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TRANSNATIONAL FIELDS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION



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EDITORIAL

The thematic part of the second issue of *Practical Sense* unites articles on transnational fields of cultural production. As the recently published volume *Impérialismes* (2023, various translations forthcoming) makes clear, Bourdieu and his collaborators worked on a broadly conceived research program on “internationalization” and “globalization” since the late 1980s and 1990s. Some of this work, like Bourdieu’s article on “The International Circulation of Ideas” (original 1989), has been frequently translated and is relatively well known. Other parts of the research program, however, have not circulated widely, were never published in the first place, or have otherwise remained largely invisible.

The current issue contains articles on respectively the global space of cinema by Julien Duval, the transnational literary field by Gisèle Sapiro, the global field of art by Larissa Buchholz, the transnationalization of the social and human sciences by Johan Heilbron, a joint interview with Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni and Ian Merkel on the inequality of North-South cultural exchanges by Carolina Pulici and Jéssica Ronconi.

Each one of these relatively short articles is based on extensive research that has been undertaken over many years. The objective of bringing them together is to draw attention to some of their most salient results, and – by uniting them in a single issue – to contribute to overcoming the usual separation of the sociology of art, literature, cinema and scholarship. Well-grounded comparisons on transnationalism in different cultural and intellectual fields provoke a host of questions pertaining both to the observation of empirical patterns and to theoretical issues about how to conceive of transnational structures and their dynamics. Aside from stimulating such comparisons and thus advancing research in these areas, the articles also raise issues about how to conceive of transnational and global fields more generally and about pursuing research on these topics.

On international and comparative research we have included a short and largely unknown text by Pierre Bourdieu. It originally appeared in French in 1992, but was published merely in a confidential research report, and barely circulated beyond the scholars who were involved in the workshop meetings from which it originated.

The issue, furthermore, contains rubrics. The volume *Impérialismes* is reviewed in the “recent books” sections, which also provides a list of such publications. The “events” section features short notes about two recent manifestations, one held in Bordeaux and the other one in Paris. Finally, a new section introduces research groups using Pierre Bourdieu’s tools, one in Italy and the other one in an endangered Argentina.

The editorial team

SPECIAL EDITION: TRANSNATIONAL FIELDS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION



SOME REMARKS ON THE CONDITIONS AND RESULTS OF A COLLECTIVE INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Introduced by Johan Heilbron

Among the early but rarely noted topics addressed in Pierre Bourdieu's work is the tension between the crucial role of comparative research and the enormous difficulties of its practical realization. In *The Craft of Sociology* (or. 1968, tr. 1991), Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron state that the specificity of sociology as a science is that "it can only constitute its object by the comparative approach" (1991 [1968]).

However, rather than simply compare particular social groups or specific institutions with each another, according to Bourdieu comparative analysis should concern itself with the sets of relationships within which such groups or institutions exist. An approach that resists summary comparisons, these inquiries demand an increase in "our

methodological caution," to explicitly question "the conditions and limits of comparability" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1967, p. 21). Hasty comparisons between bureaucratic indicators, such as unemployment levels in different countries or between presumed cultural traits of national cultures, treat the elements of comparison independently of the relationships within which they acquire their meaning. Comparative research is fictitious and fallacious when it "neglects the real object of the comparison, namely the system of relations in which the facts under comparison are enmeshed" (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991 [1966]).

In an illuminating 1967 article, Bourdieu and Passeron discuss these issues in more detail and deplore the fact that international conferences in the sociology of education rarely produce more than comparisons based on superficial, and even artificial indicators, rather than promote what is scientifically required: rigorous reflection on the indicators used, on the comparability of the institutions compared, and on the actual conditions of comparative research (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1967).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Bourdieu focused more systematically on processes of internationalization and globalization, and in so doing broadened his program of relational or "structural comparativism." The recently published volume *Impérialismes* (2023), which Julien Duval reviews in this issue, contains many of

Bourdieu's articles and notes from these years. Editors Franck Poupeau and Gisèle Sapiro recall that from approximately 1990 onward, in particular, Bourdieu initiated multiple international projects. These projects were concerned with the international circulation of ideas, the emergence and impact of transnational fields, the rethinking of the question of imperialism, and the launching of an international journal. *Liber* (1989-1999), the *European Review of Books*, as it was subtitled, appeared in up to ten languages, with the English edition lasting no more than a few issues.

The short text translated here was a part of these international projects. At the Parisian Center for European sociology, directed at the time by Monique de Saint Martin and Jean-Claude Combessie, an international network was formed in 1989 for "Comparative research on the educational institutions of corporate executives" [Étude comparée des institutions de formation des cadres dirigeants]. Two international workshops were held in Paris, in 1990 and 1992. Both were chaired by Bourdieu and resulted in a mimeographed report.¹

The following text is a translation of the concluding chapter of this report. It was never republished or translated, and because it appeared in a mimeographed report that did not circulate much beyond the participants of the workshop, it did not attract much attention.

Reflecting on the growing significance of transnational relations, Bourdieu first questions the limits of models based on a single national case. Maintaining that no method is more useful than international comparisons, he also returns to his earlier observation that they remain particularly difficult to put into practice. Elaborating on the conditions for genuine international scientific cooperation, he evokes factors that are never considered in today's routine calls for international collaboration and highlights both a shared scientific style and elective affinities among researchers as critical conditions for collaboration.

¹ The workshops were about "The Field of Higher Education and the Field of Power." The first took place at the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* (MSH) and the *Fondation Hugot of the Collège de France* (on November 8 and 9, 1990). The following meeting was held at the *Maison Suger* (on February 6 and 7, 1992). Contributions from both workshops were collected in de Saint Martin and Gheorghiu (eds) (1992). Two more international workshops followed. They included

participants from more than twenty countries, the network was coordinated by Monique de Saint Martin (Paris) and Donald Broady (Stockholm), and focused on elites, internationalization and comparative inquiry. The workshop reports, however, did not reach a broader audience than the first report. See Broady, De Saint Martin and Palme (eds.) (1995) ; Broady, Chmatko and De Saint Martin (eds.) (1997).

Some Remarks on the Conditions and Results of a Collective International Comparative Research Enterprise

Pierre Bourdieu

Like interdisciplinary research, international comparative research is universally celebrated, and rightly so. In fact, there is no method that is more useful, yet more difficult to *implement in practice* than the comparative method, and this for reasons that are essentially social. However, the obstacles that are most often invoked, such as *a parte subjecti*, the divergences between national intellectual traditions that have a tendency to delay the unification of the scientific field and render it challenging to construct shared research questions, and *a parte objecti*, or discordances between institutional traditions, which means that phenomenally different institutions can be very similar and phenomenally identical institutions quite different (I am thinking, for example, of the teacher training colleges called 'normal schools' in Budapest, Paris, and Pisa), are nothing when compared to the obstacles related to geographical and social distance and the logic at work in competition, which generates egotistical isolation, that oppose the *social organization of collective comparative work*.

Paradoxically, cultural producers – and sociologists themselves – almost always

forget to consider the social infrastructure of intellectual work. There are problems that cannot be solved and methods that cannot be implemented until a suitable organizational methodology has been found. The work presented here is the product of such a methodology, developed and implemented little by little, and through trial and error. To describe it would be to evoke, with many details that may appear to be anecdotal, the entire history of international scientific exchanges initiated by the *Centre de sociologie européenne* and the *Centre de sociologie de l'éducation et de la culture*: training seminars organized by the most advanced researchers in the various countries concerned, research training internships during which young researchers work alongside established researchers, present their work for discussion, and prepare publications and periodic seminars, with the intention to encourage detailed discussions on papers intended for publication, and the innumerable informal exchanges, skillfully orchestrated by Monique de Saint Martin's "invisible hand," that make all of the aforementioned exchanges possible. From all of this work, at once seemingly anarchic and profoundly methodical, emerged what seems to be the primary condition for genuine international scientific cooperation, a *common scientific style*, recognizable through a certain way of asking questions and of constructing subjects, and "elective affinities," which often become friendships. In fact,

the social obstacles are so great that only strong affective ties – particularly necessary to support frankness and critical freedom in scientific exchange, and also to establish a genuine, active interest in the work of others – can enable us to actually overcome them. In this way, all participants were able to agree to confront, when dealing with very different empirical *objects*, the same *constructed object*, rather than merely verbally agreeing on preliminarily constructed objects, which is often the basis interdisciplinary research that considers itself international.

As for the results, they are very closely linked to the comparative method's own effect. First, it seems to me that each of the national studies (as was evident in the discussions) was enriched by the contributions provided by the application of the same research question to different historical objects of study. The exploration of the social conditions of production of *modern state nobility* was greatly enhanced by comparing situations as different as Hungary during the interwar period and Algeria, considered as constituting two opposite poles of a continuum. On one hand, a quasi-feudal nobility based on genealogically-transmissible symbolic capital, and on the other, a recently-founded nobility dramatically facing the issue of legitimization and reproduction. Consequently, the role granted to the education system varies: while the ancient nobility of

hereditary transmission can go without formal education and the strictly technical dimension of formal training, content with education of a purely legitimizing nature (designed to reproduce symbolic capital and also ensure the acquisition of social capital), modern state nobility must give greater attention to specialized education and the technical dimension of training. This gives rise to specific contradictions, linked to the discrepancies between the logic of the school system, with its own requirements, and a purely genealogical logic (contradictions that did not spare Soviet-style regimes, with conflicts between the holders of hereditary political capital and the technocrats, in part descendants from the former, who intended to receive the material and symbolic benefits of degrees that recognize their technical competence). More profoundly, however, the comparison compels us to question the most fundamental evidence: the example of Algeria, and the crisis of the state institution that affects this country, brings to mind the evidence (as such forgotten) that there is no state nobility without the state, and that, consequently, state nobility increasingly depends on academic degrees, through which the state may both guarantee their validity and offer the main markets in which they are of use.

Nevertheless, new national nobilities are increasingly internationalized, both in

terms of how they operate and how they are formed and reproduced. We are witnessing a *unification of the global field of executive training*. The effects of this internationalization of training can only be grasped and understood, by definition, through comparative studies of the kind conducted here. In particular, it is only by understanding this international field as such that we can grasp the otherwise invisible effects that the existence of an international degree market has on national school markets. In many countries, and perhaps even in France today, conducting a study of the type we have carried out in France on the *grandes écoles* within the confines of the national school market is to resign oneself to disregarding the essential point. This is clearly evident in the case of an educational market such as Senegal, where the intervention of the World Bank has upset the balance of power between executives trained in the French style, in schools built according to the French *grandes écoles* model, and the new International – namely Americanized – executives, who through the training they have received, have acquired ways of thinking and lifestyles that include them in a certain economic and political order. The new International of national leaders finds one of its main foundations in common forms of thought, which are inculcated in training bodies of a new kind (to include business internships, study abroad trips, etc.). The actions of institutions such as the World

Bank could very well reflect the domination of a particular economic model, deeply rooted in the economic and political structures of an imperial nation that is imposed on a universal scale, that confers itself, through the intermediary of the school system, the appearance of universality. If in states that preceded the dominant mode of reproduction, we could observe an opposition, and sometimes a conflict, between the strictly symbolic functions of legitimization and the specifically technical function assigned to the training of leaders, it is clear today that the most technical forms of culture, and mathematics in particular (especially as they are utilized in economics), have become, through the seeming necessity and universality that they give to a vision of the world dominated by a certain vision of economics, one of the most powerful social foundations of the legitimacy of those who dominate the world.

The knowledge of these mechanisms of globalization involved in training and thought that we are working on collectively could be one of the key tools in critical internationalism, capable of effectively resisting, on symbolic ground, where economic and political powers are also at work, though in a dissimulated fashion, the new cultural International of the dominant powers.

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CAN ONE BUILD A TRANSNATIONAL SPACE OF CINEMA?

Julien Duval

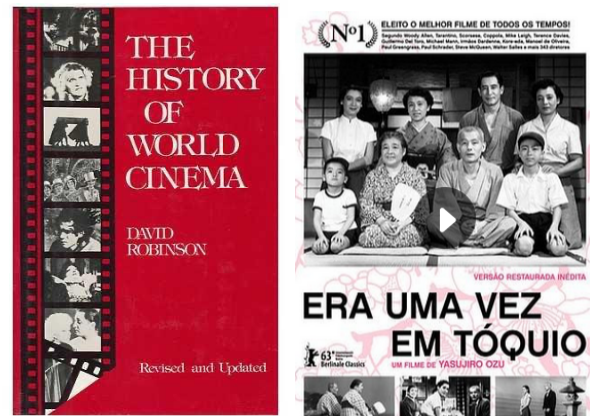
The work briefly presented in this text draws from a previous research project on cinema. One of its aims was to explore the possibility of analyzing cinema in terms of field studies. There is some debate as to whether the cinema sector, where the costs of producing and distributing works are particularly high, has the same structure as the literary field analyzed in *Les Règles de l'art* (Bourdieu, 1996). While some sociologists recognize the opposition between *mainstream* and *independent* cinema, or between arthouse films (*cinéma d'auteur*) and genre films (*cinéma de genre*), as a clear manifestation of the opposition between the subfield of large scale production and the subfield of restricted production, others argue that figures such as Hitchcock and Spielberg demonstrate just as clearly that cinema is a field where it is possible to combine the successes of both a wide audience and recognition from specialized critics.

