

# PRACTICAL SENSE

NEWSLETTER OF THE PIERRE BOURDIEU FOUNDATION

## HALF A CENTURY OF ACTES



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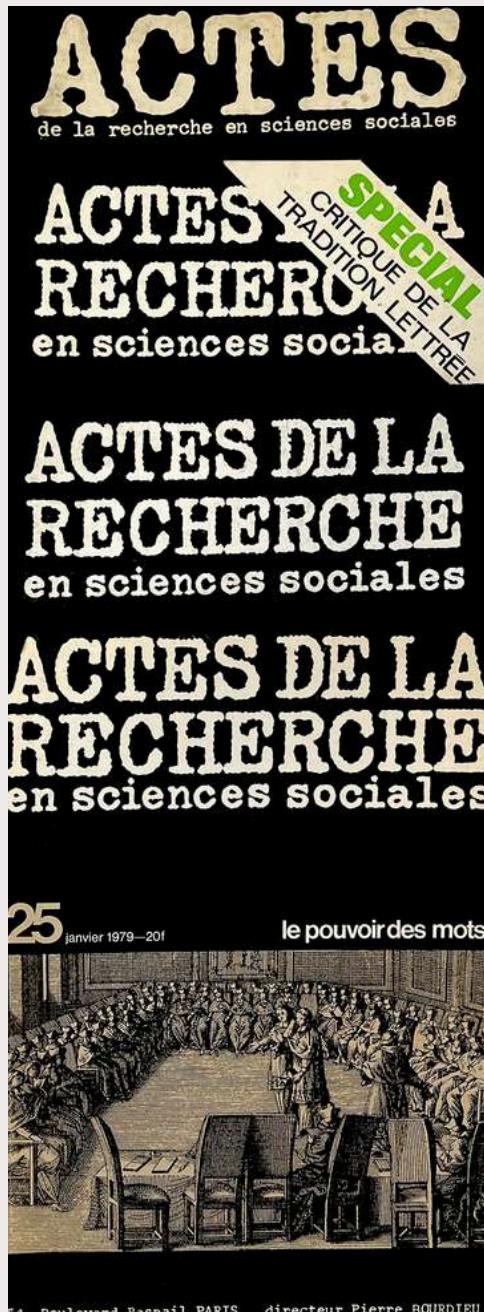
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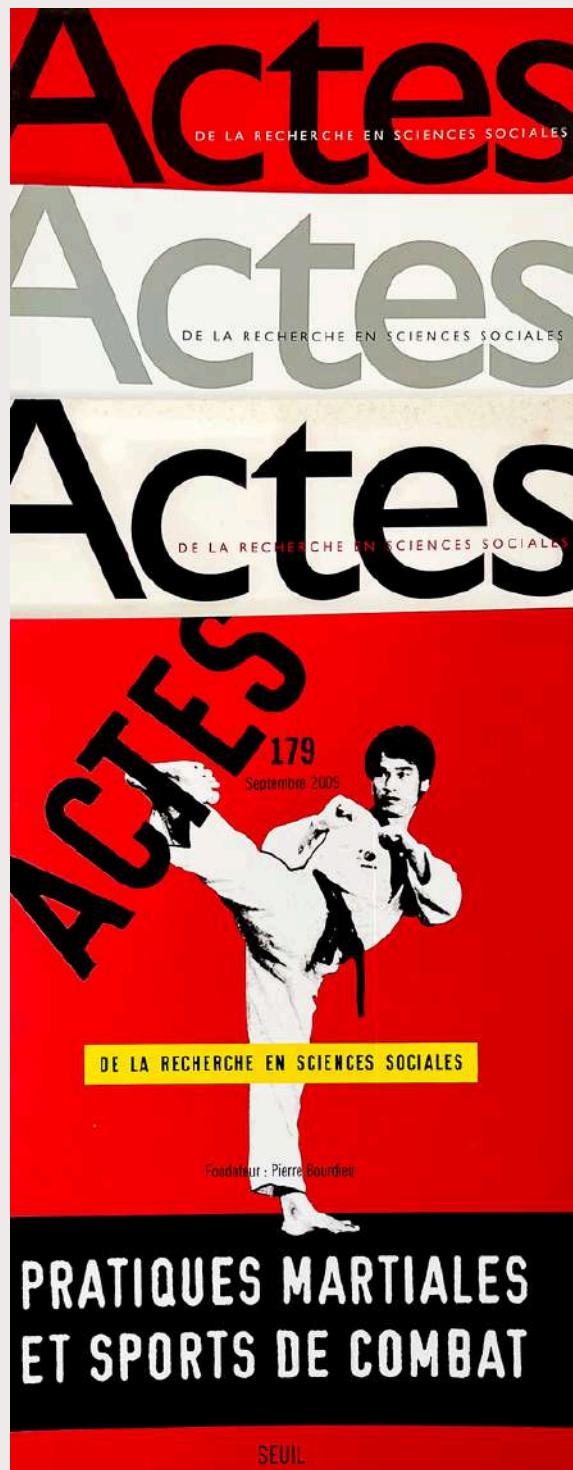
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## EDITORIAL

The third issue of *Practical Sense* arrives on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*.

Non-Francophone readers now have access, by way of translation, to a large number of Pierre Bourdieu's books. This number varies, of course, depending on the language. At the same time, certain aspects of Bourdieu's scholarly work remain invisible and inaccessible even to Francophone readers. This applies particularly to the important work he executed as the director of the journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*.

This journal is published in Paris, where it was founded in 1975 by Bourdieu and a team of researchers he assembled. He led the journal until his passing in 2002, for over 25 years. Issues of the journal can be consulted in any country in the world, on the websites [persee.fr](http://persee.fr) and [cairn.info](http://cairn.info).

Published in French, the journal retains a strong international dimension. In certain periods, more than half of its articles were written by researchers working outside of France: in North America or in Western Europe, but also in countries like Brazil, Hungary, and Algeria, with whom Bourdieu and researchers at his center had established close bonds. There also came, as the result of varied and incidental collaborations, articles from a number of other countries: Norway, Sweden, Greece, Israel, Argentina, Japan, South Korea... At the same time, the journal had a Francophone readership that spanned the globe.

Bourdieu's work always had a collective dimension. Starting in 1975, *Actes de la recherche* became the subject of significant investment from the collective surrounding him. The journal aspired to be the expression of an international network of researchers, with shared principles on what the social sciences should be. Bourdieu himself regularly published his latest work in *Actes de la recherche*. And, though not reducible to it, the journal was also an extension of his work. It published all sorts of research that was, though inspired by his work in many ways, also a means to develop Bourdieu's tools and apply them to fields and social universes he couldn't address, due to a lack of time and specific expertise.

*Actes de la recherche* also deserves to be well known because it was so unique. It's difficult to find a true equivalent elsewhere, in other countries. The journal became famous in France because of its ubiquitous usage of images, unprecedented in social science journals. More generally, it tried to invent new ways to present research: interviews and annotated documents, programmatic notes, publishing work in progress, interviews with researchers on current affairs, more classic scientific articles... The journal tried to liberate itself from the constraints that researchers habitually impose on themselves in scientific journals. Another defining feature: while still committed to a high level of scientific rigor, the journal

also wanted to reach a readership outside the university who were nonetheless interested in social sciences. In publishing issues often focused on a single theme, it innovated new forms of collaborative work. Also inventive was the way it approached the imperative to construct an object of study through the melding of complementary approaches — taking into account their disciplinary origins (sociology, history, anthropology, linguistics...), the methods used, and even the countries studied.

The objective of this issue is to make this original undertaking led by Bourdieu, which doesn't yet enjoy the recognition it merits outside the French academy, better known. A thematic dossier contains the introduction to the first issue of *Actes de la recherche*, a presentation of the journal by Loïc Wacquant, an article on its use of images by Franz Schultheis, Charlotte Hüser, and Lilli Kim Schreiber, two international perspectives from Yves Gingras and Gustavo Sorá, as well as a review of the journal's latest issue by Annick Prieur.

This issue also contains regular sections. In “Recent Books,” Anna Boschetti reviews Christophe Charle’s book, *L’Europe des intellectuels*. The “Events” section reports back on three recent events held in Toulouse, Vienna and Stockholm.

In preparation for a forthcoming issue of *Practical Sense* focused on the theme of reflexivity, this issue includes a call for proposals. We welcome short articles, interviews, notes, and reading suggestions related to this theme.

*The editorial team*

# SPECIAL EDITION: HALF A CENTURY OF ACTES



## PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF *ACTES*

*This text was first published in: (1975) "Présentation", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 1, pp. 2-3.*

Here you will find, side by side, texts that differ greatly in style and function: "finished" texts, of course, as they are called in academic journals, but also brief notes, reports of oral presentations, working texts such as drafts and interim research reports – where the theoretical intentions, empirical verification procedures, and data on which the analysis is based are more clearly visible. The desire to provide access to the workshop itself, which knows no rules other than those of method, and to deliver the archives of a work in progress, implies abandoning the most obviously ritualistic formalisms: right-aligned typography, rhetoric of coherent discourse, articles and issues of uniform length, and, more generally, everything that leads to the standardization and "normalization" of research products. Recognizing no other imperatives than those imposed by the rigor of the demonstration and, secondarily, the search

for its readability, means freeing oneself from the censorship, artifices, and distortions engendered by the concern to conform to the conventions and good manners of the academic field. That rhetoric of caution or false precision, the apparatus and pomp of celebratory discourse that is nothing more than self-celebration, is an ostentatious waste of signs of belonging to the most selective and elite groups in the intellectual universe.

