and recruitment): more professional at North, more bureaucratic at South. We could say that the polarization North-South is readable also as a polarization between two different kinds of capital structures: more scientific (but also economic) capital in the North, more social (and political) capital in the South.

### Acknowledgements

This is a very first result of a larger research still in progress. I thank for their help, their suggestions and their witness the following colleagues and friends: Marzio Barbagli, Arnaldo Bagnasco, Laura Bovone, Alessandro Cavalli, Roberto Cipriani, Fabio Dei, Lorenzo Fischer, Anna Carola Freschi, Maria Immacolata Maciotti, Alberto Marradi, Giorgio Marsiglia, Daniele Monaco, Emanuela Mora, Roberto Moscati, Claudio Paolucci, Gabriella Paolucci, Alessandro Pizzorno, Franco Rositi, Angelo Salento, Roberta Sassatelli, Lello Savonardo, Maria Antonietta Trasforini, Angela Zanotti. Special thanks to Matteo Bortolini, Monica Sassatelli, Roberta Sassatelli, and especially Elisa Bellotti for their help with the text and the language.

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## How “Not” to Become a Dominant French Sociologist: Bourdieu in Italy, 1966-2009

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Abstract: The reception of Bourdieu in Italy, especially among sociologists, from 1966 till 2009, is here investigated with both published and personal documents. The article reconstructs the whole series of translations (articles and books), identifies the processes and mechanisms of introduction in Italy of a French scholar, and the modes of reading these processes activated among Italian social theorists and empirical researchers. Finally it tries to offer a structural explanation of the patterns of reception so identified through an interpretive model focused on the analysis of the genesis, structure and transformation of the Italian sociological field since the sixties. Ecological, network, organizational, and epistemological factors are highlighted. The paper contributes to the literature on intellectual reputation building as well as to the research on the international circulation of ideas with an empirical case study of intellectual marginalization in spite of an early and diffuse penetration.

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*Keywords: Bourdieu, reception, translation, sociology of sociology, Italy.*

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