A more systematic approach in exploring this matter is to attempt to construct the

field statistically, using the multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) technique that Bourdieu often employed for this purpose, followed by other researchers (Duval, 2018). This technique has the advantage of avoiding hasty comparisons. The analysis was carried out at a national level and focuses on France. I had considered a study on the international level, but constructing a database at this level seemed much more complex. This statistical difficulty may reflect the importance that the national scale has maintained, at least in France, in structuring a social activity such as cinema. Given that films are “talking pictures,” their circulation is affected by linguistic borders, as dubbing or subtitling is costly, and not accepted by all audiences. Moreover, French cinema is organized in great part according to national sources of funding and award systems. Most French films are not released outside of France.

Statistical analysis led to the conclusion that the “cinematographic field” in France in the 2000s had, *mutatis mutandis*, a very similar structure to that highlighted in studies on the French literary field in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, “closed economy” reasoning is only ever provisional. The field of cinema in France cannot, in any lasting way, be considered as a perfectly closed microcosm, or as a self-sufficient set of connections. In order to fully grasp what is taking place in this field, we must

at some point envision its participation in a larger space. For example, French films, and particularly those aimed at a wider audience, face competition from American films (in France, about half of all box office receipts are from American films). Some of them are also imitations or parodies of American films, which is a sign of dependence. Similarly, while France, like other countries, has its own national awards and equivalent of the Oscars (*les Césars*), recognition by international institutions, such as film festivals, also has a major impact on the national cinematographic scene. Is it possible to study cinema without considering the existence of a “transnational culture” related to cinema? While there is, to varying degrees according to the country in question, a “national culture” that rarely, if ever, crosses borders certain films, genres, and film celebrities do travel abroad, and others (sometimes the same) are known for having contributed to a history of cinema that is occasionally presented as “global.”



The transnational circulation of films and the (false) evidence of the notion of “world cinema”

It is thus possible to imagine a “transnational cinema space” (which coexists with national spaces, relatively autonomous by comparison) drawing from the model of the “world republic of letters” – of which a transnational cinema space could, in part, be a by-product, as Pascale Casanova suggests. Furthermore, it is possible to gather elements to better define or characterize this space. For example, UNESCO collects national statistical data. This data is compiled according to procedures that undoubtedly vary somewhat from country to country, and can therefore only be compared with caution, though what the data does indicate is quite striking. The data reveals massive phenomena, such as the unique position of the United States, in light of many statistical indicators, or the existence of a group of countries that are major film producers (the United States, Nigeria, China...). However, is it possible to

transcend these scattered elements and use MCA at a transnational level?

The obstacles appear to be numerous. As Yves Dezalay suggests (Dezalay, 2015, pp. 23-24 and p. 26), transnational spaces may be structures that are too complex to be analyzed with MCA. They may also be less institutionalized than national spaces, and therefore more difficult to grasp objectively. The fact that statistics may still be associated with States (thinking in etymological terms) presents yet another difficulty, in that a transnational society is a stateless society.

Despite these challenges, I have endeavored to statistically construct a transnational cinema space. The most satisfactory attempt is based on a set of national box-office figures. These figures reflect information that is relatively accessible in the field of cinema, within which economic recognition is perhaps more significant than in more culturally legitimate fields. The set is not exhaustive but comprises of 65 countries that have a certain amount of influence in the world of film. Therefore, the analysis focuses on a relatively homogeneous subspace (countries with a minimum number of cinemas and a system for recording box-office receipts), which is perhaps just as, if not more relevant to an analysis related to field studies. Box-office data made it possible (though not without material difficulty) to construct a series of indicators. For each film, I was

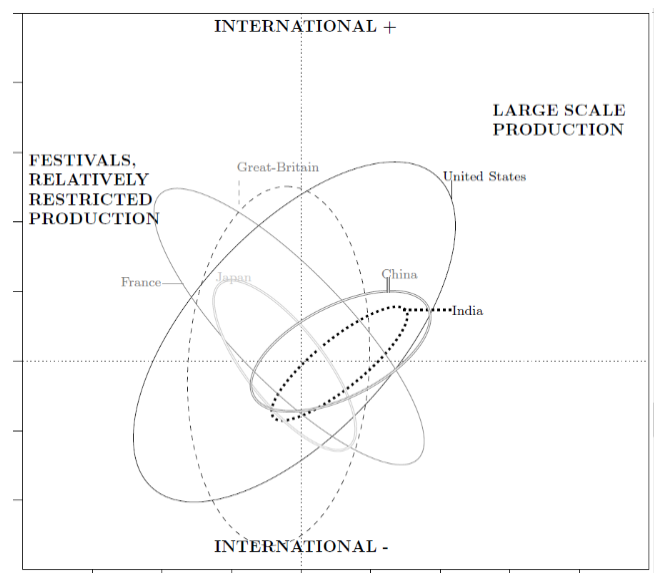
able to calculate the total revenue generated in the various markets where it had been released and study the structure of this total according to the various countries. I then looked at other, “international” institutions. In cinema, as in other fields, there are no Nobel prizes or truly “international” magazines, but festivals that are viewed as “international” play a notable role. At the very least, these festivals are international in the sense that they present films from different countries to juries composed of citizens of different nationalities.

Statistical analysis of this data supports Pascale Casanova's hypothesis that a correlation exists among transnational and national spaces, or the French space, in any case (1999, pp. 120-121). Within the transnational space, films are distinguished first and foremost by the degree to which they circulate outside their country of origin. A long continuum distinguishes the small number of films that circulate very widely around the world (or in the “world-economy” studied here) from a number of films that, without being totally confined to their country of origin, circulate very little outside of it. A second opposition identifies the “dualistic structure” of cultural production fields. Among the most “transnational” films, there is a difference between those that are exhibited in many countries and generate very high box-office receipts, and those that are distinguished not by their record box-

office receipts, but rather by the fact that they are presented at the most prestigious festivals (Berlin, Cannes, Toronto, Venice...). The former corresponds to a production that is more widely distributed than the latter (which, incidentally, are shown in a slightly smaller number of countries). This dualist structure also refers to two forms of internationalization: internationalization produced by “market” forces alone, and internationalization associated with festivals. Effectively, many festivals present themselves as an alternative to the market. Statistical analysis confirms that the highest-grossing films are not those selected for festivals, but it also shows that a continuum links the two. Halfway between these two poles are films that have a certain amount of legitimacy, while still reaching a relatively large audience, and characteristics that are well-suited to an event such as the American Oscars.

A distinctive feature of this transnational space is that the films that circulate within it all have privileged ties to the national space (or even two or three national spaces) in which they were produced. Indeed, there is no such thing as a “transnational” or stateless film. Statistical analysis confirms that the probability for a film to circulate in the transnational space, and in any of its regions, is not at all independent of its national origin. For example, films that circulate the most on mainstream

markets are nearly all American productions or co-productions. By contrast, Indian and Chinese films tend to occupy non-dominant positions in the large-production subspace: they can be extremely successful, but on a more regional scale. European films (like those from many “small” cinematographic nations) that circulate at all, almost always do so via festivals.

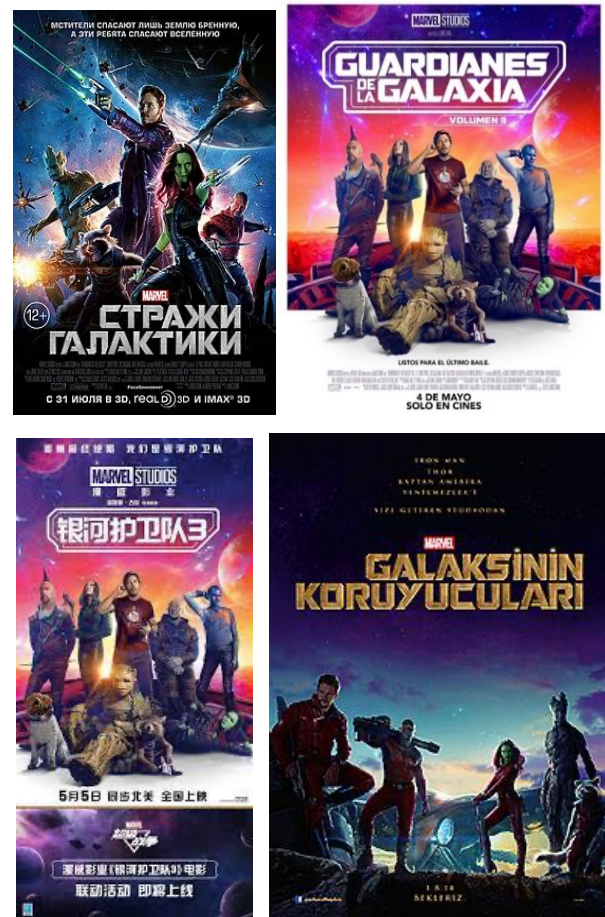


An initial and brief way of describing national power relationships in this transnational space is to emphasize the exceedingly unique position of the United States to then specify that few countries are able to even remotely compete with this position. China and India constitute a first form of competition: both countries boast a very large and protected domestic market – through political measures or consumer habits – and are not without significance

in the wider production subspace. France, with its fairly strong position in the restricted production pole, represents another form of competition. Other countries (the UK, Japan, other Western European countries, Russia, South Korea, etc.) carry some weight in the space, but their position can likely still be characterized as being closer to that of France, or closer to that embodied by China and India.

Another way to briefly describe the balance of power would be to say that while the U.S. clearly dominates the space, it is in a central (and almost monopolistic) position in the wide release market, whereas the pole of restricted production is more poly-centric. Our database (which underestimates the weight of U.S. co-productions) suggests that U.S. films account for at least two-thirds of total box-office receipts (and ten times more receipts outside of their own market than China, which comes second in this respect). By contrast, the U.S. accounts for only one-sixth of selections at major international festivals, where they face a more pronounced competition from France (one-tenth of selections), Germany, Japan, Italy... The representation of film exchanges organized around a center exporting to peripheries that trade little with each other therefore applies primarily to the mass market. At the pole of restricted production, Western domination can still be observed,

though the centers are more numerous and, another difference, these centers are both exporters and importers.



A "planetary film" from 2024: Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3

Efforts to statistically construct transnational spaces related to cinema therefore seem worthwhile. However, two further remarks must be mentioned. First, Bourdieu's observation that statistics are the result of an official vision (and have to do with the State at the national level) remains true at the transnational level: the data that can be used to construct space is associated

with cinema attendance and ignores domestic consumption, which is sometimes similar to that related to cinema attendance, but not always. Specifically, statistics fail to consider transnational circulation – better grasped through anthropological approaches – which, like the abundant production from the Nigerian industry since the 1990s, takes place almost exclusively outside cinema networks (and on the fringes of central countries). Second, one cannot work statistically on transnational space without questioning the type of space it can form and how it relates to national spaces. Transnational space is undoubtedly homologous to national spaces, but not all national spaces are alike, and the balance of power within transnational space undeniably stem from the differences that exist among national spaces. Transnational space, as described here, is a kind of intersection of national spaces. Synthetizing this work, as I have done here, has the disadvantage of implying that a transnational space could somehow preexist national power relations, whereas it is more likely to be the product of these dynamics. The difficulties involved in constructing a transnational space should therefore not obscure the fact that, ideally, the construction of this space and the study of the relationships it maintains with national spaces is a simultaneous endeavor.

For developments on the points discussed in this article, see:

In French:

-(2020) “Une république mondiale du film”, *COnTEXTES. Revue de sociologie de la littérature* [Online], 28. <https://journals.openedition.org/contextes/9222>

-(2023) “Les échanges transnationaux de films. De l'opposition centre-périphérie à la construction d'un champ”, *Revue française de sociologie*, 64 (4), pp. 659-689.

-(2024) “Le cinéma français et le monde. Note sur les relations entre un champ transnational et les champs nationaux”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 253-254, pp. 68-83.

In Portuguese:

-(2023) “Uma república mundial do filme”, *Revista Pós Ciências Sociais*, 20 (2), pp. 356-385. Translation by Jéssica Ronconi and technical revision by Carolina Pulici].

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TRANSCULTURAL FIELDS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The Case of the Literary Field

Gisèle Sapiro

In the program Bourdieu outlines for a “sociology of the international circulation of cultural works,” he asks under what conditions it is heuristic to speak of “international fields,” which may only be grasped through the effects they produce, and particularly symbolic power relations (2023, pp. 83-100). He compares the high degree of the internationalization of mathematics with that of law, situating sociology between the two. Moreover, Bourdieu examines the relationship among national and international fields, and the degree and type of autonomy of the former in relation to the latter to distinguish three factors: protectionist policy, the inertia of the educational institution, and linguistic isolationism. Although Bourdieu was unable to pursue this theorization to its conclusion, a number of studies began to reflect on the fields of cultural production on a transnational scale following the publication of Pascale Casanova's

volume (Casanova, 2008 [1999]; Sapiro, Leperlier and Brahimi 2018; Buchholz, 2022; Bourdieu, 2023, pp. 184-188). Nowhere does Bourdieu confine fields to national borders. Nevertheless, the nationalization of fields is a historical fact that must be revisited if we are to understand what is at stake in the formation of a transcultural literary field (Sapiro, 2013, pp. 161-182). I will illustrate this here through the example of the literary field, a study based on my book *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur mondial ?* (2024).