By renouncing formality and sometimes even form itself, we also make it possible to seek a mode of expression that is truly suited to the requirements of a science. Taking social forms and formalisms as its object, this science must reproduce in how it presents its results the very process of desacralization that made it possible to achieve them. Here we encounter what undoubtedly makes social science unique: its achievements, won against the social mechanisms of concealment, must escape, at least partially, the laws that govern the circulation of all discourse through the social world if they are to inform individual or collective practice. In this case, transmission means providing, whenever possible, the means to reproduce, practically and non-verbally, the operations that made it possible to uncover the truth of practices. Since it must provide instruments of perception and facts that can only be apprehended by means of these instruments, social science must not

only tell but also show, presenting records of daily life, photographs, transcripts of speeches, facsimiles of documents, statistics, etc., and then reveal, sometimes through a simple graphic effect, what lies hidden within them. We only truly gain access to knowledge of objects imbued with sacred values if we surrender the weapons of sacrilege: unless we believe in the intrinsic power of true ideas, we cannot break the spell of belief except by opposing symbolic violence with symbolic violence. And, when necessary, we must put the weapons of polemic in the service of truths conquered by the polemic of scientific reason.

The discourse of science can only seem disenchanting to those who have an enchanted view of the social world. It is as far removed from utopianism – which mistakes its desires for reality – as it is from sociologism – which revels in the killjoy evocation of fetishized laws. Social science is content to destroy the pretences and evasions forged by an overly reverent vision of man, over which organized religions do not have a monopoly.

## A SOCIOLOGICAL WORKSHOP IN ACTION

*This text was first published in: Kritzman, L. D. (ed.) (2000) The Columbia History of Twentieth-Century French Thought. New York: Columbia University Press.*

Loïc Wacquant

Launched in 1975 with the blessing and support of Fernand Braudel, the director of the *Maison des sciences de l'homme* where it remained based for some twenty years, the journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (hereafter ARSS) has established itself as one of the world's premier social science publications, yet one that remains highly singular for its format, tone, and mission. It has fueled the development of a distinctive sociological perspective, inspired by the scientific and civic vision of Pierre Bourdieu, that both extends and breaks with the long lineage of the French school of sociology. It has fostered the internationalization of social science in a Parisian milieu whose predilection for intellectual autarky is beyond dispute. And it has sought to

bring the most advanced products of social research to impinge on collective consciousness and public discussion in France and beyond.

ARSS bears the unmistakable mark of its founder and editor-in-chief, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose indefatigable stewardship has propelled the journal across three decades and whose prodigious scientific output has profoundly shaped its contents. But it is the result of the joint activity of a wide network of scholars anchored by the *Centre de sociologie européenne* of the *Collège de France* and its foreign associates and affiliates, as testified by the diverse origins, styles, and theoretical inclinations of its contributors.

Unlike *Esprit* or *Les Temps modernes*, ARSS is a *scientific* rather than an intellectual journal, so that methodological validity and empirical adequacy retain priority over literary elegance and political rectitude. In contrast with *L'homme* or *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*, however, it is both doggedly transdisciplinary and attuned to current sociopolitical issues: the mouthpiece of an activist science of society whose audience is primarily but not exclusively composed of academics. Yet, contrary to *Le débat*, its ambition is not to echo but to question intellectual and political fashion, based on the notion that a self-critical social science can and must function as a “public service” by relentlessly challenging accepted ideas

and established ways of thinking. Indeed, much as the *Année sociologique* served as focal point of the scholarly exchanges and vehicle for the sublimated republicanism of the Durkheimian school earlier in the century, ARSS was designed as springboard for a transdisciplinary sociology marrying scientific rigor, methodological reflexivity, and socio-political pertinence.

The longish and rather awkward title says it: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* aims at exposing both sociological objects and the “research acts” necessary to bring them to light or, better, to *construct* them as such. For the implicit epistemological charter of the journal (rooted in the philosophy of the concept of Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem) stipulates that social facts are not given ready-made in reality: they must be conquered against ordinary perceptions and scholarly common sense. Bucking the normalization of social science reporting, which tends to hide the “dirty work” carried out in the sociological kitchen, ARSS “must not only demonstrate but also display.” For the distinctive goal of this sociological laboratory-in-action is precisely “to unmask the social forms and formalisms” in which reality cloaks itself (untitled editorial introduction to the inaugural issue). Thus its infatuation with “transversal” themes, cut out in counter-intuitive ways that overturn accepted conceptions and typically elevate “lowly”

objects while lowering “lofty” ones (it is not by happenstance that the very first article of the first issue dealt with “The Scientific Method and the Social Hierarchy of Objects”).

To achieve rigor and relevance without subservience to doctrinal precepts and to make sociology come alive to its readers, ARSS has multiplied formal experimentations and stylistic innovations. First it publishes not only standard scholarly articles but also shorter reviews, polemical pieces, reading notes, telling documents, and closely edited, self-reflexive, field or experiential accounts (see, e.g., Yvette Delsaut’s “Notebooks for a Socioanalysis” and Philippe Bourgois’s “A Night in a Shooting Gallery,” in the February 1986 and September 1992 issues). Second, the archetypal *Actes* article weaves text with photographs, fac-similes of exhibits, and excerpts of interviews or raw observational data in boxes and sidebars running alongside the text. It also plays with different fonts and types, and mixes direct and indirect styles, all in an effort to wed analytical precision with experiential acuity.

The journal has actively sought to *denationalize social research* by opening a wide window onto foreign scholarship, connecting developments in gallic sociocultural inquiry to trends and breakthroughs abroad and vice-versa. Next to *Annales*, it is the most internationally-oriented social science pe-

riodical based in Paris. Indeed, the list of non-French authors published in ARSS reads like a veritable “Who’s Who” of world social science: Michael Baxandall and Howard Becker, Michael Burawoy and Aaron Cicourel, Nils Christie and Robert Darnton, Norbert Elias and Carlo Ginsburg, Johan Goudsblom and Eric Hobsbawm, Jürgen Kocka and William Labov, Wolf Lepenies and Eleanor Maccoby, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Gershom Sholem, Joan Scott and Carl Schorske, Amartya Sen and Theda Skocpol, Ivan Szelenyi and Jeno Szücs, Raymond Williams, Paul Willis, and Viviana Zelizer. Many renowned French authors also saw print in the journal before they had earned international acclaim, from Maurice Agulhon and Jacques Bouveresse to Robert Linhart and Bruno Latour. Yet through the years ARSS has pursued a concerted policy of scouting and broadcasting the work of younger scholars, in tandem with little-known texts by classic authors (E.C. Hughes, Mauss, Goffman, Weber and Wittgenstein). Alongside with foreigners and younger researchers, ARSS has also published more women than most if not all social science journals of comparable stature and reach.

While ceding nothing to political fads and newsy items, the journal strives to keep a pulse on society and to *contribute to ongoing sociopolitical debates* from a rigorous scientific standpoint. It thereby pursues the civic mission of social

science: to strive for autonomy, yet to reinject the knowledge made possible by such autonomy into the public sphere (Bourdieu, 1989). For example, in the fall of 1980, as Soviet tanks were rolling towards Kabul, ARSS featured an issue entitled: “And What About Afghanistan?” In 1988, on the eve of the presidential face-off between Mitterrand and Chirac, a series of articles by leading politologists, sociologists, and legal scholars took to “Rethinking the political.” In the early nineties, new forms of social inequality and marginality surged which eluded traditional instruments of collective voice. In response, ARSS published a series of biographically-based studies depicting the social roots and implications of such “social suffering” (these studies were later expanded into the best-selling, thousand-page, socioanalysis of contemporary France entitled *La Misère du monde*, (Bourdieu (ed.), 1993)). Coming on the heels of the massive December 1995 street demonstrations against social insecurity, the November 1996 issue on “New Forms of Domination at Work” featured an organizational analysis of overwork in the trucking industry just when truck drivers were paralyzing the country with roadblocks. In 1997, as the debate around “globalization” and its ills mounted, the journal gathered a set of in-depth, international, inquiries into “Economists and the Economy.”

Under another angle, ARSS may be characterized by its privileged objects and recurrent themes. Chief among them is the *economy of cultural goods*. Literature and popular imagery, painting and publishing, music and museums, fashion and taste, religion and schooling, myth and science (as well as their intersection, scientific myths, beliefs, and rites): the production, circulation, and consumption of these goods obey peculiar laws that are best uncovered via comparative and analogical analysis in a variety of settings. A second favorite subject-matter is the logic of *social classification and the fabrication of social collectives*. Studies in the making (or unmaking) of class, gender, ethnicity, age, region, nation, and empire converge to show that alternate principles of social vision and division constitute tools and stakes in the symbolic struggles whereby social reality is at once endowed with facticity and revealed as a brittle edifice. This concern for deconstructing ready-made social entities extends to such familiar “containers” of social life as the family, the firm, the party, and the state. The correlative concern to document the social necessity at work behind extreme social realities encompasses such seemingly exotic institutions as folk singing, soccer, concentration camps, and the ghetto.

A third thematic node centers on social strategies of *domination, distinction, and reproduction*: among them figure studies

of households, schooling and consumption, work and labor, the bases and effects of public policy, the intersection of economy and morality, and the role of politics and the law. Last but not least, ARSS has continually scrutinized *intellectual practices, predicaments, and powers*. Such thematic issues as “The Categories of Professorial Understanding,” “Science and Current Affairs,” “Research on Research,” “The Social History of the Social Sciences,” and “The Cunning of Imperialist Reason” (September 1975, February 1986, September 1988, June and September 1995, and February 1998) attest to the need to put scholars under their own microscope in order to uncover – and hopefully better control – the social determinants of social thought. Among classic articles on the sociology of intellectuals, one may single out Pierre Bourdieu’s “Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger,” Michael Pollak’s “Paul Lazarsfeld, Founder of a Scientific Multinational,” Roland Lardinois’s “Louis Dumont and Native Science,” Gisèle Sapiro’s dissection of François Mauriac’s literary trajectory, and Louis Pinto’s incisive pieces on the “parodic intellectuals” of *Tel Quel* and related Parisian coteries (November 1975, February 1979, June 1995, February 1996).