The Formation of a Transnational Literary Field

According to Bourdieu, the emergence of a field depends on three conditions: the appearance of a group of specialized producers, the presence of consecrating authorities, and the existence of a market for symbolic goods. The formation of literary fields in the different vernacular languages accompanied the construction of national identities and the development of print markets in these languages thanks to a progressive increase in literacy (Anderson, 2006 [1983]; Thiesse, 2019). If the market contributed to the autonomization of literary activity from state-imposed ideological and moral restrictions on the freedom of expression, and offered new professional development avenues for authors, it also created unprecedented constraints by imposing its own law, that of economic profitability (Bourdieu, 1971,

pp. 49-126; Sapiro, 2003, pp. 441-461). Faced with these conditions, authors banded together in circles, cenacles, academies, authors' societies, and magazines, but were also divided in competitive struggles over the legitimate definition of literature.

However, these national fields are not entirely isolated. They are part of a space of international competition orchestrated by nation-states that, in some ways, determine them, as well as transnational networks of exchange led by authors, publishers, literary agents, translators, and academics. It is through such networks that a transcultural literary field structures itself, a field in which a competitive struggle is waged between national literatures, but also among writers from different countries for the accumulation of transnational symbolic capital. As the global book market is subdivided by two types of borders, state and linguistic, which do not always coincide, this competition, which excludes entire regions as well as most regional languages, takes place on the translation market, but also in linguistic areas polarized between centers and peripheries. In both cases, the competition is arbitrated by intermediaries with transcultural legitimizing power,

located in the geographical centers of these markets. The creation of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1901 provided this space with an international consecrating authority. In the second half of the twentieth century, other transnational institutions of this kind were created, marking the transition from an international configuration to a transnational configuration before the move toward globalization began in the 1980s (see below).

These specific intermediaries and authorities led to the autonomization, within the expanding translation market, of a pole of small-scale production in comparison to a pole of large-scale production that has become increasingly global and standardized through the circulation of bestsellers and genre literature (thrillers, romance novels, science fiction).¹ The differentiation among these poles has been codified in the emic vocabulary inspired by industrial classifications through the categories of "upmarket" and "commercial," which are used in the English-speaking publishing field. While at the pole of large-scale production, publishing is perceived as a means to grow economic capital, at the pole of small-scale production, it is the previously accumulated symbolic capital

¹ A similar polarization can be observed in the cinematographic field, between the pole of large-scale production and a pole of small-scale production organized around international film festivals; see Duval (2020). While the notion of a pole of large-scale production is not relevant to

the non-industrial arts, the contemporary art field is nevertheless structured according to a similar dual logic, between a commercial pole dominated by auction houses, and a pole focused on the accumulation of symbolic capital, structured around biennials; see Buchholz (2022).

that is reconverted into long-term financial profits once the titles in the collections become classics. The symbolic capital of a literary publisher depends neither on the size of the publishing house nor on its dividends, but rather on its capacity to produce value. Literary prizes also have the power to convert symbolic capital into economic capital.

In contrast to the pole of large-scale production, which is largely dominated by English-language products circulating in their original language or in translation, the pole of small-scale production is characterized by a high degree of linguistic and cultural diversity. This diversity is due not only to competitive struggles between nation-states, but also to the relatively autonomous strategies enacted by intermediaries and mediators among cultures, as well as by consecrating authorities. Such diversity is partly ensured by the fact that, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, nation-states have imposed national identity as a principle of literary perception and categorization (French, English, German, Italian literature, etc.), at the cost of an amalgamation of language and nation that was to have a detrimental effect on regional-language productions and those of writers from the colonies. This principle of classification, which co-

exists with literary genre, enables the collective accumulation of literary capital necessary for national literatures to gain access to the translation market. However, intermediaries and mediators have the power to extract themselves from nationally-produced symbolic hierarchies and to distinguish authors who do not possess the status of national writers, such as those in exile or in prison. Tensions between different strategies are exacerbated in extremely politicized conjunctures, such as the Cold War, but can also be present in other configurations.

Thus, the literary field's relatively autonomous pole is not immune to heteronomous strategies, whether they are ideological, economic and/or social. The conditions of access to translation and recognition beyond linguistic and national borders depend on the structure of the transcultural field,² i.e. on the unequal distribution of symbolic capital within this field. The configuration varies according to the political, religious and economic constraints weighing on cultural products and their degree of autonomy. The cultural intermediaries, mediators, and authorities involved in the circulation and consecration of literary works are the vectors of these different logics, both autonomous and

² The notion of a transcultural field has the advantage of not predetermining the configuration of these relationships, even though

this term also presupposes the existence of distinct cultures that can be characterized minimally by a common language and a set of shared representations and ways of doing things.

heteronomous, which clash and negotiate within, or through them.

The possibility of access to “the universal” is, therefore, determined not only by a work’s literary qualities, but also by a series of heteronomous parameters such as the author’s gender identity, ethnicity, geographical origin, and language of expression. This access also depends on the investment of intermediaries and their legitimizing power. The power of publishers and agents varies according to their position in the national publishing field and their country’s position in the transnational field, but also according to their international strategies, which may be aimed at strengthening their position in the national field or investing in another space.

Similarly, it is important to distinguish internationalization strategies at the different poles of the literary field – dominant vs. dominated, autonomous vs. heteronomous – and according to the position of the national field within the transcultural field. For example, the avant-gardes tend to challenge national pathways to the accumulation of symbolic capital (institutionalization, professionalization, division of labor, separation of the arts) and, like the Surrealists, at times join international political movements with which they share this propensity: communism, Trotskyism, anarchism...

Three Configurations of the Transcultural Literary Field

Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur mondial ? combines the questions posed respectively by Foucault and Bourdieu – “What is an author? and “Who creates the creators?” – and shifts the perspective to the transcultural level. The first part of the book proposes a theoretical framework and research program to study both the making of world authorship and the social conditions determining the circulation of texts in translation. The social construction of authorship has given rise to a series of studies since Foucault’s article. From the standpoint of historical sociology, authorship is the result of the professional development of literary activity, the work of intermediaries (agents and publishers) who intervene early on in the process of producing the work and the belief in its value, and finally the involvement of mediators who frame a work’s reception and interpretation. While these aspects are decisive at the national level, recognition beyond linguistic borders does not automatically result from this process. Rather, it is through specific (inter)mediation efforts that the author acquires a worldwide status, in which translators play a crucial role and that involves transcultural intermediaries and mediators.

To understand the mechanisms that favor or hinder the circulation of works

in translation, it is essential to distinguish three types of factors: political, economic and socio-cultural, the latter category encompassing religion, identities, and aesthetic principles specific to the literary field. These factors give rise to circulation patterns that oscillate between isomorphism (the tendency to translate previously translated works) and differentiation (the logic of distinction that governs cultural universes). To analyze these two opposing tendencies, I have combined field theory, which considers the rationale of differentiation, with DiMaggio and Powell's neo-institutionalist approach (1983), and have transposed constraint, imitation and professional norms, the three mechanisms they identify as leading to isomorphism, to the publishing field.

Beyond these patterns, the selection process depends on a combination of parameters linked to the unequal distribution of symbolic capital between languages, cultural intermediaries, and authors. The first set derives from the language in which the original work is composed – a text is more likely to be translated if it is written in a central language rather than a peripheral language – and from the linguistic-literary capital of the national literature in which it is embedded, as defined by Casanova. The second set combines the symbolic capital of the cultural intermediaries (agents, publishers) involved in publishing the work in its original language

and in translation. The third includes the symbolic capital of writers (literary prizes, scholarships), as well as other characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and nationality (women, minorities, migrants, and authors from the Global South had, until the 1990s, fewer opportunities than established Western white men), and their social capital. A fourth parameter is literary genre: the novel has become the dominant genre since the end of the nineteenth century, marginalizing poetry, drama, and short stories on the translation market.

Three socio-historical configurations were identified: inter-nationalization, transnationalization, and globalization. The process of inter-nationalization concomitant to the affirmation of national identities culminates in the inter-war period. Politically recognized through the creation of the League of Nations, this process had concrete repercussions in the literary field and in publishing practices, where national categories became a principle of perception which structured a booming translation market, and triggered an abundant production of anthologies, panoramas, and literary histories.

Among the national literatures emerging at the time, American literature acquired a particular visibility thanks to the active role of transatlantic intermediaries and the interest it elicited in the French literary field. The importation of William Faulkner's work to France reveals, at the

micro level, the chain of cooperation that helped to establish an unknown author from a peripheral region in the country that was then at the center of the “World Republic of Letters” (Casanova, 1999). Moreover, Faulkner’s case highlights the role of intermediaries and mediators in producing the value of this work, and that of Maurice-Edgar Coindreau in particular, the translator who also acted as a scout and intermediary for the publisher, and that of writers such as André Malraux, Valéry Larbaud and Jean-Paul Sartre. Gallimard’s archives also reveal the competitive struggles between publishers and translators, which helped to reinforce the belief in this value. The publisher’s resolute investment, despite weak sales, illustrates the long-term authorial policy that characterizes the publishing field’s pole of small-scale production. This investment was compensated with the Nobel Prize awarded to Faulkner in 1949. At the same time, Faulkner’s French consecration also played a pivotal role in his transnational recognition.

If political and cultural internationalism were reestablished after the war under the aegis of UNESCO in a conjuncture marked by the beginnings of American domination of the new world order, due to the challenges presented by the Cold War, soon followed by those associated with decolonization, this period also witnessed the formation of transnational networks. Such networks existed before

the war, yet literary exchanges tended to free themselves from official relations in a configuration that saw the formation of a transnational publishing field organized around international book fairs. Within this publishing field, certain publishing houses have accumulated a transnational symbolic capital, granting them a superior power of consecration. Such is the case of Gallimard, which reinforced its dominant position in the translation market and diversified its catalog with four collections of foreign literature launched in the 1950s: the prestigious “Du monde entier,” “La Croix du Sud” for Latin American authors, “Connaissance de l’orient” for Asian literature, and “Littératures soviétiques” for writers in the USSR, to which can be added their “Série noire” for crime and mystery books, where English translations predominated. Participating in the reconstruction of Europe as it assured its status as one of the main importers of American and English literature into France, Gallimard therefore simultaneously contributed to the circulation of works by writers from Communist countries beyond the Iron Curtain and to the broadening of the translation market to non-Western cultures.

Still very European-centric, this transnational publishing field was gradually opening up to non-Western cultures thanks to the Third World movement on the one hand, and UNESCO’s policy of promoting “literary interpenetration” on

the other. Initially aimed at creating a new canon of world classics, as UNESCO archives reveal this policy led to the creation of the “Representative Works” program, of which East-West dialogue was a priority. This program was led by Roger Caillois, a multi-positioned figure, situated at the crossroads of several national and transnational networks. These networks gave him the opportunity to implement the program himself with the “La Croix du Sud” collection, while also helping Gallimard to obtain subsidies for the “Connaissance de l’orient” collection, launched by René Étiemble. Once again, this cooperation was not without its frictions, rivalries, and bitter negotiations at all levels, between publishing houses, between managers, and between UNESCO and Gallimard. Nor was it free of ethnocentrism or a sentiment of Western superiority that was still widely prevalent among the literary elite, despite the call for decentralization from Claude Lévi-Strauss and anthropologists at UNESCO. This decentering was nevertheless present in one of the program’s flagship achievements in France, the *Trésor de la poésie universelle* (1959). The result of a project by the poet Jean-Clarence Lambert, it bears witness to the contribution of the transnational network of

literary and artistic avant-gardes in this decentering.

A gradual opening-up to non-Western cultures can be observed at the same time in the Nobel Prize for Literature, a supranational body that organizes and unifies competition among national literatures. Nomination lists from 1960–1972, nomination letters, and Nobel Committee reports consulted in the archives of the Swedish Academy indicate a broadening, however measured, of the geocultural horizon, to Latin America (which saw several of its authors win awards) and Asia (Japan’s Kawabata), before sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world in the 1980s. Although more women gained transnational recognition during this period, their chances of achieving supreme consecration remained limited until 1990, despite an increase in nominations. In this case, I speak of the *reproduction of intersectional domination* – reproduction as defined by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in their studies of educational institutions, which involuntarily reproduces and legitimizes class social relations (1970). The notion of reproduction is more appropriate here than that of refraction,³ in that it reveals the limits of the literary field’s autonomy, or its impure foundations, since such pre-

³ On the principle of refraction, which presupposes autonomy in relation to the social power relations in question, see Bourdieu (1992).

judices are detrimental to the purity of aesthetic judgment.

Feminization, consideration of minorities and migrants, and geocultural decentering characterize the third configuration of “globalization”. The Swedish Academy's choices reflect this evolution, but this diversification masks the increasing dominance of the English language, both in terms of the number of laureates writing in English and the weight that two competing institutions, the Neustadt International Prize and the Booker Prize, seem to have acquired – whether consciously or not – in the selection process. These choices also refract the growing economic constraints on the translation market, and reveal the weight of dominant literary agents and large groups who more frequently collect the symbolic and economic profits of the prize, as shown by the analysis of the publishers of the 33 prizewinners from 1990 to 2022 in the three central languages: English, French and German. Thus, despite its efforts to counter heteronomous rationales and the effects of the concentration of symbolic capital, the Swedish Academy contributes, in this configuration as in the previous one, to reproducing certain modes of domination, in a manner that is here refracted through the field's specific stakes, given that intermediaries recuperate the profits of the specific symbolic capital accumulated by these authors.

These trends – geocultural diversification, feminization, and also the dominance of English – can also be observed on another stage that is expanding rapidly in the era of globalization: that of international literature festivals, which are multiplying following the rise of international book fairs around the world. While the latter bear witness to editorial globalization at a time of consolidation and financialization, the former safeguard a somewhat autonomous literary space, becoming a new consecrating authority that highlights transnational literary careers. Far from offering equal access to this supranational recognition, however, the festival subfield largely reproduces the relations of domination that govern the translation market. Nevertheless, some, such as *Étonnants-Voyageurs* in Saint-Malo, the Berlin International Literature Festival, and World Voices in New York, deploy strategies aimed at countering these mechanisms, regarding both English and Western domination. Such strategies go hand in hand with a politicization that takes various forms, from the promotion of multiculturalism to the defense of human rights and democratic freedoms, turning these festivals into an alternative transnational public sphere where writers, and increasingly women writers, intervene as engaged intellectuals, reviving a tradition once in decline in the Western world.

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FROM THE NATIONAL TO THE GLOBAL RULES OF ART

Contributions and Questions for Globalizing Field Theory

Larissa Buchholz

Globalizing Bourdieu's field theory has been a collective endeavor for over two decades, propelled by foundational interventions such as Pascale Casanova's *World Republic of Letters* (2004) and Johan Heilbron's study of global translation flows (1999). Yet despite the proliferation of studies across domains – culture, academia, politics, religion, and beyond – a coherent theoretical framework for theorizing global/transnational fields has yet to emerge. Amid this fragmented landscape, the contemporary visual arts offer a particularly suggestive case. As a medium that is seemingly less constrained by linguistic translation, pedagogical nationalism, or the requirements of live performance – unlike literature or theatre – visual art appears to exemplify a field with heightened globality.

This impression quickly unravels under scrutiny, however, as visual art – like

other cultural practices – is deeply embedded in historically specific social relations. Artworks are not universally legible but require contextual translation and mediation through infrastructures shaped by national, institutional, and geopolitical forces. The notion that visual art is inherently more “global” therefore risks falling into a kind of medium essentialism – obscuring the relational and historical foundations that shape all fields.

More fundamentally, this example highlights a deeper epistemological challenge: the need for robust, rather than spontaneous, analytical categories to compare how fields emerge, evolve, and operate across global space. This is not merely about extending Bourdieu's relational concepts beyond the national frame but about constructing a comparative framework to theorize the commonalities and divergences in global/transnational field formations – a critical step toward a more unified and reflexive global field theory.

That said, such a preamble should not obscure the fact that we can learn something from the global art field more broadly. The *Global Rules of Art* (Buchholz, 2022) offers valuable insights for how we can think about the emergence, structure, and spaces of global/transnational fields. This article draws on that study to first distill its key findings, before reflecting on some broader methodological and theoretical con-

tributions to a comparative theory of global fields.

From West-centric Domination to a Global Logic of Struggles

The Global Rules of Art traces how visual art has evolved through successive waves of globalization – from 19th-century imperial circuits to the seemingly borderless networks of the 21st century. Focusing especially on the last forty years, the book examines how visual art circulates, gains recognition, and acquires value on a global scale.

At its heart lies a central question in cultural globalization: Has recent global expansion disrupted longstanding Western dominance in the arts, or merely repackaged it? Well into the 1980s, the “international” art world remained predominantly transatlantic – centered on North America and Western Europe – with artists from other parts of the world largely sidelined.

Scholars remain divided on how much has changed. Some herald the rise of a “global art world” in which historically excluded artists now gain visibility and agency. Others, invoking cultural imperialism, caution that such shifts may obscure persistent asymmetries under the veneer of pluralism.

The Global Rules of Art intervenes by advancing an intermediary position. Rather than viewing globalization as

either rupture or reproduction, it argues that the art world has evolved into a “global field”: an expanded yet unequal space where new agents participate in shared institutions, discourses, and stakes. This transformation has lessened but not eliminated power imbalances. Cultural authority remains concentrated in major Western hubs, but more multi-directional forms of “asymmetric interdependence” are at play. The book’s relational approach thereby counters one-sided narratives of cultural imperialism. When participants from both centers and peripheries enter a shared force field, all are transformed. In this evolving field, meanings and canons are being redefined through ongoing struggles involving artists and institutions across continents. While West-centric norms have not been entirely dethroned, they have become increasingly unsettled by plural, often contradictory forces.

One of the book’s key insights is how the global field manifests differently across its symbolic and commercial subfields. The former, autonomous subfield – driven by biennials, curators, and critics – has expanded into countries like Brazil, South Korea, Senegal, and beyond, creating global circuits that uplift postcolonial artists and cosmopolitan discourses. Meanwhile, the heteronomous pole – the globalizing commercial art market – remains more geographically concentrated in the Global North.

Driven by market dynamics such as branding, speculative value, and financial investment, it largely favored artists from economically ascendant nations.

The Chinese contemporary art boom of the early 2000s illustrates this divide. Artists such as Zhang Xiaogang and Yue Minjun achieved commercial prominence within the heteronomous subfield, which, however, outstripped their institutional or curatorial recognition – illustrating a growing disconnect between economic and symbolic capital in the globalizing field.

The divergences that the book uncovers highlight the need to move beyond binary frames such as West vs. non-West or “Global North” vs. “Global South”. *The Global Rules of Art* argues for a multi-dimensional subfields perspective that accounts for uneven geographies, temporalities, and power structures within globalization itself.

Overall, while much of the Bourdieusian tradition has focused on the national reproduction of inequality, this study reorients attention toward the transnational reconfiguration of cultural hierarchies. In a moment shaped by calls to decolonize canons and institutions, the book offers both an empirical account of how “peripheral” actors gain recognition and a conceptual framework for understanding how global cultural inequalities are made and unmade.

Constructing Relations in a Multi-Scalar Global Field

Although *The Global Rules of Art* centers on a specific case of “high culture,” it offers conceptual and methodological insights that extend beyond the cultural sphere. Three core contributions emerge: the multi-scalar construction of global fields, the mapping of relational heterogeneity within globalizing subfields, and the role of geography in structuring global power.

First, whereas Bourdieu and others have theorized the genesis of new social fields primarily as horizontal, autonomous differentiation from adjacent fields, *The Global Rules of Art* substantiates a complementary model in which global fields emerge through vertical differentiation – that is, through hierarchical structuring across spatial scales. The concept of “vertical autonomy” (Buchholz, 2016) captures how a global field can arise not simply through scale expansion (regional to global), but through the creation of new hierarchically distinct logics and positions that operate relatively independently of national or regional fields.

This scalar perspective also prompts a methodological reorientation for examining the emergence of a global field. Traditional field analysis often begins by tracing the evolving competitive relations among a set of agents within a relatively bounded space. Casanova’s

account of world literature exemplifies this at the macro level, where symbolic competition among national fields drives internationalization (2004). Yet such an approach is difficult to transpose to global art: treating national fields as coherent actors risks reification, while mapping relations among individual actors across continents is logistically and methodologically challenging.

To navigate this complexity, the book redirects the analytical starting point. Rather than tracing evolving struggles among agents (macro or micro), it foregrounds the infrastructures that make global relations possible. This shift – from analyzing field-specific relations to their enabling conditions – is not merely methodological, but epistemological. It moves from objective relations to the mediating institutions and symbolic frameworks through which global fields emerge. In doing so, it retains Bourdieu's concern with “structuring structures” while departing from bounded models of relational mapping.

In this, the book fleshes out three types of infrastructure central to the emergence of global field relations: field-specific institutions that facilitate regular transcontinental exchange and competition (e.g., the biennial and art fair circuits); global mechanisms of hierarchization and valuation (e.g., prizes, rankings, and gatekeeping platforms); and post-national discourses that reframe the field's core practices and values (e.g.,

cosmopolitan curatorial frameworks). The historical analysis shows how these infrastructures do more than connect agents; they reconfigure how competition, legitimacy, and symbolic value are produced across space, in complex interaction with various broader forces.

By the early 2000s, what had emerged was a vertically differentiated global field – not reducible to national levels, though still shaped by their refractive dynamics. Artists, curators, and collectors now operate across local, regional, and global levels simultaneously.

Yet a multi-scalar field perspective goes beyond descriptive layering. As Buchholz and Schmitz (2025) argue, the task ahead is to theorize more the variable strength, directionality, and mediation of interscalar effects. Fields at different scales exhibit uneven “fieldness:” They vary in degrees of relational density, institutional coherence, and symbolic integration. The challenge for global field theory is to analyze how historically variable interdependencies shape scalar field relations, and how capital conversion and translation dynamics operate differently in vertical versus horizontal field configurations (Ibid.).

How Do Subfields Relate, Transform, and Pluralize in a Global Context?

In addition to proposing a multi-scalar framework, *The Global Rules of Art* ex-

tends Bourdieu's theory of autonomous and heteronomous subfields – such as the specific symbolic and commercial subfields of cultural production – into the global arena. The subfield concept offers a powerful lens for theorizing internal differentiation within globalizing spheres in ways that cut across, without dissolving, conventional territorial units like nations or regions. In doing so, it invites attention to genuinely transnational forms of sub-differentiation – an analytic space still underdeveloped in global comparative field theory.¹

Offering one of the most sustained extensions of subfield theory at the global scale, the book traces how meso-level subfield dynamics interact with macro- and micro-level forces to produce distinct transnational patterns. By examining these multi-level dynamics through a single case, the study offers a model for how subfields emerge, interact, and undergo relational transformation in a global context.

Contrary to claims that globalization leads to generalized heteronomization or the erosion of subfield boundaries (cf. Bourdieu, 2003; 2008), the book shows how global expansion can sharpen internal differentiation and intensify polarization. As the global art field took shape, its subfields did not merely grow

in size and reach – they were transformed in ways that deepened their divergence.

The globalizing symbolic subfield was transformed through an expanding ecology of biennials, experimental artists, and mediating agents – curators, critics, artist-centered galleries – whose practices propelled postcolonial critique, new debates on “global art,” and emerging cosmopolitan criteria of legitimacy. Global biennials, for example, recalibrated hierarchies of artistic value by introducing curatorial frameworks that displaced Eurocentric canons, elevated postcolonial voices, and helped consolidate a more discursive logic within the field. These shifts unfolded not as mechanical effects of globalization, but through field-specific developments that were refracted by broader currents: decolonization, migration, and identity politics.

Conversely, the commercial subfield – dominated by mega-galleries, fairs, and auction houses – was influenced by economic globalization, rising global wealth, and liberalized markets. As speculative logics took hold, market valuation became increasingly decoupled from critical recognition or institutional legitimacy. The emergence of a financialized global “art industry” thereby complicates

¹ For insightful exceptions that extend subfield analysis to global contexts, see Steinmetz's theorization of colonial knowledge production

through intersecting subfields of empire and state formation (2016), and also Sapiro's mapping of transnational publishing flows in global academia (2023).

Bourdieu's model of large-scale production. Artworks, though entangled in speculative markets, retain material singularity and symbolic distinctiveness. Theorizing this global subfield requires new tools to capture its distinctive technological infrastructures, speculative temporalities, and financial interdependencies – dimensions not fully captured by Bourdieu's original framing of heteronomous cultural production.

Taken together, globalization did not flatten the art field – it fractured it in new ways, creating increasingly divergent poles: cosmopolitan discursive production on one side, corporatized financial speculation on the other. Still, the divergence between symbolic and commercial poles should not be mistaken for a rigid binary. The field remains internally plural, and future research must examine other cross-border subfields of circulation, activism, or alternative production that may follow different logics and trajectories in a global context.

This more open-ended perspective encourages a shift in how we approach global comparative field theory. Rather than focusing on emerging global fields, it calls for deeper theorization of their internal sub-differentiations. As subfields globalize, a series of comparative questions arise: When does global expansion foster subfield pluralization, and when does it blur boundaries? What configurations sustain relative autonomy

under conditions of looser integration and symbolic ambiguity? And what theoretical and methodological strategies best delineate subfields at the global level, where social structures are more fluid and harder to trace? A global subfield perspective not only illuminates the internal complexity of cultural globalization but also expands the analytic scope of field analysis itself.

Transnational Articulations of Physical, Social, and Cultural Space

Globalization has not displaced but sharpened scholarly debates on the geography of social and cultural processes. While Bourdieusian sociology has long used spatial metaphors and demonstrated how physical space shapes social reproduction – through domestic divisions, residential segregation, or the concentration of institutional capital – global and transnational research offers an opportunity to incorporate geography more explicitly into field theory. *The Global Rules of Art* contributes to this emerging agenda by proposing a framework for understanding how geography mediates power in cross-border fields – both territorially and interpretively – through its articulation with subfield-specific social and cultural relations.

Territorially, global field theory entails theorizing the unequal geographic dis-

tribution of power resources across macro entities (e.g., urban, national, regional fields), which delineates field-specific geographies of centers and peripheries (Buchholz, 2018a). In the global art field, this appears in the uneven spatial distribution of “macro capital” (Ibid.; Buchholz, 2022), including institutional resources essential for the transnational production, mediation, and valuation of contemporary art. Crucially, a field’s center–periphery configurations can vary across subfields. In the autonomous global subfield – revolving around symbolic consecration – the geography of power is shaped by a high concentration of cultural infrastructures in cities like New York, Berlin, and Paris. In the heteronomous global art market, commercial infrastructures – auction houses, galleries, and art fairs – cluster in hubs such as New York, London, and Hong Kong. Thus, the centers of the autonomous and heteronomous poles diverge and must be treated as analytically distinct, depending on the subfield-specific forms of macro capital that structure competition (Buchholz, 2018a). Importantly, global centers do not exert influence uniformly. The ways geographic inequalities create a “multiplier effect” (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 91) on field dynamics are mediated by subfield-specific social and cultural relations. In the autonomous subfield, where embodied cultural capital and strong ties matter, peripheral artists often had to

migrate and be physically present in cultural centers to gain global recognition and institutional validation. In the heteronomous art market, however, artists have achieved international success without relocating. Here, transactions rely more on weak ties, and remaining in one’s home country can even enhance value as an “authentic” geo-aesthetic asset. Such variations underscore the need to theorize not only different subfield-specific centers but also how geographic, social, and cultural power relations interact. Together, they generate distinct territorial logics of competition across borders, even within the same field (Buchholz, 2022, pp. 269–273; Buchholz, 2025).