All told, the driving impulse behind the varied investigations published in ARSS is to denaturalize social categories, facts, and institutions, while providing the means to recapitulate and assess the

different steps of the demonstration at hand. This formula has proven appealing: with a regular readership approaching ten thousand, ARSS enjoys a broad public extending well beyond academia (there are only about a thousand sociologists in France). The latter includes not only researchers but schoolteachers and university students, social workers and activists, cultural intermediaries as well as other educated strata interested in social inquiry and questions (several issues have sold upwards of 20,000 copies). With “sister journals” in Sweden, Japan, and Brazil that reprint key articles in translation, its international audience reaches far outside of the French-speaking ambit. Since 1989, ARSS has been flanked by a supplement, *Liber: revue internationale des livres*, published simultaneously in nine European countries and languages, whose aim is to further circumvent national strictures and accelerate the continental circulation of innovative and engaged works in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

*Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* remains a largely artisanal operation, with a small staff and limited institutional support, quite disproportionate with its national impact and international following. Success inevitably tends to dilute the original formula that yielded it; as the pool of both authors and readers expands, the distinctive scientific and civic spirit of the journal becomes harder to sustain. ARSS can be expected to

evolve in response to shifting intellectual currents and constraints while remaining true to its initial vocation: to promote rigorous, transdisciplinary, social science from around the globe that fuses research and theory while remaining alert to the political and ethical implications of social inquiry. In so doing, it renews the scientific militancy and internationalism of the French school of sociology. And, as with Durkheim and the *Année sociologique*, its biggest challenge will be to survive the eventual passing of the scholarly generation that created and nurtured it. Reading *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* in years to come thus promises to offer an intriguing experiment in the routinization of intellectual charisma.

## References and further readings

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# VISUALIZING THE CONCEPTUAL, CONCEPTUALIZING THE VISUAL

*A Journal in the Service of Collective Sociological Practice*

Franz Schultheis, Charlotte Hüser and  
Lilli Kim Schreiber

## A Blind Spot in Transnational Reception

To this day, the modern social sciences remain constrained by the boundaries of their national affiliation and the historical structures of their respective emergences, although they incessantly emphasize the universal validity of their theoretical and methodological perspectives. As Pierre Bourdieu repeatedly pointed out, they are contemporary without really being so. It often takes decades for works or institutions that are of crucial importance to some to be noticed by others. Texts circulate constantly in the context of international exchange, often detached from their original context, and their reception isolates them from their original frame of reference.

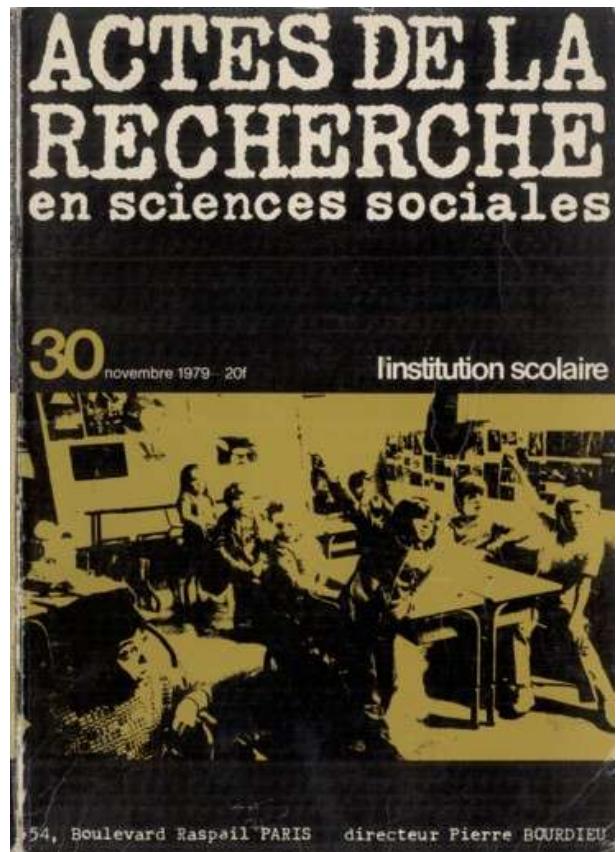


Figure 1: Cover of an ARSS issue entitled "The institution of the school". A journal beyond all academic conventions in terms of production form, format, layout, visuality, style, theoretical coherence, methodological stringency and empirical diversity.

The reception of Bourdieu outside France is a vivid example of this: although he is known worldwide as an outstanding author, the collective aspect of his work is often overlooked. This is particularly true of the journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (ARSS). Franz Schultheis' team, located at *Zeppelin University* in Friedrichshafen, Germany, recently published an article about ARSS in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) – one of Germany's largest national daily newspapers with around 850,000 readers. The article entitled "Die Wörter und die Bilder" ("The Words and the

Images") drew on ongoing collective research. It introduced Bourdieu's unconventional publication project, shed light on both visual sociology but also the special features of the journal and its extraordinary team of authors, and aimed to bring the German audience closer to a medium that is so far hardly known east of the Rhine. A look at the journal *ARSS*, founded by Bourdieu exactly 50 years ago, in 1975, demonstrates its significance for science communication and its influence on Bourdieusian research on the way to a trans-European sociological paradigm. This text is an updated version of the *FAZ* article.

### **The Collective Intellectual: A Concrete Utopia Becomes Practice**

From the very beginning, Bourdieu and his research team shaped the journal's unmistakable profile. In particular, the dialogue between text and image became influential – a connection that already played a central role in Bourdieu's early research in and on Algeria – which continued in *ARSS*. However, this particular practice of science communication, which began in 1975 with a kind of "undisciplined research," remained anchored to Bourdieu's strong authority – more in the sense of a Warholian "*Factory*" than a truly democratic research workshop.

This shows the necessary distinction between the "collective intellectual" – a theoretical counterpart to the "total intellectual" à la Sartre or Heidegger – and what could be described as the "Bourdieu collective," i.e. the concrete team of researchers who played a decisive role in the emergence of *ARSS*. Bourdieu's practice in this collective made the figure of the collective intellectual conceivable in the first place, even if it often remains invisible in the reception of his writings. Although he always worked closely with others, his work was usually reduced to the signature of a singular intellectual – especially in Germany, where, as Bourdieu himself pointed out, his texts are often read detached from the context in which they were written.

The Bourdieu collective, which is now considered emblematic of *ARSS*, is particularly evident in the style and composition of the individual issues. Not only were unusual topics such as fashion (*ARSS* Vol. 1, n° 1, 1975), holidays in the peasant environment (*ARSS* Vol. 1, n° 2, 1975), class-specific practices of marriage (*ARSS* Vol. 2, n° 4, 1976), or physical practices in Bali (*ARSS* Vol. 14, 1977) published. Equally decisive was the working method of the journal itself: instead of anonymous peer review and classic editorial structures, *ARSS* relied on a close exchange between an editorial staff and authors who understood science as a thoroughly collective process.

Texts were not only edited but often developed together as part of ongoing research projects.

To counteract the ritual formalism of academic journals, which typically standardize research findings, *ARSS* relied on visual overload and the manual assemblage of newspaper clippings, underlining, and encirclements. This compositional principle shaped the early editions in particular, which were still elaborately handcrafted with scissors and glue.

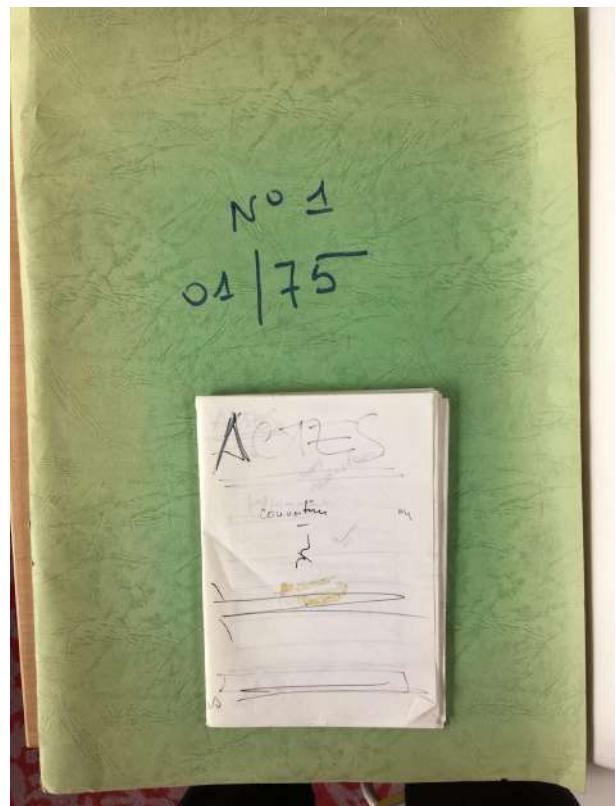


Figure 2: Photographs and other visual documents create a dense representation of research practice and make the working process comprehensible. (ARSS Vol. 1, n°5-6, 1975, p. 28)

This production method required a collective that put together the individual booklets and took countless hours of work – an effort that seems dizzying

today. The dense interweaving of image and text aimed to awaken critical reflexivity and participatory research by combining the visual with the conceptual. Through this material visuality, sociology itself could be experienced as a “material practice.” In the early years, photo editing was therefore a central part of this approach and itself emerged from collective work.