More intricate still is geography’s influence on interpretive frameworks. The book’s case studies of artists from Mexico and China highlight how geographic classifications shape symbolic competition within global and transnational fields. In the global art field, there has been a shift away from Eurocentric, time-based evaluative categories (such as the new vs. the outdated, the contemporary vs. the modern) toward frameworks rooted in geographic difference. As the field globalized, the exclusionary logic of a linear, Western-centric art history – reflected in Bourdieu’s temporally oriented theory of artistic innovation (1996) – became increasingly untenable. With temporal categories losing credibility and geo-

cultural “diversity” gaining value as symbolic capital, labels like “Chinese,” “Mexican,” or “global” emerged as alternative markers for interpreting and evaluating art.

Yet these labels function differently across field domains. In the autonomous subfield, they act as refracted signals shaped by hierarchies and aesthetic discourse. In the heteronomous, market-driven subfield, they tie more directly to broader global narratives and economic imaginaries. The book thereby offers a typology of four modalities through which geo-cultural classifications imbue symbolic practices with value: universalist, cosmopolitan, cultural-identitarian, and cultural wealth frames. This typology serves as a comparative tool for theorizing the multiple, and sometimes contradictory, roles geographic categories play in global cultural fields – and potentially beyond, in other globalizing arenas where symbolic classifications matter (Buchholz, 2022, pp. 269–273; Buchholz, 2025).

These insights into the territorial and interpretive dynamics of transnational geography raise new comparative questions for globalizing field theory. How do configurations of autonomous and heteronomous centers generate distinct spatial logics of recognition and competition? When does mobility become essential for peripheral actors, and when can geographic distance be revalued as symbolic capital? How do geo-cultural

labels acquire varying meanings, weights, and institutional effects across subfields? And what relational mechanisms shape the emergence, consolidation, or transformation of mono- versus polycentric macro structures over time?

Global field theory stands to gain from a deeper conceptual engagement with geographic spatiality. Attending to the territorial and interpretive dimensions of geographic power through a field-theoretic lens – not as fixed structures, but as shifting and field-specific relational formations – offers a multidimensional framework for analyzing how geographic configurations shape and refract struggles over value, legitimacy, and influence in globalizing social arenas.

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WHAT IS TRANSNATIONALISM IN THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES?

Propositions for Comparative Inquiry

Johan Heilbron

What are the main empirical and theoretical insights that, for the purpose of comparison, can be drawn from studies on the transnationalization of the social and human sciences (SHS)?¹ The SHS may appear to represent a rather different social space from the cinematographic, literary and artistic fields that form the objects of the other articles in this issue. However, there is good reason to include them in the comparative understanding of cultural and intellectual fields.

The SHS do not merely constitute a relatively autonomous social space to which field analysis can be applied. The specific characteristic of cultural production fields – the opposition between

the poles of “large scale” and “small scale” production – is relevant for the SHS as well. The extensive, heteronomous universe of “applied” research is comparable to the pole of “large scale” production, while the production of autonomous or “fundamental” research is analogous with the logic of “small scale” production.

Transnationalism Across Scholarly Fields

Aside from comparisons with cultural production fields, the SHS should, for epistemological reasons, be compared with the scientific field as well. Transnational circulation and exchange in the SHS are homologous to similar processes in the natural sciences to the extent that they depend on unequally distributed resources which, in the broadest sense, reflect the cumulative advantages of dominant Western countries. Nevertheless, a significant difference must be considered: unlike elementary particles or mathematical structures, the objects of study in the SHS change over time and vary across borders. Inquiring into the principles of historical change and cross-cultural variation is the proper aim of SHS research, not proposing ahistorical, decontextualized, and therefore pseudo-universal models.

¹ In this brief article, I cannot provide the required references. They can be found in various publications on which the article is based. For more or less recent ones in English, see Heilbron, Sorá and Boncourt (2018) and Sapiro, Santoro and Baert (2020). The present text

elaborates the concluding section of Heilbron (2023, pp. 262-284).

This epistemological difference has, as Yves Gingras has shown, consequences for transnational relations. Significantly higher in the natural than in the social sciences, transnational exchange is lower still in the humanities. For example, transnational co-authorship, which is a powerful indicator of cross-border connections, is highest in the natural sciences and lowest in the humanities, with the social sciences occupying an intermediary position between the two.

The historical pattern of transnational circulation in the SHS suggests that the contemporary web of global connections represents a transformative change when compared with earlier historical periods. With the disintegration of the European-wide Republic of Letters and the establishment of national systems of higher learning in the early nineteenth century, cross-border connections became less salient; Latin was replaced by vernaculars, and the relatively high levels of mobility and exchange between European universities declined significantly.

It is easily forgotten, however, that the process of nation building was in many areas accompanied by the simultaneous construction of an international order shaped in great part by the proliferation of *international organizations*, governmental as well as non-governmental. In addition to older forms of mobility (correspondence, travel, migration) new ones arose, and notably through interna-

tional scholarly *associations* and *international conferences*.

Emerging in the second half of the nineteenth century, predominantly Western, international scholarly organizations increased their geographical scope following World War II. This was first due to decolonization, and then to the “globalization” that followed the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, which coincided with new communication technologies (the world wide web and the personal computer).

Beyond the relatively limited and infrequent modes of exchange within international organizations, contemporary transnational relations are based on the presence of SHS research in virtually all countries and regions of the world. Facilitated by new information technology, increased levels of transnational communication and mobility have transformed transnational practices, from information sharing and scholarly diplomacy, to more frequent, extensive, and research-driven forms of exchange.

A Global Core-Periphery Structure

Despite their importance, new forms of transnational circulation and mobility do not constitute unrestrained “liquid” flows of ideas and people, as globalization theorists such as Zygmunt Bauman have proposed. Nor can they be properly understood as a mere function of a unified and homogeneous world system:

a capitalist “world system” according to Immanuel Wallerstein, or the culturalist “world polity” or “world society” as conceived of by John Meyer.

The globalizing SHS are more accurately understood as constituting an *emerging global field*, that is a relatively autonomous social universe with specific stakes, agents, and institutions. Without adhering to the economic premises of the world-systems approach, this globalizing space can be analytically described as a *core-periphery* structure, which is first and foremost based on the unequal distribution of both material and symbolic resources of the agents and institutions involved.

Rather than dichotomous, bibliometric and institutional indicators show that core-periphery relations consist of a *duopolistic*, Euro-American core, a variety of semi central or semi peripheral zones (in Asia and Latin America), and a host of peripheral countries. Given that the core itself is a differentiated space (rather than a homogeneous “Northern” bloc), a polycentric dynamic is a defining feature of its functioning. For example, certain French and German intellectual traditions, while belonging to the Global North, are widely perceived as offering critical alternatives to mainstream North American social science.

Given that the basic opposition in international relations between “diffusion” and “coercion” only captures two modes of cross-border transfer, the general

process of transnationalization is more adequately understood as *uneven circulation* and *asymmetrical exchange within a core-periphery power structure on a global scale*.

Dominated by the core countries, semi central or semi peripheral zones tend to function as *bridgeheads* of the core, assuring a mixture of *imposition* and *selective appropriation* of work from the center. Less frequently, they can also be locations of *hybridization* of knowledge. Under certain conditions, *peripheral centers*, as Fernanda Beigel has called them, can develop into effective *challengers* to the hegemony of the dominant forms of Western social science. In this case, *reverse flows* take place from the (semi)periphery to the core: *dependencia* versus modernization theory being a prime example.

Multi-Scale Field Analysis

Existing in multiple configurations (bilateral, trilateral, multilateral, etc.), the most significant transnational relations in the SHS are located at the transnational regional and the global level. Instead of being essentially national or predominantly transnational, the contemporary SHS form a multi-scale structure. As such, there is a need to go beyond both methodological “nationalism” and “transnationalism.” With varying degrees of autonomy and institutionalization, the different scales

should be examined both independently, and in relation to each other.

The functioning of the transnationalizing field is thus shaped not only by the internal struggle within transnational structures, but simultaneously by its relations to other levels of SHS practices. Since these distinct levels have a structure and dynamics of their own, they are irreducible to a single mechanism or an all-encompassing world systems logic, whether in terms of “diffusion” or “imposition.” A more accurate theoretical account is thus offered by *multi-scale field analysis*. This framework requires assessing the specificities of the various levels or scales, their modes of separation and interdependency, and should include the various *strategies of specialization and switching* that agents employ to deal with the multi-level structure.

Between National Anchorage and Global Hegemony

Examining transnational scales empirically, regionalization and globalization have both been quite limited in the SHS. Several indicators (co-authorship, citation patterns, prizes) show that the global presence of the SHS has so far reproduced rather than undermined transnational hierarchies. In theoretical terms, both the transnational regional and global levels of the SHS tend to be *weak fields*, as political sociologists (Didier Georgakakis, Antoine Vauchez and others) have called them. Re-

presenting a specific order with a certain degree of institutionalization, transnational SHS fields remain structurally dependent on more well-established national fields, on the one hand, and on the global hegemony of the United States, on the other.

A rough indication of their relative strength can be gained by comparing membership in professional associations. Sociological associations in France and Germany each have two to three thousand members, whereas the European association, rather than being much larger, is of similar size. On the global level the disparities are even more telling: the American Sociological Association (asa) alone is about twice the size of the International Sociological Association (isa), which is a world organization.

A comparative analysis of journals confirms the relative weakness of regional and global structures. The citation profile of SHS journals tends to be dominated by a combination of references to local and American journals. Even the most prominent journals from other countries have a minimal role. In France, for example, journals tend to refer to American and French journals, and very rarely to German, Spanish, or Italian journals. At the same time, regional (European, Latin American, Asian etc.) as well as global journals (published by international scholarly associations for example) have a low position in the citation hierarchy. The structuring prin-

ciple of relations among SHS journals is, therefore, one of *bi-nationalism*, rather than transnationalism or globalism.

As measured by references to journals, transnational relations between SHS periodicals display a structure of multiple, coexisting national universes which, at the top of the citation hierarchy, refer to themselves and to a single center – the US – but rarely to other, foreign journals. In network terms, the international domination of American journals can be visualized as occupying the center of a *star network*, or a set of relations with a single center to which all others refer, while rarely referring to each other.

The Euro-American Divide

While the international dominance of American journals seems unrivaled, regions with alternative traditions have become increasingly relevant (Europe) or appear to be emerging (Latin America, China). In specific research areas, some have successfully challenged American models. So far, however, this has occurred at the individual level and within specific research groups or traditions rather than at the institutional level: there are very few SHS journals or scholarly organizations that can compete with their American equivalents.

Shifting from the institutional structure to the level of individual scholars, an intriguing opposition appears within the Global North between American and

European scholars. Among the most cited individuals, the US is far less dominant than it is in terms of journals, funding, and scholarly associations. The most cited scholars in the SHS form a Euro-American mix, which varies significantly. Whereas in disciplines like economics and management, North American scholars are more dominant, in sociology and several other SHS European authors tend to dominate the citation hierarchy (Bourdieu, Foucault, Derrida, Habermas, etc. are the most cited SHS scholars). These Europeans are primarily book authors that are referenced in translations. The reference pattern traverses many different disciplines and subdisciplines, and the cited work in question often has a more general allure and is rarely, if ever, defined in narrow, technical terms.

The duopolistic core of the global SHS thus has a peculiar, multidimensional structure, which is obscured when treated as a homogenous Northern bloc: there seems to be a divergence between the symbolic capital of the most reputable individual scholars and what Kuhn described as the universe of professionalized “normal science.”

Accounting for Scale Interdependencies

Contrary to certain macro theories, there is no single pattern of scale interdependency. Conversely, the relationship between different scales

varies significantly by discipline and by country. A relatively high level of interdependency, transnational convergence, and global unification occurs in the natural sciences and in economics (the use of international textbooks, references to a common canon, recognized prestige of a small number of high impact, English language journals). At the opposite pole are disciplines like law, sociology, and the humanities, which have a much lower level of scale interdependency, tend to be more nationally oriented, and display more heterogeneous practices across countries (as indicated by larger variation in the disciplinary canon, for example).

The relative weight of transnational structures varies by country as well. Dominant countries tend to be more inward-looking with higher levels of self-centeredness and self-citation, whereas semi-central or semi-peripheral countries orient themselves to foreign center(s) and have higher proportions of citations to foreign scholarship. Reference and citation patterns are in this respect similar to translation ratios, which vary in the same manner.

Social science research in American universities thus focuses on the US and generalizes based on one national case, which is implicitly taken to be the most advanced and “modern” society, whereas studying “foreign” objects is outsourced to separate departments in “area studies,” which do not frequently

interact with the main social science disciplines.

In opposite cases, where the SHS at the national level are relatively weak (small and peripheral countries), transnationalization tends to lead to the imposition or importation of internationally dominant models, which risks an impoverishment of national knowledge production and a deterioration of public social science. Evaluation regimes that privilege English-language articles reinforce this tendency. In strongly internationally codified disciplines such as economics, the consequence is that in smaller and/or more peripheral countries certain topics are no longer properly researched because they appear to be of merely local or national interest. This not only leads to *knowledge deficits*; it also produces an impoverishment of the public debate and a *democratic deficit*.

In somewhat larger and/or more central countries, where the SHS are academically well established and national elites coexist with, or even predominate over internationally oriented groups, scholarly production can be protected from foreign influences. Actively resisting internationally dominant models or opposing certain of their features can lead to *counter-traditions* as well as regressive modes of isolation and *parochialism*. Regressive tendencies have in recent years gained strength, whereas truly internationalist and innovative

initiatives have great difficulty in materializing.

Within a multi-scale field framework, and unlike the assumptions of unilateral and top-down diffusion or imposition models, the social category of *intermediary agents* (gatekeepers, brokers, import-export specialists, translators, and other go-betweens) plays a critical role *between* and *within* these scales.

Assessing their significance, which is well documented in reception studies and the analysis of cultural and intellectual transfer, requires: (a) specifying their particular position in the field structure, which defines the constraints and opportunities within which they operate, and (b) assessing the specific resources, trajectories and habitus (exile, migration, membership of cosmopolitan minorities, etc.) that shape their strategies and that predispose them for mediating among different scales and/or across various fields.

Some Implications

The increased opportunities provided by the historical growth of transnational exchange produce divergences and divisions within and between disciplines. National scholarly fields tend to bifurcate into an internationally oriented elite, possessing transnational forms of academic and social capital, and a primarily national elite that, in the social sciences, is often connected to national

policy circuits. Enhanced competition between “international” and “national” research areas, teaching programs, and career structures is a widespread consequence.

Transnationalization through official international organizations tends to reinforce mainstream approaches and favors standardized research, writing conventions, and publication practices. For example, “European” journals in the SHS, which have proliferated, tend to be restricted to mainstream research. Outlets for innovative, multidisciplinary research, as they exist in several national contexts (*Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* being an example) are lacking, and seem largely absent on the transnational level.

Innovative approaches circulate less through official organizations, whether national or international, than through partly informal *networks* that are based on a shared research program and elective affinities (as Bourdieu evokes in the text published in this issue). Shaped by travel, migration, and punctual transfers, they may stabilize in institutional *niches*. The (trans)national connections and transfers that these networks sustain offer the best chances for the “new combinations” that, for Schumpeter, define innovation.

The transnationalization of the SHS theoretically requires a shift from *single-scale*, whether national or transnational, to *multi-scale* field analysis. Resisting the

alternative between a uniform and global model of the SHS and forms of parochial retreat, a multi-scale, multi-lingual, and multi-support publication system (favoring not only articles but also books for both peer and public audiences) should be pursued and promoted for scholarly as well as for civic reasons.

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THE INEQUALITY OF NORTH-SOUTH CULTURAL EXCHANGES

A Joint Interview with Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni and Ian Merkel

Carolina Pulici and Jéssica Ronconi

Two recent books based on international archives draw on Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture to deconstruct the mythical figure of the "uncreated creator" in order to reintroduce the social conditions related to the production and circulation of ideas and paintings. In *Mulheres Modernistas. Estratégias de Consagração na Arte Brasileira* [Modernist Women: Strategies of Consecration in Brazilian Art] published in Brazil in 2022, the Brazilian sociologist Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni examines the social and artistic trajectories of Regina Gomide Graz, Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral and specifically, their divergent access to international space, as well as the difficulties faced by Latin American artists in gaining recognition in 1920s Paris more generally. In *Terms of Exchange. Brazilian Intellectuals and the French Social Sciences*, published in

2022 in the United States and in 2024 in France and in Brazil, the American historian Ian Merkel takes a fresh look at French academic missions to Brazil in the 1930s, with the aim of demonstrating the weight of the South American country and of Brazilian intellectuals on the research and future careers of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Fernand Braudel, Pierre Monbeig and Roger Bastide. Given that both authors focus on the constraints of the international circulation of intellectual and artistic work, we deemed it fitting to conduct a joint interview with them via e-mail exchanges.



Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni is Professor of Sociology of Art at the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil, since 2005. She has been a visiting professor at several foreign institutions, including the École Normale Supérieure (rue d'Ulm, Paris), where she also completed a postdoctoral fellowship between 2016 and 2017.

Ian Merkel is an Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies at the University

of Groningen with tenure. He received his Ph.D. in *cotutelle* between New York University and the University of São Paulo and has taught at Cornell University, the University of Miami, the University of Turin, and Leipzig University.

Q: *Your books are based on extensive research in archives in different countries. Could you tell us a bit about the development of these projects into monographs?*

Ian Merkel (IM): During my doctorate, I became interested in Brazilian intellectual and cultural history. Initially, my plan was to write a history of São Paulo inspired by what Carl Schorske (1979) did many years ago for Vienna. I wanted to examine the effervescent cultural sphere of the city in the first half of the twentieth century in its various manifestations: artistic, social-scientific and political. It is through this that I came upon the “French missions” to Brazilian universities. Initially, these missions were only part of a broader project, but I quickly came to realize the potential for a monograph focused on them. Ultimately, it was the archives that informed my approach. Both Lévi-Strauss and Braudel’s archives had

recently been made available in Paris, and the *Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros* (IEB) at USP [*Universidade de São Paulo*] housed many papers from Monbeig and Bastide. Between these four thinkers, I had a significant basis from which to build outwards. I could reconstruct their experience and the Brazilian thinkers with whom they were in dialogue, including Mário de Andrade, Caio Prado Júnior, and Florestan Fernandes.¹

Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni (APCS): My book was the outcome of many years of research dedicated to modernist women in Brazil. This research began in 2005 when I studied the trajectory of Regina Gomide Graz (1897-1973), who introduced modern textile arts (Art Deco) in Brazil. Despite her innovative approach, she remained largely obscured in Brazilian art history. Regina was married to the Swiss artist John Graz (1891-1980) and the sister of the Brazilian painter Antonio Gomide (1895-1967.) Together, they brought a modernist approach to decoration aligned with the principles of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total art, to Brazil. Regina’s name, however, was overshadowed and subordinated compared to her male counterparts. Moreover, in dedicating herself to textiles, Gomide

¹ All three were influential Brazilian intellectuals: the literary critic Mário de Andrade (1893-1945) was a central figure in São Paulo’s early twentieth century avant-garde movement; the economist Caio Prado Jr. (1907-1990) pioneered a Marxist and historiographic approach to understanding Brazil’s colonial society; Florestan Fernandes

(1920-1995,) who succeeded Roger Bastide at the chair of sociology in the *Universidade de São Paulo*, was a leading sociologist known for his studies on the indigenous society of the Tupinambá, on the integration of former black slaves in class society, and on Brazilian industrialization.

Graz renewed a traditional pattern in the gendered division of labor; she was less studied and exhibited than her husband and brother, and her work was less preserved.

In 2009, I joined the IEB at USP, an institution that houses important modernist archives fundamental to Brazil's cultural history. At that point, I felt compelled to include more noteworthy examples, such as the artists Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral. Here, the challenges were different: it would be inaccurate to say that they were excluded, but it is also impossible to claim that gender played no role in shaping their careers and public recognition. Both are regarded in Brazil as prominent figures of national modernism, a role rarely attributed to women artists in a global context. However, this recognition is not granted *despite* their gender; on the contrary. I point out that all three artists occupy narrative positions deeply shaped by notions of femininity: Tarsila do Amaral as the muse, Anita Malfatti as the victim, and Regina Gomide Graz as the collaborative wife. In that regard, Bourdieu's thesis that the figure of the artist as a genius, and therefore individualized, is the product of a process within the artistic field itself contributes greatly to historicizing, and therefore denaturalizing, this vision. While Bourdieu provides the foundation for rethinking the creation of the singular artist as a myth, or collective illusion, when considering

the myth of "female exceptionality" specifically, and particularly in the arts, I elected to draw on other references, such as Griselda Pollock, Tamar Garb, Christine Planté, Patricia Mayayo, and Séverine Sofio.

Q: *Ian, in studying the importance of Brazil in France's reshaping of the social sciences, you mention having drawn on Pierre Bourdieu's lectures on the painter Édouard Manet to analyze Claude Lévi-Strauss's "rebellion" against Émile Durkheim and the emergence of structuralism. Could you explain in further detail how Lévi-Strauss's time in Brazil resonated in his thought, and how Bourdieu's work informs your argument?*

IM: It is a matter of the broader question of fields and how to understand the individual agents within them. Bourdieu recognized in Manet's painting a kind of "symbolic revolution" that had transformed the world of art. Perhaps uncharacteristically of Bourdieu, he granted Manet a significant amount of autonomy in doing so. And yet, as he argued, Manet depended upon fellow painters, artists, and writers in homologous positions to enact the revolution for which he became so well-known. For Lévi-Strauss, I would argue that something similar occurred. He was inspired by Durkheimian social science but frustrated by its limitations. Ethnology (what we would now call Anthropology) provided a way out. Whether in 1930s São Paulo where he advocated for Cultural Anthropology

instead of Sociology, or in 1950s Paris as the father of Structural Anthropology, Lévi-Strauss effectuated a kind of symbolic revolution. He was far from alone, however, in this task. We tend to think of structuralism as the fruit of Lévi-Strauss's dialogues in New York with the linguist Roman Jakobson. But Brazilians such as Mário de Andrade, Heloisa Torres² and Luiz de Castro Faria³ were invaluable collaborators on the ground. Lévi-Strauss's French colleagues from Brazil, too, helped to bring both attention to and institutional support for his structuralist method.

Q: *Ian, when dealing with the French missions to Brazil in the 1930s, you focus less on the contribution of these academic missions to the development of Brazilian social sciences and consider more thoroughly the impact of Brazil and Brazilian intellectuals on the work and future careers of French researchers in the beginning of their trajectory. Could you tell us more about this “effet de retour,” or in other words, how the Brazilian experience was reinvested in the French academic context?*

IM: This question gets to the heart of what I ultimately argue in the book. I should recognize up front that the question of these “missions” has been one of serious scholarly research for

some time now. Fernanda Arêas Peixoto's work (1991), in particular, is pioneering in examining these French intellectuals in Brazil. But the archival sources made me profoundly aware of just how important this nucleus of Franco-Brazilian scholars in the 1930s was for the French social sciences after World War II.

Measuring influence is always a tricky thing to do in intellectual history. What I try to do in the book is to recontextualize “French” concepts such as structuralism and the *longue durée* in the transatlantic space in which Brazilians played a crucial role. As just one example, I highlight Caio Prado Júnior as a transformative influence on Braudel's understanding of transatlantic trade and temporality. But there is also a broader institutional effect of the Brazilian missions on French intellectual life. The archives made it clear to me that the four French scholars who make up the heart of the book remained in close contact as they constructed their own social-scientific institutions in France. The *École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*, the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale* and the *Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine* all bear the mark of the Brazilian years, not only because they hosted “Latin American” subjects, but

² Heloísa Alberto Torres (1895–1977) was a Brazilian anthropologist, one of the first women to join the National Museum of Brazil, where she later served as its director.

³ Luiz de Castro Faria (1913–2004) was a founding member of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology and took part in Claude Lévi-Strauss's expeditions in Brazil.

also because they represented new kinds of empirical research.

Q: *Ana Paula, concerning authors from peripheral nations who try their luck in central countries, Pascale Casanova (1999) argues that “if they wish to be noticed, they have to show that they are different from other writers – but not so different that they are thereby rendered invisible.” To what extent does this analysis shed light on the international circulation of the works of Regina Gomide Graz, Anita Malfatti, and Tarsila do Amaral? Is it relevant to say that the small percentage of these artists’ cultural production that achieved international recognition can be interpreted both as a form of exoticism and contingent on their exchange with the northern hemisphere?*

APCS: Traveling abroad was fundamental both for artistic training and for gaining recognition. In the nineteenth century, women were not allowed to enter art academies, neither in France nor in Brazil. Access to academic training was no longer the main issue for the modernist generation, but becoming a vanguard artist still required a period abroad. It was in Geneva that Regina Gomide Graz received the theoretical and practical training that enabled her to become a modern decorative artist; Anita Malfatti encountered artistic movements in Germany and the United States that allowed her to introduce modernism in Brazil in 1917. Interestingly,

Tarsila do Amaral was in Paris between 1920 and 1921, but did not embrace modernism at that time. It was in São Paulo, after the Modern Art Week of 1922, that she better understood the debates among different artistic languages through her contact with the São Paulo modernists. During her subsequent stay in Paris, beginning in 1923, she took a “leap” into cubism, producing the most valued works of her career. Very few artists who did not study abroad managed to stand out; one rare exception is Mário de Andrade.

Q: *Ian, you reject the thesis of the unidirectional transfer of ideas from privileged societies to those that are less privileged. How can we implement restrictions on the traditional approach to international borrowing without succumbing to relativism and cultural populism?*

IM: Social theory is at a difficult crossroads. The main difficulty, in my view, is a global rightward turn combined with austerity that seeks to dismantle critical educational projects. There is also the broader question of how to remake curricula in the social sciences: for the most part, European and North American authors remain the classical, canonical references. They are “universal,” whereas thinkers from other parts of the world are valued primarily for their understanding of their local or national contexts.

In that sense, Bourdieu and Wacquant's article (1998) is helpful for thinking critically about how authors and concepts circulate internationally. In the Netherlands, where I live and work, I try to use Latin American authors whose texts help to think *beyond* their local experience. Nowadays, U.S. based scholars are overrepresented in social scientific discourse. Remaining vigilant about why this is the case as we read them remains important.