In addition, there was no editorial committee or scientific advisory board until the mid-1980s. The numerous authors who have contributed to *ARSS* over the years have been deliberately listed without academic titles or institutional affiliation. Bourdieu himself supervised all 140 issues – no contribution was published without his explicit approval.



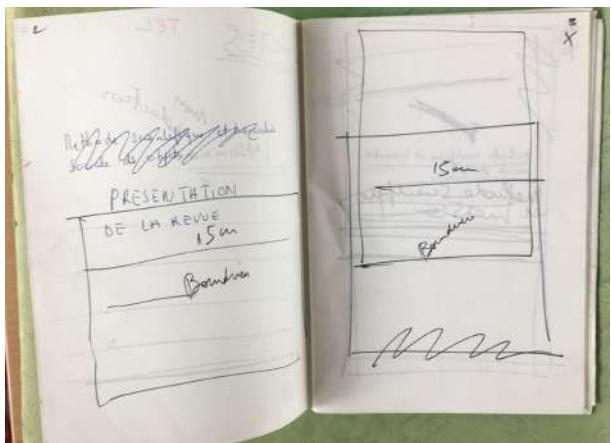


Figure 3: In the early years, Bourdieu took over the setting of the revue himself. For each individual issue, he drafted a detailed plan in which he determined the composition of text and image.

### Conceptualizing the Visual, Visualizing the Conceptual

In its graphic and visual design, *ARSS* also broke with the academic conventions of contemporary journals, which pursued a conservative state of the art and, on top of that, largely presented only textual elements.

The print templates of text and images were composed anew for each issue to form a coherent whole. This creative process conveyed sociological ideas visually, and was more than a purely aesthetic packaging or a technical necessity. Jean-Pierre Jauneau, who worked as *ARSS*'s typesetter for many years, described how the journal's character was also reflected in the typographic design of the titles, creating a visual syntax.

A central focus was on the visual elements: in addition to classic graphics

and documentary photographs, there were also press photos, text excerpts from magazines, interview excerpts, handwritten sketches, illustrations, comics, personal drawings, caricatures, maps of cities and countries as well as ornamental graphics, emblems and copies from non-scientific magazines such as fashion magazines.

These were used partly for purely aesthetic reasons, partly in close connection with the text to support the argumentation. Particularly revealing is the question of the extent to which individual elements were aesthetically motivated, appear to be justified in terms of content, and to what extent they are largely independent of the narrative text as a textual element in the so-called *encadrés* – framed insertions that function as so-called paratexts (Genette, 1992) – and are intended to specifically encourage readers to think or conduct their own research.

The typical *encadrés* often emphasize central arguments and are reminiscent of infoboxes in newspapers. This innovative approach to visual and textual elements illustrates sociology as a constructivist and experimental practice. The layout was understood as a “composition” in which nothing was left to chance: each page was intensively discussed in order to achieve an optimal interaction between the different information carriers.

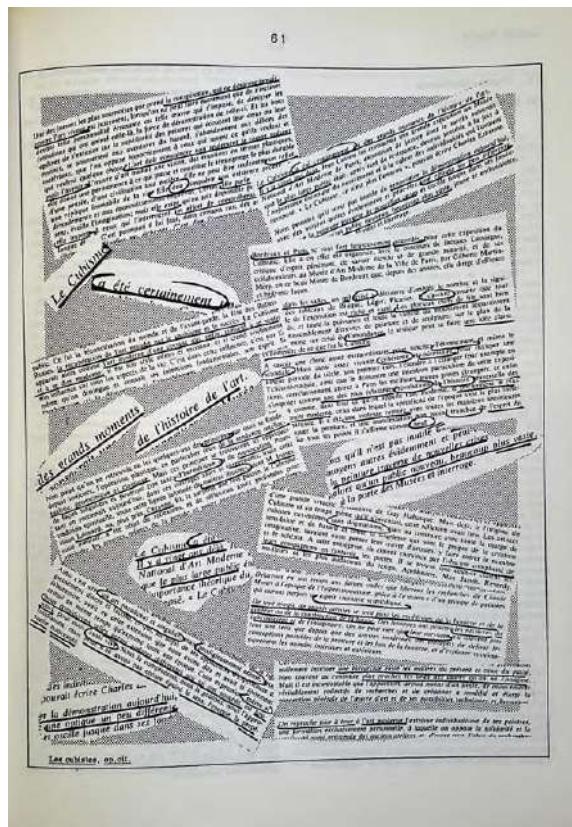


Figure 4: The collage technique serves to visualize a field of discourse – in this case, the art world and its tendency to verbalize art, accompanied by a cacophony of labels and underlinings. (ARSS Vol. 1, n°5-6, 1975, p. 61)

An emblematic example of this compositional style of ARSS is the text “Corps et âme” by Loïc Wacquant (ARSS n° 80, 1989). The chosen combination of the title “Body and soul” with the martial image of a boxer seems intriguing at first glance – and is supposed to. The long-time typesetter of the revue himself describes how the image, which immediately and aggressively catches the reader's eye, in combination with the equally imposing title, offers an initial orientation (Duplan, Jauneau and Jauneau 2008, p. 39). This image-text dyad, supplemented by a more precise subtitle, guides the reader's eye and

makes it easier to classify. The experimental arrangement of text and image was not only an aesthetic decision, but also a strategic means of making scientific concepts and sociological theories accessible to a wider audience. The image acts as an eye-catcher, spontaneously arouses critical-reflexive curiosity and draws the reader directly into the article. The young Bourdieu had already experimented with these techniques of image-text montage during his ethnological-sociological field research in Algeria; for example when it came to recognizing gender differences in the daily work of the Kabyles or to show the reader the *hexis* – i.e. posture and gait – of the Kabyle “man of honor” based on the dense descriptions of his observations in a way that could be directly experienced by the senses.

## CORPS ET ÂME NOTES ETHNOGRAPHIQUES D'UN APPRENTI-BOXEUR

En août 1988, à la suite d'un concours de circonstances (1), je me suis inscrit à un club de boxe d'un quartier de l'ouest de Clermont. Je n'avais jamais pratiqué ce sport, ni même entendu de l'info. Hormis les notions superficielles et les stéréotypes que j'avais pu lire dans la littérature (2) ou le cinéma, j'en faire à travers de la boxe (3) ou le contact avec les autres boxeurs (4) que je n'avais contact avec le monde pugilistique. Je suis entré donc dans la situation du parfait novice.

Durant trois mois, j'ai participé régulièrement aux entraînements aux côtés des boxeurs, amateurs et professionnels, à raison de trois séances par semaine. J'ai également été régulièrement présent à de nombreux combats officiels dans divers clubs de la ville et de sa banlieue. Les notes de terrain que j'ai conservées de ce périple (en grande partie pour aider à harmoniser un professeur de boxe de niveau moyen de ce genre, sans mal doux redoublé par le fait que le seul blanc dans une classe fréquentée par des noirs et des métis) montrent que les observations, photos et enregistrements réalisés lors de ces combats pugilistiques ont se promenait dès l'ensemble de ces documents, sans pour autant donner du texte qu'on va lire.

Premier retour sur une expérience d'apprentissage. Les deux demandes ne prétendent pas être représentatives de la boxe en général, voire même seulement de la boxe au stade. Un seul élément de ce document suffit à démontrer que quel qu'il soit, il faut reconnaître la position qu'il occupe dans l'espace des autres (4), de même qu'il peut saisir la position des autres (5). C'est à dire que l'object est donné sans le replacer dans le système complet des manières possibles de s'y adonner, qui se détermine pour partie dans leur relation d'opposition ou de

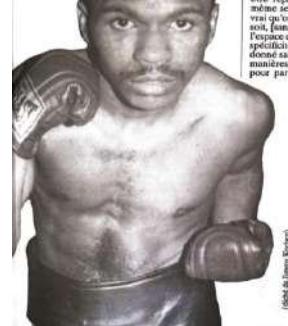


Figure 5: Idiosyncratic title-text-image compositions, in which the object catches the reader's eye, reflect

Bourdieu's claim to illustrate central scientific concepts – such as "habitus". (ARSS Vol. 80, 1989, p. 33)

Bourdieu's 1975 article "L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger" (Vol. 1, n°5-6, 1975) seems to be particularly typical of the provocative attitude of ARSS. It is a critical examination of Heidegger's affinities with the Nazi regime, which until then had remained hidden behind the powerful Heidegger cult. A few years later, Bourdieu published a revised and more detailed version of the same article, retaining the original title, in the series *Le sens commun* (Éditions de Minuit, 1988), and in the same year it appeared in German as *Die politische Ontologie Martin Heideggers* (Suhrkamp, 1988). This is one of many examples of how ARSS articles served as a template for later publications. The article further shows that ARSS was characterized not only by its unusual form, but also by the deliberate use of "objective irony": images that spoke for themselves in such a way that they needed no explanation. In his book *Rendre la réalité inacceptable* (2008), Luc Boltanski recalls a double page in the Heidegger article entitled "Memories of an ordinary professor," "which we had a lot of fun with." (Boltanski, 2008, p. 32) The editorial team collected private Heidegger photos – such as him in the family circle or in Swabian costume – and provided them with deliberately ironic captions. "We had put them together according to the model of the family albums that my brother Christian

Boltanski used in his artistic work and thus turned them into works of art." (ibid., p. 33)



Figure 6: In ARSS image montage is more than an illustration: the double page ironized Heidegger's self-staging as a German professor and exposed his ideological positioning. (ARSS Vol. 1, n°5-6, 1975, p. 148f.)