Q: *Ana Paula, in discussing the difficult recognition of Latin American artists in the Parisian art scene of the 1920s, you note that all those who achieved some measure of success took advantage of hailing from regions perceived as primitive and exotic. Could you tell us more about the expectations shaped by these artists' national origins?*



Brochure for the *Tarsila do Amaral* exhibition at the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris, from 9 October 2024 to 2 February 2025

APCS: To “measure” success, I drew on the theory of circles of consecration from Alan Bowness (1989), Natalie Heinich (1998) and Nuria Peist (2005), which identifies exhibition in museums as the final stage in a cycle of accumulating recognition. Based on this, I investigated the entry of Latin American artworks into public collections in France between 1910 and 1947. In fact, very few Latin American artists succeeded in having their works acquired by museums: fewer than 10%. Among those, not all, but the vast majority in some way presented what France perceived as “typically Latin American:” representations of indigenous, multiracial, or Afro-Brazilian populations, “exotic” landscapes, and local customs (such as dances and folk festivals), for example. If we add to that the art criticism of the period and the vision of the *École de Paris* promoted by André Warnod, which claimed that the school included artists from around the world while expecting foreigners to contribute the “specificities” of their home countries, we begin to understand that there was a strong expectation of “otherness.” This often translated into a demand to perform a kind of exoticism, as Michele Greet (2018) has also analyzed.

Tarsila do Amaral was fully aware of this dynamic and stated it clearly in a letter to her parents, saying she “wanted to be the painter of her land” and that this tendency was well received in Paris,

where the city was “tired of Parisian art.” In her chronicles, she also recalled that in her studio she organized lunches with traditional Brazilian food, cachaça, and tobacco to immerse the French modernists in a Brazilian aura of “exoticism,” which they greatly enjoyed. This is a clear example of how artists responded positively to the call to perform otherness; it was valued in France, and it resonated well within the Brazilian art circuit. Anita Malfatti, who took a different path during her stay in France, did not receive as favorable a reception in France nor in Brazil.

Q: *Ana Paula, the presence of Brazilians and even Latin Americans in global artistic and intellectual networks remains limited, which contradicts contemporary views of a current world of art and science that is truly more democratic. Do you plan to continue your research on which Mulheres Modernistas is based, and if so, how?*

APCS: Currently, I am studying the presence of Latin American women artists in international rankings after completing research on Latin American artists in the *Centre National des Arts Plastiques* collection. This project has revealed something interesting: contrary to what the art world has disseminated, the exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989, Centre Pompidou) did not have a significant impact on the inclusion of Latin American artists in French collections. This is important because

the exhibition is seen as a turning point in global art history, in that it was to have promoted a greater inclusion of peripheral countries in the world of art. However, when I concretely studied the acquisitions, it became clear that they were much greater in the 1970s and 1980s due to the presence of many Latin Americans in France – expatriates due to the *coups d'état* that ravaged their countries – as well as the unique funding policy for the arts established by François Mitterrand. In the years following the famous exhibition acquisitions dropped significantly, and even during the apotheosis of acquisition and visibility of a “Latin American scene” in France gender inequalities were present.

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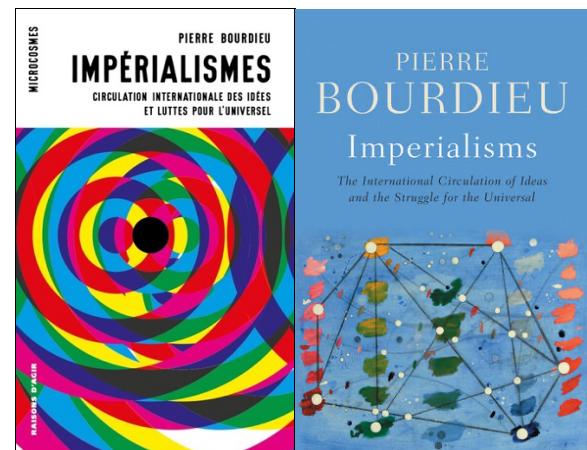
PIERRE BOURDIEU'S POSTHUMOUS VOLUME ON INTERNATIONAL PHENOMENA

Bourdieu, P. (2023) *Impérialismes. Circulation internationale des idées et luttes pour l'universel*, Paris: Raisons d'agir.

Julien Duval

Impérialismes is a posthumous volume by Pierre Bourdieu published in 2023. It brings together texts and speeches on the international phenomena, most of which are unpublished or difficult to access. Introducing the book, Franck Poupeau and Gisèle Sapiro point out that Bourdieu was always concerned with international phenomena and conducted his first research in Algeria in a colonial context. In the 1960s, Bourdieu began running a research center with a European scope that included comparative research. From 1965 onwards, as editor of series of books in different publishing houses and later journals, he began introducing a number of foreign re-

searchers in France. His reflection on the topic intensified in the 1990s, both in response to “globalization” and because he was traveling abroad more frequently, particularly in his efforts to launch transnational intellectual ventures. Most of the texts published in this volume date from this decade. The end of the book includes research carried out after the 1990s on international subjects inspired by Bourdieu.



The editors of the volume have distinguished four main themes: the first section, “Universalism and Domination,” brings together two texts by Bourdieu. The first analyzes the imperialism exercised by France and the United States in international exchanges, each of which is associated with forms of political universalism. The second deals with the way in which academic concepts related to the specificities of American society (multiculturalism, flexibility, globalization, underclass, race,

and identity...) became a “universal common sense” in the 1990s.

A second theme is the international circulation of works; Bourdieu draws attention to the “import-export” operations in intellectual life. He invites us to study the agents involved (states, publishers, translators, preface writers for foreign authors, etc.), the interests that drive them, and the transformations (liberating or destructive) that works undergo as they circulate. Translations are linked to the symbolic capital of the exporting country in the field in question as well as to the importing country’s interest in foreign literature. In a short text from 1985, Bourdieu discusses the dilemma of Belgian literature, which has attempted to establish itself within the borders of the Belgian state, but remains exposed to the domination of the French literary field.

The third section focuses on international comparatism. In one paper, Bourdieu states that his affiliation with French theory in the United States is an illustration of the *allodoxia* that can accompany the circulation of texts from one country to another. In a 1975 text, he posits that the presupposition in American comparative studies that all societies aspire to the “modernity” of American society is evolutionist and nationalist. In an article from 2000, Bourdieu calls for reflexive work on national “scholarly unconscious,” and in a related seminar explains the necessity and difficulties of

the comparative method; sociology must confront the existence of untranslatable words and realities specific to nations. He calls for exchanges between researchers from different countries with the shared goal of structural comparatism. When comparing countries, researchers must consider that each country is also comparing itself to others.

A final theme is the analysis of transnational fields. Bourdieu was interested in the Olympic Games, an international event disseminated via televised broadcasts with a nationalistic dimension that is shaped by the host country in question. He also looked at the development of multinational legal firms: such firms recruit cosmopolitan candidates, who experience social decline in their national field, but who advance a form of universality and contribute to the formation of the global legal field. In 2000, Bourdieu also analyzed “economic globalization” as a form of unification which, through political measures and the action of international institutions in the interest of a “global economic field,” works to the advantage of the United States.

Bringing these texts together has a powerful effect. The volume shows that the international dimension is for Bourdieu a major feature of the social world as it underscores a number of crucial research questions and perspectives. Throughout the texts, Bourdieu applies several of his main concepts to transna-

tional objects of study: field, capital, habitus, allodoxia... Nonetheless, this collection of texts remains a posthumous book. We will never know if Bourdieu would have collected his reflections on the international phenomena in a sole volume, nor how he would have done so. For this reason, we should perhaps approach this volume with the intention to benefit from the editing work that facilitates the reading of rather disparate texts, while also bearing in mind that this work involves choices (of the title, the final selection of Bourdieu's texts, and the perspectives adopted in the introductory and concluding texts) that potentially exclude other possibilities.

Forthcoming translations:

English

-Bourdieu, P. (2025) *Imperialisms. The International Circulation of Ideas and the Struggle for the Universal*. Cambridge: Polity. Translated by Collier, P.

Italian

-Bourdieu, P. (2025) *Imperialismi. Circolazione internazionale delle idee e lotte per l'universale*. Roma: Quodlibet. Translated by Boschetti, A.

Portuguese

-Bourdieu, P. (2026) *Imperialismos. Circulação internacional das ideias e luta pelo universal*. São Paulo: Edusp. Translated by Campos, N.

Croatian

-Bourdieu, P. (2026) *Imperijalizmi. Internacionalna cirkulacija ideja i borba za univerzalno*. Zagreb: Meandar. Translated by Sindičić Sabljo, M. and Vodanović, B.

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- Boschetti, A. (2024) *Benedetto Croce. Dominio simbolico et storia intellettuale* [Benedetto Croce. Symbolic Domination and Intellectual History]. Quodlibet: Roma.
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Editions/Translations of Pierre Bourdieu's Work

2024

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Events



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HEGEMONY AND FIELDS. WORKING WITH THE CONCEPTS OF GRAMSCI AND BOURDIEU

*Centre Émile Durkheim, Science Po
Bordeaux, January 16-17, 2025*

Matteo Puoti and Antoine Roger

The underlying epistemological project of the conference was to deploy concepts from Gramsci and Bourdieu in their own logic, that is by employing and mobilizing them. Hegemony and field are analytical and heuristic concepts, therefore if they are considered statically as falling points or sites of anchorage, they lose their *raison d'être*. They can only be appreciated as devices for ongoing work and must be constantly put to the test, just as their operational quality and openness as thinking tools must be upheld; this is a fundamental feature common to both, as well as the respective conceptual constellations in which they are embedded. Without these aspects they risk being compromised, as they are themselves the result of resemanticizations, clarifications, and reuses of categories already used by

others and contributed to by Gramsci and Bourdieu. The conference at hand was thus an opportunity for participants from a range of backgrounds and interests to develop and challenge these premises, thereby giving substance to these infrastructures.

Érik Neveu examined asymmetrical circulations, selective receptions, and mutual denials in British cultural studies (CS) in relation to Gramsci and Bourdieu. Neveu noted that the effective use of Gramsci within CS was often theoretical, and that, in empirical work, he was primarily an ideal reference for studying popular practices. He also pointed out that Bourdieu was largely neglected by CS, much like Bourdieu himself maintained a distinct position from what he considered a “bastard discipline,” as well as from the Marxist orthodoxy he ascribed to Gramsci.

Fabio Dei and Luigigiovanni Quarta provided a novel lens through which the Gramscian historicist approach and its conception of praxis – where the subject is a product-producer of relations and history – can enhance and expand the potential of the typical Bourdieusian analytical objectivation with respect to the relationship between social agents and their “making time,” which involves their localization in a social structure with its own temporality.

Maririta Guerbo examined the feasibility of discussing subaltern classes in Bourdieu's work, particularly in relation

to the concept of “object class,” and subsequently drawn parallels between Bourdieu's “revolutionary pessimism” and Gramsci's concept of the reunification of the proletariat and the sub-proletariat.

Marie Lucas illustrated connections among religious and institutional beliefs and mediations that both Gramsci and Bourdieu address, though with one crucial discontinuity: Gramsci's exploration of the mediating role of intellectuals and the “translatability” between political and religious language is not contemplated by Bourdieu. He only refers to them in terms of field, leading to their continued consideration as two distinct structural logics.

Célia Enache and Titouan Carrere explored the tension between scientific autonomy and political intervention in intellectual fields. From a unified Bourdieusian-Gramscian perspective, they discussed how the effectiveness of the inherent challenges to hegemonies depends on the ideological unification of disparate, and not necessarily connected domains.

Carmelo Lombardo and Gerardo Ienna outlined key points for constructing a framework for social research in scientific fields through the perspective of hegemony. This helps to evaluate scientific production as it is traversed by logics and struggles that are both autonomous and heteronomous; indeed, its social function and its capacity to

structure broader socio-political and productive domains are invariably associated with the influences it undergoes, along with its internal structural limits and those of a more general nature.

In considering studies on the evolution of far-right ideology, from a marginal to a relevant position in French society, Eric Darras revealed a dynamic of consent related to the construction of hegemonic interconnections between the political and journalistic fields that produces an integration of symbolic violence and the construction of political reality.

Paola Arrigoni presented a case study focusing on the most senior figures within one of the most prominent Italian banking foundations. The central heuristic key was the interstitiality between fields, applied in an analysis of elite levels, showing that the concept of hegemony can encompass them.

Gilles Pinson and Angelo Salento examined how Gramsci and Bourdieu, in their respective analyses, approached the phenomena of territorial and cultural marginality, spatial inequalities, and center-periphery relations.

Through their research on the privatization of the Italian steel industry, Edoardo Mollona and Luca Pareschi demonstrated that the conjunction of the concepts of hegemony and historical bloc elucidates processes of stabilization of a social system in the aftermath of a transformative period. Building upon

this, they established a correlation with the dynamics of acquisition of different forms of capital as contributions to the stabilization in different fields. This allows for an analysis of all the actors, including those who find themselves in an unfavorable position after the change.

Following an evaluation of the preceding discussions, Gisèle Sapiro concluded the conference by proposing a systematic effort to synthesize and compare the primary conceptual and epistemological principles underlying divergences between the organic intellectual and the collective intellectual. She then constructed a triangulation between symbolic violence, symbolic domination, and cultural hegemony.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSNATIONAL FIELDS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Workshop, CESSP, March 11, 2025

Vera Guseynova and Eunyoung Won

While transnational approaches of different fields of cultural production have been developed with increasing frequency over the last two decades, no comparison of these fields has yet been made. A recent workshop held at the Site Pouchet of the *Centre européen de sociologie et de science politique* (CESSP) in Paris on March 11 brought together specialists from diverse research areas and geographical spaces to discuss how to operate transnational approaches by addressing the theoretical and methodological questions and challenges encountered in existing and ongoing empirical investigations. Organized in a manner that reflects the CESSP's research axis "Production et diffusion des savoirs et biens culturels," this workshop consisted of four panels with each focusing on distinct mediums of expression, from visual arts and cinema to

literature and performing arts, and was followed by a final discussion.

Gisèle Sapiro began the workshop by highlighting the historical emergence of a transnational approach and juxtaposed this approach with comparativism among nation-states. Once the traditional way of transcending national borders, comparativism has been criticized due to its tendency towards methodological nationalism. Although national histories have neglected transnational exchanges and shared legacies, the national dimension cannot simply be abandoned, given that national fields developed along partly separate histories. Therefore, Gisèle Sapiro emphasized that a transnational approach must be combined with international comparison, considering the unequal power relations among national cultures and the circulation of goods, people, and models in each field. Another key point in Sapiro's introduction focused on the conditions of comparing fields of cultural production, which proved central to the workshop's debate. The workshop's first two panels, chaired by Antoine Vauchez, explored these issues through the lens of the visual arts and cinema.

Larissa Buchholz advanced key theoretical tools for analyzing the global contemporary art field, situating it within a set of relations that are invariably historically and geographically specific. She argued for shifting the focus from competitive relations between

national-level macro entities to the conditions that enable them, highlighting the key role played by proliferating transnational institutions in fostering global competition and contributing to the emergence of the transnational artistic field. Buchholz expanded upon the distinction between centrality at the level of artistic production and geographic centers and peripheries at the level of institutional mediation and concentration in the presentations that followed. In her study of the transnational exposure of “unofficial” Russian art during the Cold War, Vera Guseynova examined the heteronomous pole of artistic production resulting from external economic and political constraints, including the Soviet state-regulated patronage system, and the aesthetic impositions of the socialist realism canon. This research offered an illustration of how one might integrate historical and political transformations into the analysis of the progressive autonomization of a local artistic space. Anton Olive-Alvarez concluded the panel with his analysis on transnational dynamics in the careers of French street artists. Supported by numerous case studies, this research underscored artists’ subfield strategies, which are structured by access to symbolic and institutional positions between the national and the global art fields, at the different poles of this subfield: market-based, independent, commercial, and the autonomous pole.

The second panel focused on cinema and examined, in one respect, the issue of how to articulate the transnational field model with the study of the circulation of cultural goods and people, and in another respect, addressing the question of hierarchies and struggles within the field by combining a transnational approach to the field with other theoretical frameworks. Addressing the former, Julien Duval drew on his study on the statistical construction of a transnational film space and his exploratory work on the mobility of actors to investigate how this theoretical model of transnational space could account for observable phenomena, such as the circulation of professionals. In turn, Jérôme Pacouret demonstrated how both his framework combining field theory with the center-periphery model and Abbott’s theory of professions shed light on authorship battles and professional hierarchies in the transnational field, and compared American, French, and several peripheral film spaces. Also combining the articulation of the transnational field model with circulation studies, Eunyoung Won suggested that approaching international film festivals as a subfield of the transnational film field will help to understand the circulation of films occupying peripheral positions in the global market, such as South Korean cinema during the 2000s.

The afternoon panels chaired by Alireza Ghafouri focused on literature and the

performing arts. Gisèle Sapiro provided a point of departure by outlining the key elements that help to grasp the specificity of the transnational literary field, its structural logic, and how it functions. Following her analysis of isomorphic elements in the literary field within global cultural production, Sapiro focused on the agents of (inter)mediation and the global consecrating authorities that contribute to authors' transnational recognition. Concealing the social conditions of access to transnational recognition, these authorities tended to render invisible existing inequalities in the transnational literary field. However, since 1990, a progressive feminization and an ethnic, linguistic and geographic diversification can be observed in the recognition from these authorities. Álvaro Santana-Acuña then examined how the characteristics of the circulation of literature derived from its mode of expression and production, followed by his illustration of diverse kinds of transnational literary circulation through a case study of the exhibition of literary works, objects, and related artifacts in museums situated in different locations of the Latin America. Finally, in his presentation on circulations and adaptations within international linguistic areas Tristan Leperlier highlighted the importance of language and nationalization in the comprehension of a transnational literary field when compared to other cultural forms. He argued that such linguistic transnational literary

fields are structured by the opposition between national and international poles; however, within monolingual literary spaces, the relationships between local spaces are shaped by a tension between unification and independence.

The final panel tackled the question of how one might construct a transnational field in the performing arts, such as music and theater. Quentin Fondu investigated the cross-border circulation of performance models, with the internationalization of theatre as a primary example. He examined the role of transnational institutions, such as the International Theatre Institute (ITI), which was established as part of UNESCO's cultural policies in 1948. ITI played a pivotal role in broadening the global presence of theatre by promoting the exchange of artists and performances, most notably through figures like Bertolt Brecht. This movement, in turn, contributed to the transformation and standardization of national theatre practices, and particularly in France. Reflecting on the specificities of music as a medium, Myrtille Picaud examined the key issues and difficulties in constructing a transnational music field given the diversity of music genres, their differing forms of cultural legitimation, the heterogeneity of markets, the characteristics of music's circulation, and the degree of its nationalization.

During the final discussion, after exchanges among the participants and

feedback from the audience further directions for exploring the transnational approach were suggested. These can be summarized by the following topics: the comparison of the structure of these transnational fields in terms of their specific authorities and their distinct history; a comparison of fields that considers gender and ethnicity inclusivity; the interest of cultural authorities in the combination of artistic genres. This workshop is expected to continue in a new format, which will provide an opportunity for further exchange to broaden the topics discussed.

Research Groups



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PRACTICAL SENSE AND THE BOURDIEU SPACE ARGENTINA

Fernanda Beigel, Denis Baranger and
Alicia Gutiérrez

On November 11, 2024, the *Practical Sense* Newsletter was presented as a special event organized by the [Research Center for the Circulation of Knowledge](#) (CECIC) within the Workshop “Convergences between Bibliometrics and Prosopography: coverage studies, knowledge circulation, and academic asymmetries.” The webinar featured the participation of Johan Heilbron, Julien Larregue, Matthias Fringant, Carolina Pulici, Jéssica Ronconi, Alicia B. Gutiérrez, and Fernanda Beigel. This event also served as the opportunity to present the new [Bourdieu Space: Argentina](#) (EBA being its Spanish acronym), a recently created network to disseminate and engage in dialogue with Bourdieusian scientific research in the country.

In Argentina, the intellectual field has always been keenly aware of European developments, and particularly those from France: first, with the reception of the works of Sartre and Lévi-Strauss,

followed by Althusser, Barthes, Lacan, Foucault, and Bourdieu. In fact, it was in Buenos Aires that *El oficio del sociólogo* was translated into Spanish for the first time in the world in 1976. Nearly a decade earlier, in 1967 Spanish translations of the famous issue of *Les Temps Modernes* containing Bourdieu’s article “Literary Field and Creative Project” (from Mexico’s publisher Siglo XXI) and of *Los estudiantes y la cultura* (from Spain’s publisher Labor) circulated in Argentina.

This dynamic reception was stunted in 1976 when a military dictatorship dismantled the social science departments in public universities and Sociology programs were closed throughout the country. Thousands of researchers and professors were imprisoned, or even disappeared, and the Argentinian intellectual field withered to its seeming death. It was not until the advent of democracy in the country and the reinstatement of the social sciences, beginning in 1983, that a national tradition of scientific research nourished by Bourdieu’s ideas began to unfold throughout Argentina. As in many other countries, Bourdieu has become the most cited author in both sociology and anthropology. It was only natural, then, for a group of researchers united by a common interest in putting Bourdieu’s categories and concepts to productive use to create a shared network; not as a site of reverence, but rather as a sort of laboratory that does not exclude the

incorporation of ideas from other traditions.

With the creation of the Bourdieu Space in Argentina, whose very name indicates a limited degree of institutionalization, we aim to create an instrument capable of achieving a broader circulation of all information and developments related to work that draws from the Bourdieusian tradition – considered in its broadest sense – both in Argentina, and elsewhere. While a very rich set of research projects have been developed outside of Buenos Aires, the capital city has always distributed its symbolic and material resources in a manner that confers more visibility to those working in the metropolitan area. Accordingly, one of the Bourdieu Space's main objectives is to integrate researchers that reside in the provinces, and in so doing avoid the predominating centralism in the Argentinian intellectual field. It is still possible to join the network, and thus far the [EBA has 30 members](#) from 10 different universities in the country.

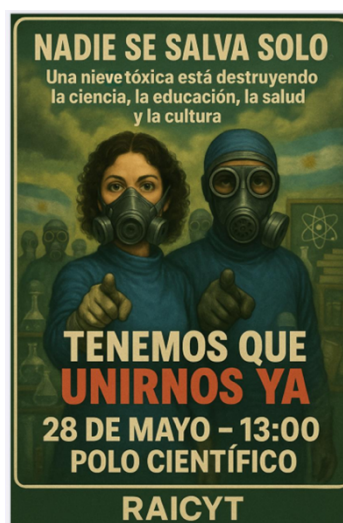
It is interesting to question why this initiative did not emerge earlier in a country where Bourdieu has been so widely read and cited. Moreover, that the Bourdieu Space came to fruition during a particularly critical moment for the scientific field and public universities in Argentina controlled by a self-proclaimed “anarcho-capitalist” government that is implementing fast social changes that will increase inequality and

is drastically defunding scientific research is significant. Perhaps, it is simply because we must stand together to resist this new, ultraconservative doxa coming from a government that is openly anti-rights and anti-science conducting what has been called a “scienticide.” And to remind ourselves that sociology, too, has its fair share of ammunition for combat.



Among the different actions and campaigns, on May 28, the researchers manifested in the streets with gas-masks, invoking a recent NETFLIX series produced in Argentina called the “Eternauta.” This emblematic comic strip, written by Héctor Germán Oesterheld and drawn by Francisco Solano López was published between 1957-1959. It tells the fictional story of a deadly snowfall that kills all the people in the streets and a few survivors must fight against an

alien invasion. While struggling against the cruelty of the monsters that attack the humans, the main character – Juan Salvo – says “nobody is saved alone.” Struggling against the governmental attack over science, Argentina’s research community keeps working and resisting.



THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTIVE WORK STRATEGIES: THE LTIT GROUP

Anna Boschetti

The transnational research carried out by the LTit group (Literature Translated in Italy) clearly illustrates the importance of “collective work management strategies,” which Pierre Bourdieu saw as a necessary condition for autonomy (2005). LTit was founded between 2012 and 2013 by Michele Sisto, Anna Baldini, and Irène Fantappiè thanks to ministerial funding secured for their collective project on the role of translations in national literary history. Pierre Bourdieu’s theoretical framework serves as a fundamental reference for Baldini and Sisto, who have participated in ESSE conferences and maintain scholarly exchanges with Gisèle Sapiro, Christophe Charle, and other researchers working from a transnational perspective. Initially focused on German translations in the first half of the twentieth century, their project expanded in 2018 to include translations from other foreign literatures (notably Irish, Scandinavian, Czech, and Russian) with the aim of cons-

tructing a transnational history of Italian literature.

This collective project explores three main avenues: the history of the Italian literary field, the history of publishing, and the impact of translations on texts from Italian authors. Additionally, it examines the relationships between literature and other relevant fields – political, academic, artistic, cinematic, and journalistic – and pays particular attention to the main gate keepers.

Over time, the group has recruited new members who contribute to enriching the LTit digital database, launched in 2018. This online research platform catalogues translations published in book form throughout the twentieth century, establishes connections among original works, translations, and different editions of a text, and simultaneously provides information on cultural mediators.

In Italy, there is no established tradition of translation studies, and the group’s approach challenges the disciplinary divisions in which the Italian university system is entrenched. Since the end of public funding in 2018, members have relied solely on research funds tied to their university positions. Due to these disciplinary barriers, early-career researchers joining the team face significant difficulties in advancing within the academic system.

The founders of LTit have organized numerous conferences and seminars,

strengthening the group's position within the academic and editorial space. Their book series *Letteratura tradotta in Italia*, launched in 2018 with the publisher Quodlibet, has already produced fourteen volumes, offering a reinterpretation of Italian literary history.

The group also contributed to the establishment of the CeST (Centre for Translation Studies) in Siena in 2021, directed by Giulia Marcucci, who since 2024 coordinates a PhD program in Translation Studies at the Università per Stranieri di Siena. In 2022, LTit participated in the launch of the History and Translation Network (HTN), and in the foundation of the transdisciplinary journal *ri.tra: rivista di traduzione* (Translation Journal) in 2023, which will soon be supplemented by the Quaderni di *ri.tra* series.

In 2024, Michele Sisto published the programmatic text *World Literature(s). Traduzioni e storia letteraria nazionale*, arguing that there is no singular world literature, but rather many world literatures that each retranslate the contributions of other literatures according to the specific possibilities characterizing the host space.

The group has succeeded in establishing a new, collective position, now serving as a key reference for scholars in Italy who adopt a Bourdieusian approach within a transnational framework.

Further readings

-LTit – Letteratura tradotta in Italia. Testi, contesti, protagonisti, web database : www.ltit.it

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