## Conclusion

The design of the early editions, which is deliberately reminiscent of *bricolage* (DIY), evokes an approach to the sociological collective "workshop" and suggests that the intention behind it was not to prescribe rigid rules such as a consistent rhetorical structure or a uniform article length. The central point here is not so much deductive reasoning as the demonstration of practice – a *montrer et ne pas démontrer* (to show and not to demonstrate). The text and image design of ARSS itself thus becomes evidence of the creative, and reflexive work of the research collective.

The multitude of research steps and text drafts were not created in mechanical

routine, but rather in an organic, cooperative form – as a kind of *atelier de recherche* (research workshop). In this structure, collectivity and group cohesion play a central role, while at the same time mechanisms of the singulation of a collective author, Bourdieu, take effect. Throughout his life, Bourdieu pursued the concrete utopia (Ernst Bloch) of a “research collective,” as embodied for him by the encyclopaedists of the 18th century, in which the fruits of scientific work are not attributed to an individual, but to the collective. *ARSS* tried to put this vision into practice through continuous teamwork. The collectively shared, scientifically institutionalized *habitus* resulting from the practice of *ARSS* went beyond aesthetic commonalities as well as common content interests, and found expression in the perception of the journal as the mouthpiece of a kind of “Bourdieu school,” which was emphasized by the ironic label “*les bourdivins*” (based on Bourdieu and the so called divines) for the group around Bourdieu.

*ARSS* quickly developed into an autonomous “means of production” of scientific work and contributed to the institutionalization of a coherent scientific community, which over the years evolved into a paradigmatic entity that continues to shape Bourdieusian research both in France and internationally.

Whether the collectively shared but shifting constellations surrounding the

work on *ARSS*, particularly between 1975 and 1985, actually justify speaking of a “Bourdieu School” (by analogy to the Durkheim School) is less important today than the scholarly fruits of this radically anti-academic endeavor. Further research could instead focus on the working methods of various chairs, research groups, think tanks, and international networks oriented towards Bourdieu’s work. A transnational comparative study of the continuation and dissemination of the forms of collective research and collective intellectual engagement initiated by Bourdieu could provide important insights in the future.

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## HOW *ACTES* LIBERATED RESEARCHERS FROM THE STRAITJACKET OF ACADEMIC JOURNALS

Yves Gingras

I cannot really remember when I first discovered and consulted *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. I just know for sure that I discovered Bourdieu through his 1972 paper in *L'Année sociologique* titled “Le marché des biens symboliques” that we had to read in a PhD seminar when I was a student in 1979-1980. Browsing *Actes* must have followed suit.

My first contact with Bourdieu himself was in 1983 when, still a PhD student, I sent him a brief paper I had published in the magazine *La Recherche* (January 1983, n° 140, p. 112-113) sketching a sociology of the differences between the French and American academic book markets. I presented Bourdieu's book collection *Le sens commun*, as an exception in France with its very detailed index of concepts at the end of each book. Typically, French books and French translations of English academic books

were often without any index that the original English edition had included even though they are essential for their use as research tools. By contrast, English translations of French academic books, like those of Foucault that I took as an example, usually added such an index of notions, thus making the English version easier to search than the original French.

To my surprise, I did receive an answer from Bourdieu telling me – in his hard to read handwriting – that he liked the analysis, all the more so when one knows, he said, that the many hours invested in crafting these indexes, are destined to be overlooked. He concluded by telling me to send him any of my future work! Which I did...

My research interest being focused on the sociology of science, I was struck by the fact that *Actes* only devoted its first thematic issue to science and scientific research in 1988 (n° 74), though Bourdieu had published his paper on the scientific field in 1975 in the Québec sociology journal *Sociologie et sociétés*, as part of a thematic issue titled “Science et structure sociale.” Conscious of the originality of his analysis and of the fact that the Québec journal was not easily accessible and thus visible in France, Bourdieu republished it in *Actes* in 1976 and also in English in the journal *Social Science Information*, in order to maximize its visibility. The 1988 thematic issue of *Actes* on *Recherches sur la recherche*

contained my first contribution to the journal in a joint paper I did on the evaluation of university professors with Marcel Fournier (who had been my PhD advisor) and his student Creutzer Mathurin. Having since published many papers in *Actes*, I experienced first-hand the specificity and originality of the journal.

### The Specificity and Originality of *Actes*

I think that the most important aspect of the uniqueness of *Actes* in the field of scientific journals is linked to its large physical format which liberates the authors from the straitjacket that most academic journals impose on authors as if they were convinced that only written texts are needed to make a cogent argument. Their format is thus ill-suited to images and non-classical presentation of data. The very choice of the word "*Actes*" also aimed at reflecting the active construction of research results, making visible not only the theoretical analysis and interpretations embedded in sentences but also the data themselves through excerpts of interviews, archival documents and images. Also liberating is the fact that *Actes* is not obsessed with the so-called "methodology" section whose inflationary description in many journals simply hides the absence of a well-defined theoretical basis.

I think the best example of the contrast between what can be done in *Actes* and

in journals and books of conventional format is provided by Bourdieu's work on Heidegger. In order to make plain that philosophers are not living in the world of ideas but have a body that incorporates a social trajectory which also formed a singular habitus, the paper on *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, published in *Actes* in 1975, contained many photos of Heidegger which make visible his social origins through his clothes and sport habits. Republished as a book under the same title in 1988, but in the traditional format, it did not include these representations of Heidegger, and I think the book lost a part of its convincing argumentative power, making the notion of habitus more abstract with the absence of Heidegger's particular embodiment fixed by the photographs used in the original paper. We can realize the extent of the mutilation of an analysis by the exclusion of the images, by reading the pdf version of that paper now on the website Persée where the images (on p. 125-127, 148-149) are absent. For technical reasons, independent of Persée and related to permissions to reproduce images under copyright, they had to be replaced by the note "illustration non autorisée à la diffusion."

A more personal example of the freedom left to authors to even use a bit of irony in their analysis is provided by a paper I wrote in English in 1995 following the usual canon of a typical paper in the

standard academic format. That same year, Bourdieu asked me to prepare a French version of that paper for *Actes* (June 1995, n° 108). I used that opportunity to add three inserts presenting long citations from the English sources I analyzed. One was titled “Une sociologie... non sociologique” and presented three citations taken from papers published by Michel Callon and John Law that clearly illustrated their curious conception of sociology. The second presented a long citation taken from Bruno Latour’s paper “The politics of explanation,” which I titled “Tout est dans tout”. The third extract was from the same paper of Latour and I titled it “Expliquer... sans expliquer.” One can consider that the English version of my paper presented a convincing analysis of the logical and conceptual problems present in the constructivist sociology of science then promoted by Law, Callon and Latour, but I believe the French version, by showing long extracts of the original texts in English from these authors, provide a much stronger demonstration by the very “monstration” of their arguments. One could then hardly use the classic defense of being “cited out of context.”

I also had the chance to experiment with this freedom while preparing two issues of *Actes* with Bourdieu and Eric Brian during my stay at EHESS in 2000. The first was titled “*Science*” and came out in March 2002 as a double issue (n° 141-142).

The second thematic issue was titled “*Entreprises académiques*” and came out in June 2003 (n° 148). In presenting the evolution of “*idées d’universités*” I could add long excerpts from important documents from Condorcet, Humboldt and Newman, which embody three very different conceptions of universities. Again, in the absence of such lengthy quotes, the analysis would have been abstract.

In a long analysis of the specific forms of the internationality of the scientific fields, published in the *Science* issue, I included a photo of scientists marching in the streets to defend research funding. Titled “*Les travailleurs de la preuve*” – an expression used by Bachelard – the photo showed a rare public manifestation of scientists using the classical form of demonstration with banderoles usually used by workers on strike. Such illustrations replace many words and are visibly revealing the changing status of scientists in a time of the massification of research and big science. Note again that the pdf version in Persée has not reproduced the image for the reasons already mentioned. I also included in that paper a large network analysis that would have been barely legible in the usual much smaller format of sociology journals. Finally, that paper having been published three years before the creation of the French Agence Nationale de la recherche (ANR) – which forces scientists to compete to get money for

their research and thus learn how to write a convincing proposal – I added an insert titled “Comment obtenir un contrat de Bruxelles,” which exemplified a manner of asking research money that was standard in England and North America, and would become so in France after the creation of ANR in 2005. Such an insert was at the same time ironic and realistic.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the creation of *Actes* in 1975 was an event in the field of social sciences and that it was perceived as liberating from the strait-jacket of a fixed order of presentation often summarized under the headings of “method,” “results,” “analysis,” copied without reflexivity on the so-called “exact” sciences. Over the last fifty years, *Actes* has clearly shown that combining texts, images and documents contributes to the robustness of the analyses while making scientific writing and reading more enjoyable without jeopardizing scientific rigor.

## A SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVE ON *ACTES*

*For Afrânio Garcia, in memoriam*

Gustavo Sorá

Every time I write an academic paper, I try to do it in the style of *Actes*. It's a form of writing that involves intellectual decisions – how to construct knowledge problems and offer explanations. This style has a material imprint. It's visually recognizable in its intensive use of images, interview excerpts, tables, graphs, spatial diagrams, and so on. Most frequently, it employs framing devices (*encadrés*) that can take the form of sub- or hypertexts or links, and comments that allow for the integration of specific themes or interpretive connections. *Actes* reveals what dominant academic rules conceal: the obstacles to constructing knowledge problems, the value placed on empirical operations, and above all, the transcendence of textual constraint as the sole support for ideas. All of this foregrounds practices prior to writing, the conditions of possibility for research in the social sciences, and writing itself as a craft.

There's no doubt that *Actes* was a great laboratory for Bourdieu and his closest collaborators to develop a truly reflexive sociology. This statement invites us to question a paradox: in the social sciences of the current century, the demand for an authorial voice is commonplace, reflexivity seems to be a fad, and digital technology encourages breaking with the monotony of printed text and employing multiple communicative strategies. Nevertheless, currently, it is increasingly common to read narcissistic essays written with impulses contrary to those proposed by *Actes*. Both the review of *Actes'* history and the challenge of writing in accordance with its tradition are acts of rebellion against the dominant intellectual and academic order: that is what this great journal conveys.

We could say that the imprint of this journal is recognizable in its style of thought, writing, and textual and editorial organization, elements whose combination resulted from at least three factors. The first is a historical factor, marked by the time in which it was implemented and during which it had that generative effect. The second is an intellectual factor, which prioritized the selection or invitation of authors and editors for thematic issues. Finally, there is a social factor: the formation of a "society of thought," a network of people from multiple disciplinary and national origins who gained recognition through the journal, and for whom *Actes* was and

is the material emblem par excellence of the collective work fostered by Pierre Bourdieu. The dynamics of this collaborative work are then essential to fully understand the evolution of the intellectual projects of the journal's founder. If, until 2002, Bourdieu's community materialized in *Actes*, there is much to ponder regarding the place of other authors of the journal in the transnational academic space and their effects on the ways in which Bourdieu's *œuvre* is transmitted. I would like to address these dimensions through a personal experience that, in some ways, illustrates the channels opened by *Actes* and by Bourdieu's work in the Southern Cone of Latin America.

At the genesis of my relationship with this journal was an institution, the social anthropology graduate programme of the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro (PPGAS), and a person, Afrânio Garcia (1948–2024), who supervised my doctoral (1998) and master's (1994) theses. An economist, anthropologist, and a keen, rigorous, and committed intellectual, Afrânio was an extraordinary person. His long history of scientific training and activity in Paris, and since the mid-1980s as a member of the *Centre de sociologie de l'éducation et de la culture* (CSEC), was shared with me – to the point of introducing me to his international scientific network – with a keen awareness of our peripheral position (Gheorghiu, 2018).

In all the courses at the Museum, more than half of the reading lists were in English and French. French was the predominant language in the bibliography of professors like Afrânio, Moacir Palmeira or José Sergio Leite Lopes and the articles in *Actes* were the most frequently referenced. The entire collection of *Actes* was available at the library, with a valuable tool: a folder containing photocopied indexes of all the issues. When one went to print an *Actes* article for a class, one could freely select others, not necessarily complementary to the required reading. When one was choosing an area of specialization, entire issues could be photocopied.

In the late 1980s, almost every Argentinian student in the social and human sciences was reading Bourdieu. It was the result of a relatively early reception of an author then mostly perceived as a social theorist (the main reference was *El oficio de sociólogo*) sometimes with ideological accents, as “Gramsci con Bourdieu,” the title of a 1984 article by Néstor García Canclini, can suggest (Baranger, 2008; Sorá, 2023). In contrast, in the 1990s those Brazilian professors taught us early on that Bourdieu's work was, above all, empirically rooted, collective and transnational. From primary sources, we learned about the ins and outs of each *Centre de sociologie européenne* (CSE) production, the backstage aspects, and the ramifications of the research radiating from the Parisian

center. These productions were tools for empirical research.

From the early 1990s, my knowledge of the journal was mediated by personal acquaintance with many of its authors, almost all of them researchers from the CSE/CSEC. Brazil was the only country in Latin America where this was possible (Mota Rocha 2022). The PPGAS was an international academic center where we could meet great foreign authors in person. From the Bourdieusian circle, I remember Abdelmalek Sayad, Jean-Pierre Faguer, Jean-Claude Combessie, Monique de Saint Martin, Roger Chartier, Christian Baudelot, Loïc Wacquant, Benoît de l'Estoile, Anne-Marie Thiesse, Gisèle Sapiro, Franck Poupeau, and others. They are evidence of the scientific policy constructed by my reference professors and the type of interlocutors they favoured. Those of us who were really interested in that way of doing social science were then appropriating the rudiments of a scientific habitus.

After completing my master's thesis – an ethnography of the international book fairs in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo – Afrânio suggested that I send a copy to Roger Chartier. In 1996, two years later, he instructed me to send Bourdieu my second article, an analysis of the publishing and reception of the work of Gilberto Freyre, a central figure in the canon of Brazilian social thought (Garcia, Sorá and Rivron, 2026). Bourdieu's reply was generous regarding my work, which

he read in Portuguese through his Spanish-language lens. Through Afrânio, Bourdieu learned of my work on fairs. I then wrote an article ("La maison et l'entreprise. José Olympio et l'évolution de l'édition brésilienne") in the issue 126–127 of *Actes (Édition, éditeurs I – March 1999)*. It represented a pinnacle of my scientific career. Shortly before Bourdieu's death, I was invited to contribute to one of the two 2002 issues edited by Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro. My second article in *Actes*, "Un échange dénié. La traduction d'auteurs brésiliens en Argentine," appeared in issue 145, dedicated to *La circulation internationale des idées*.

I had recently returned to my country. In a very difficult time, I was able to join *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* (CONICET) as a researcher and the National University of Córdoba as a teacher. In Brazil, an article in *Actes* was as valuable as an entire book in a foreign language (Mota Rocha, 2022). This wasn't the case in Argentina. In my first *échec* for promotion at CONICET, my second article in *Actes* was graded like any other article in a local journal. However, at my new university, Alicia Gutiérrez was doing sustained work interpreting, translating, and teaching Bourdieu. We couldn't mobilize the reading of French texts as we did in Brazil. Spanish, as a powerful but peripheral language, entails the task of constant translation, and the university social

sciences and humanities environment tends to reject the reading of bibliographies in other languages. If this hadn't been the case, there wouldn't have been any *Actes* issues available, except for the few in the possession of isolated subscribers – such as Denis Baranger, a central mediator – and a couple of copies in Buenos Aires research centers.

I then decided to start a publishing strategy. I translated some articles from *Actes* and edited them in the *Revista del Museo de Antropología*. I remember two in particular: "La disparition de la 'joie du peuple'" by José Sergio Leite Lopes and Sylvain Maresca, and "Les paysans à la plage" by Patrick Champagne. We wanted to use these kinds of texts in class and introduce these authors in Spanish. In the Entreculturas series at the Eduvim university press, we published books by Joseph Jurt, Yves Dezelay, Gisèle Sapiro, Anne-Catherine Wagner, and Sophie Noël, along with innovative Latin American authors. Alejandrina Falcón, a specialist in translation studies, also told us about her plan to publish the pioneering issue of *Actes* on *Translation: International Literary Exchanges* (see Falcón, 2025). In 2026, this entire issue of *Actes* will be published as a book, in Spanish, by the *Tren en Movimiento* publishing house in Buenos Aires.

My relationship with *Actes* and the CSE network has slowly gained ground among a constellation of colleagues who

promoted the reception of Bourdieu's work in Argentina: Carlos Altamirano, Beatriz Sarlo, Alicia Gutiérrez, Ana Teresa Martínez, Denis Baranger, Federico Neiburg, Lucas Rubinich, Javier Auyero, and others. The emergence of *Practical Sense* and its organizers' invitation to Fernanda Beigel to participate in the scientific committee propelled the formation of Espacio Bourdieu Argentina, a network of researchers who make empirical and original use of Bourdieu's legacy (Beigel et al., 2025). These appropriations are diverse, as are the experiences of approaching Bourdieu's work. The tenuous presence of *Actes* in this country is a valuable indicator of the different ways in which these ideas are incorporated in the Southern Cone and of the principles guiding this international scientific enterprise.

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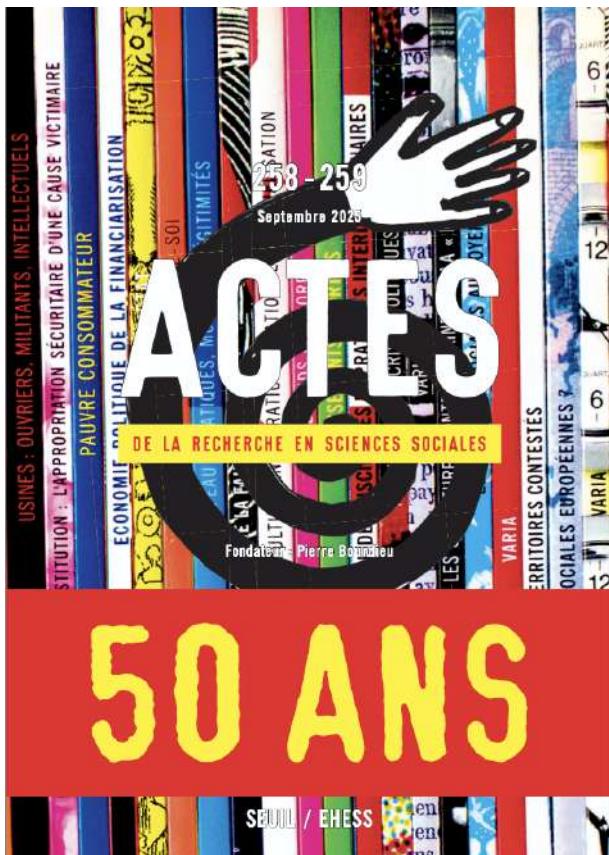
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## ACTES AT 50 YEARS

(2025) *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 50 ans, pp. 258-259.

Annick Prieur



Cover of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* issue 258-259

This anniversary issue opens with a quote from Yvette Delsaut, reflecting on her use of an old class photo in which she herself appears. She notes that the

sociologist occupies “the two poles of the analysis: as the observing analyst and as the examined object.” The quote is especially apt, as this commemorative issue is authored by individuals who have themselves contributed to *Actes* over its five-decade history.

Invited to give a review of this issue, it is also a reminder to me, as I have also published in *Actes*. I also saw the backstage of the journal as I was admitted to a desk in Gabrielle Balazs’ office for a period in the middle of the 90s, when she had a key role in the edition of the journal. I can attest that while the journal’s final output was consistently high-quality, the production process was often arduous.

Mindful of the dangers of complacency that an anniversary opens up, the editorial committee instead foregrounds the role of journals in the production of social science. They situate *Actes* within the broader transformations of the scientific field. Several articles deal with the production process, and I appreciate their candour.

Julien Duval revisits *Actes*’ first era under Bourdieu’s leadership, up to 2001. Besides the journal itself, Duval draws on testimonies from key persons involved in the editorial process over these years. He highlights *Actes*’ innovations – in content, composition of authors, writing style, visual presentation, editorial process and much more. One hallmark was its commitment to presenting social science through concrete examples of

analysis, often of a very practical nature, reflecting Bourdieu's epistemological view of knowledge as a practice. Yet it came at a cost. In its early years, the editorial team managed all practical tasks. Citing Boltanski, Duval invokes the notion of intellectual auto-exploitation. There is a sharp contrast between the journal's ethos as a collective endeavour and the anonymity of the team (except the editor) until 1997, as well as the fact that Bourdieu always had the final word on a paper's destiny.

Anne Bory and Eleonora Elguezabal dig more deeply into the journal's behind-the-scenes labour, uncovering what I have heard referred to in Scandinavia as "academic housework". The term captures its invisible and thankless nature: A work only noticed when neglected. The authors list up the many mundane tasks essential to producing the journal and name those who performed them, offering overdue recognition. Unsurprisingly, most of this labour fell to women. Like domestic work, it also involved a degree of emotional investment – dedication, solidarity and idealism – that made long hours and urgency acceptable. After 2002, without Bourdieu's symbolic capital, the editorial team struggled to recruit authors on short notice. Whether the team's own commitment waned remains unaddressed.

Camille François also remains backstage, offering a compelling study of the journal's rejection practices between

1983 and 2005. Because evaluation and response to authors were often oral, documentation is incomplete, but revealing. François reminds us that autonomy requires a degree of violence to establish an entrance barrier. Editorial judgments were often harsh, yet the letters, usually signed by Bourdieu, were typically brief, formal, and polite, without mention of the true reasons for the rejection. François contrasts this with the ordinary rejection practices today, also applied by *Actes*, with detailed feedback from several reviewers. I suppose that after Bourdieu's passing, the legitimacy of rejections required more than simply his powerful signature.

Christophe Charle traces the history of the book review *Liber*, published from 1989 to 1998 as a supplement to different European newspapers and journals, including *Actes*. Bourdieu envisioned it as a pan-European platform for international circulation of ideas, independent of state institutions. The financing challenged the project from the outset. The reprint from one journal issue of an ad for Mercedes Benz illustrates the project's lack of economic sustainability, in a time of transformation of the media sphere. The scope of the journal did not seem well defined, and many readers found it difficult to read.

Two articles broaden the lens beyond *Actes* to examine social science publications more generally. Pierre Blavier writes about the proliferation of French

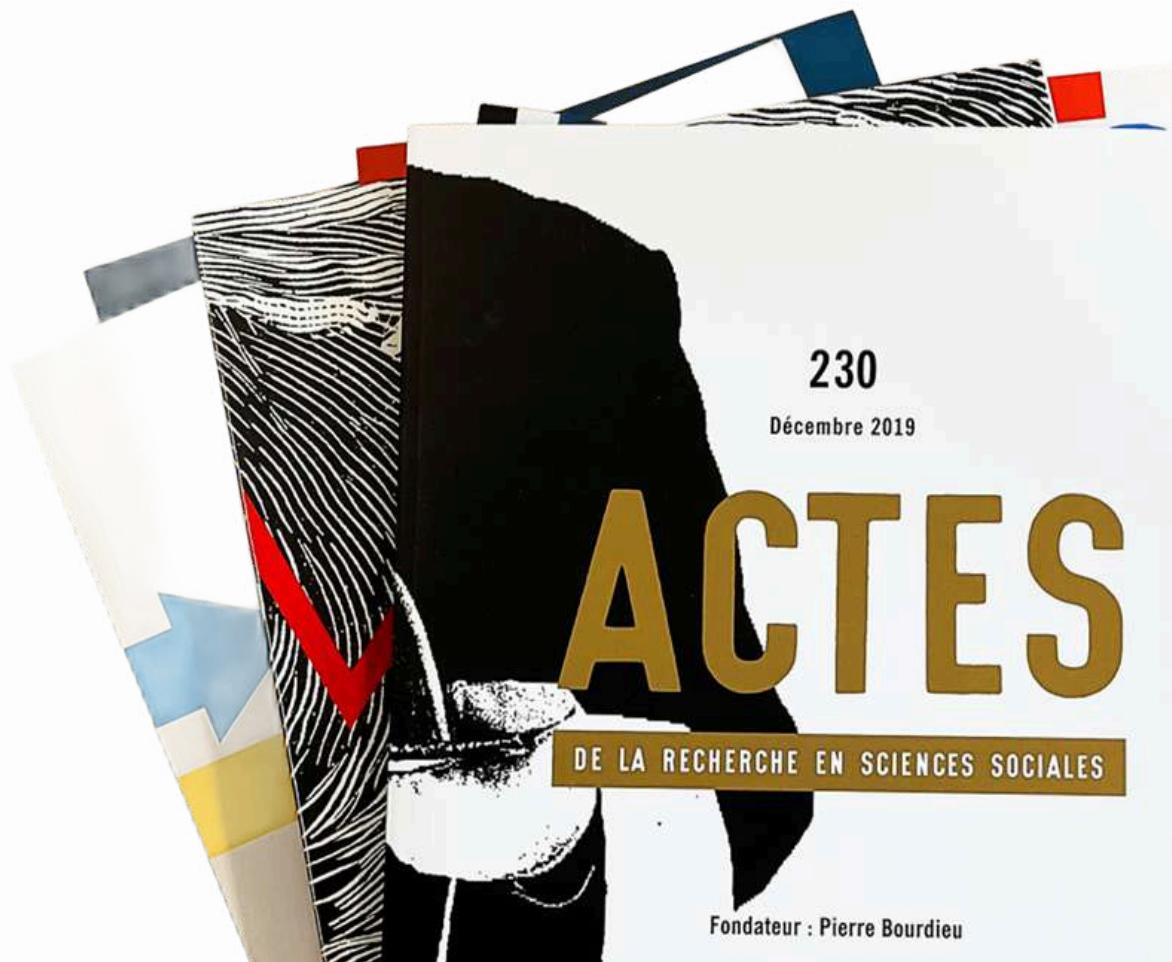
social science journals over the past 50 years, questioning its causes and consequences. The initial surge of sociology journals corresponds to the increase in the number of sociologists, but stagnation has led to a crisis of overproduction. Many journals struggle to attract submissions and reviewers. I wonder if there are not also some deeper problems: excessive effort spent on writing and reading trivial texts and a fragmentation of shared references among sociologists. My utopian suggestion is that institutions should stop rewarding publication volume and instead impose emission quotas.

With eight authors, the article by Julien Boelaert, Samuel Coavoux, Estelle Delaine, Altaïr Despres, Sibylle Gollac, Narguesse Keyhani, Adèle Mommeja and Étienne Ollion represents *Actes*' tradition of collective work well, all while embracing new methods. Using a Large Language Model, they analyse over 50 000 abstracts from 120 French social science journals to assess the presence of gender as an analytical dimension over the past 25 years. They find a steady, but modest increase. Contrary to popular belief, this rise does not diminish attention to class – rather, the two dimensions appear mutually reinforcing. The dimension of race/ethnicity remains, however, marginal.

Taken together, these articles compose an anniversary issue that is, true to *Actes*' spirit, both nerdy and edgy: Each piece is

grounded in labour intensive, empirical research, with underlying data and analytical process made visible to the readers. In a spirit of forthrightness, we do not only get to witness the backstage of the production of research, but also of the production of a journal. This issue thus contributes to Bourdieu's quest for disenchanting the space of cultural production: his tools turned to work on one of his own major intellectual ventures. This bodes well for the future.

# SECTIONS



## Recent Books



## REPRESENTATIONS OF EUROPEAN CULTURE. FROM GOETHE TO ELIAS

Charle, C. (2024) *L'Europe des intellectuels. Figures et configurations, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris: CNRS Editions.

Anna Boschetti

Christophe Charle has devoted many important comparative studies to the history of European cultures. By skillfully varying his scales of analysis, he has brought to light the relationships and “discrepancies of the times” characterizing this history.

*L'Europe des intellectuels* aims to complement these overviews through an analysis focused on the role played by some intellectuals (in the broad sense) and their representations of European culture in the period spanning 1820-1940. These figures are Goethe, Berlioz and Liszt in the first part, Émile Zola in the second, and various representatives of the early 20th century, notably Norbert Elias, in the third. Charle considers their points of view to be particularly significant, as their positions

allow them a vision of the space in which they are located. The main sources used are correspondence, information on reading practices, and testimonies from agents.

The international fame that Goethe enjoyed in the 1820s, the translations of his works, and the tributes – books, reviews, letters, visits – he received from many foreign writers helped him to conceive the “utopia of a European intellectual field” and the possibility of a *Weltliteratur*, at a time when his classicism and openness to foreign cultures were being called into question by the leaders of Romanticism. His reflections on the effects of French centralism and German polycentrism stem from his interest in French culture and in the historical factors of its domination. European culture at that time, notes Charle, “was a socially narrow world, due to limited access to education, reading, and printing for the greatest number” (p. 77). But Goethe already noted (with concern) the emergence of a dualism within the field of production, between the most autonomous positions and those making concessions to market demand, such as Walter Scott and Victor Hugo.

The trajectories of Liszt and Berlioz show that the enlargement of Europe and the intensification of musical circulations enabled a certain emancipation of musical creation and encouraged fruitful encounters between different traditions.

But composers, compared to writers and painters, remained more dependent on state patronage and social elites. Furthermore, musical nationalism created new barriers.

Emile Zola's foreign correspondence reveals the relationship between his continental fame, boosted by his mobilization for Dreyfus, and his Goethean vision of Europe as a common, pacified homeland. The diversity of foreign reactions to Dreyfusism confirms the hypothesis that reception depends to a large extent on the logics specific to the field of reception. In Austria, for example, Zola was not supported by Karl Kraus, but by the mainstream liberal press, against which Kraus was fighting.

In the following period, intellectual life undoubtedly became more international, with regard to avant-garde groups (particularly in fields such as art and music), university networks, scientific conferences and journals. But the struggles of a few pacifist Europeanists, such as the historian Charles Seignobos and Jules Romains, and the creation of institutions like the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, the League of Nations and the International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation, could do nothing to counter the involvement of intellectuals in the First World War and the rise of nationalisms.

The final chapter underlines the “constant detachment” that characterizes the autobiographical accounts of Norbert

Elias, whose existence was marked by war, persecution, forced exile and belated recognition. Elias tends to omit or minimize his youthful commitments, notably his temporary membership of a Zionist association in 1914, and his patriotism and voluntary mobilization in 1915. He declares that he has always avoided taking ideological and/or partisan positions. According to Charle, he tends to retro-date the “detachment” he claimed as a researcher, contrasting it to “involvement” which he considered an irrational attitude; and this concern for “detachment” sheds light on Elias's choice of themes distant from his historical experience, such as court society and the process of civilization.

Charle does not limit himself to analyzing the views of a few famous figures. Thanks to his broad perspective, his controlled use of sources and his mastery of an impressive bibliography, he succeeds in situating individual representations within the historical “configurations” that make them possible and explain them. He thus traces the main factors which have favoured or, on the contrary, hindered the construction of a Europe of culture.

## RECENT BOOKS' LIST

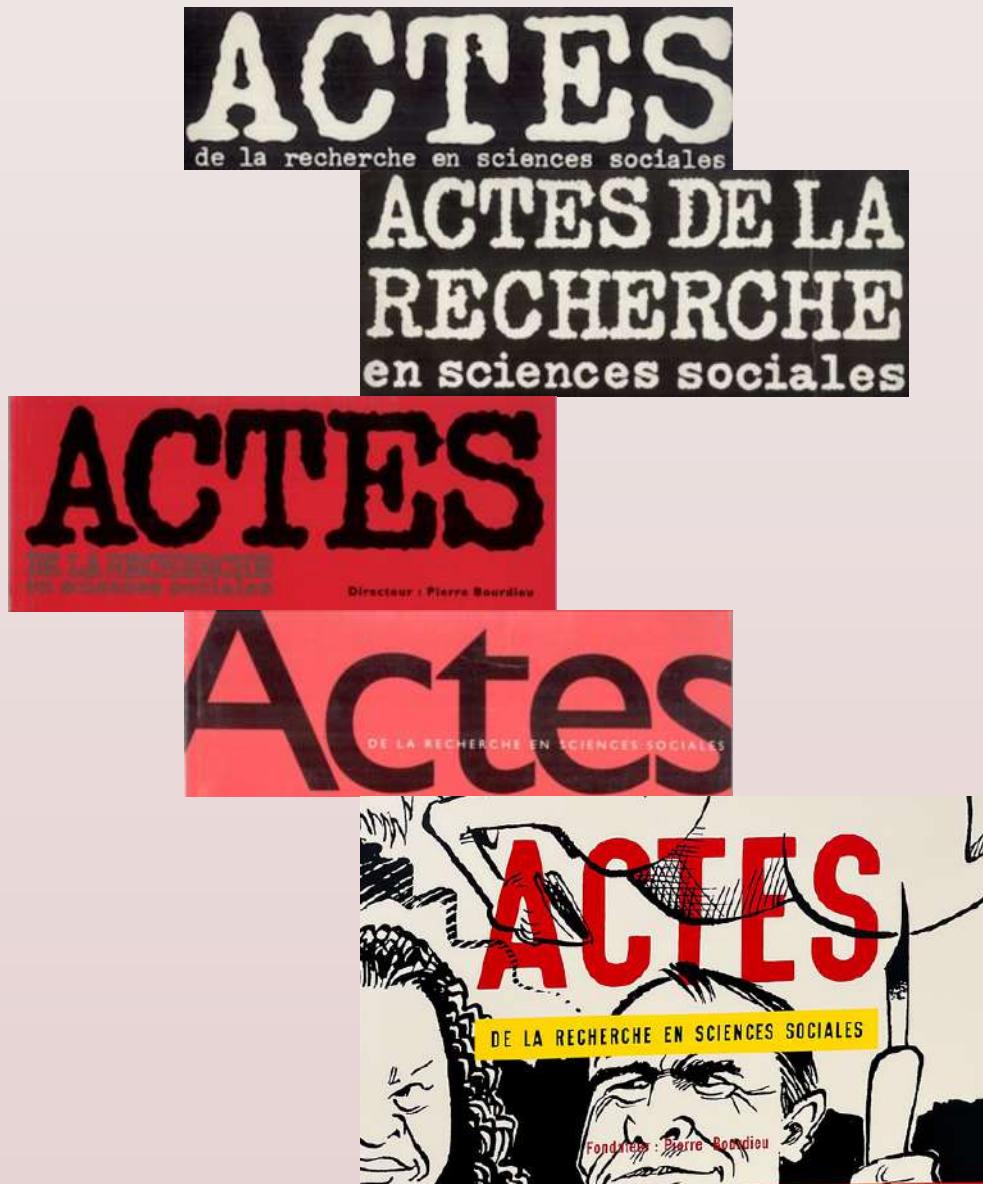
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## *Editions/Translations of Pierre Bourdieu's Work*

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- Bourdieu, P. (2025) *Microcosmos: Teoria dos Campos*. São Paulo: Edusp. Translated to Portuguese by Miceli, S. and Marques, C.
- Bourdieu, P. (2025) *Imperialismi. Circolazione internazionale delle idee e lotte per l'universale*. Roma: Quodlibet. Translated to Italian by Boschetti, A.
- Bourdieu, P. (2025) "Übrigens..." *Gespräche über das Verhältnis zu Max Weber und Jean Paul Sartre – über "Sprechende Turbane" und eigene Forschungen von Algerien bis in die Pariser Banlieues. Geführt und herausgegeben von Franz Schultheis*. Vienna: Turia + Kant. Edited by Schultheis, F.
- Bourdieu, P. (2025) *Sociologia Geral. Vol. 5: Política e sociologia. Curso No College De France (1985-1986)*, Editora Vozes. Translated to Portuguese by Ribeiro, F.
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## Events



## THE GLOBAL SOCIETY OF IDEAS: REVIEW AND PROSPECTS

*XI Congress of the French Sociological Association, University of Toulouse, July 8-11, 2025*

Tangi Audinet

“Texts circulate without their context:” anyone who has ventured into the international circulation of ideas knows this seminal formula by Bourdieu, itself borrowed from Marx, which functions as a theoretical mantra. But since the publication of that foundational text (Bourdieu, 2002), this field has made significant progress which could be seen at one recent scientific event. Last July, the congress of the French Sociological Association (AFS) allowed for a meeting between Gisèle Sapiro and Wiebke Keim, during thematic networks 27 and 36, to discuss their edited volumes *Ideas on the Move* (Sapiro *et al.*, 2020) and the *Routledge Handbook of Academic Knowledge Circulation* (Keim *et al.*, 2023).

Far from the idealistic view, sociological analysis reveals how the international circulation of ideas is embedded in social structures. The sociological perspective is thus an indispensable tool to objectivize the ways ideas, concepts and sci-

tific theories are transmitted, translated, and modified worldwide. Like any scientific approach, the sociology of the international circulation of ideas demands a fitting theoretical framework. If the *Handbook* defends theoretical pluralism, in which Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory rubs shoulders with Bourdieusian field theory, and even with post-colonial or neo-marxist approaches, *Ideas* remains firmly anchored in its Bourdieusian inheritance. This offers a ready-to-use research program, whose richness its authors seek to reveal.

Another central concern is the scale of analysis. If contemporary sociology has broadly turned its back on macro-sociological perspectives, analysis of the international circulation of ideas takes up Abram de Swann’s (2022) suggestion of a transnational society, and as such, with a world of ideas as a society. As the *Handbook* reminds us, however, scientific endeavors have been internationalized for a long time, even if they can be caught up in unequal flows generated by the western-centered rivalries or colonial relationships. While *Ideas* focuses on Europe, the United States, and Latin America, the *Handbook* takes the inter-continental dimension of this unequal circulation of ideas as one of its main scientific interests. It is important to note a clear difference between the two books: whereas the *Handbook* forms a synthesis, *Ideas* is a collection of case studies. The two are thus perfectly

complementary. In one, a tool to find a way through this vast field of study; in the other, perfect examples of precise empirical analyses.

In their presentations, each author notably returned to the birth of their respective projects. Gisèle Sapiro recalled that *Ideas on the Move* was the last in a series of three works produced as part of the Interco-SSH project. Whereas one examined the translation market (Sapiro, 2016), and another the construction of disciplines (Fleck *et al.*, 2019), this one centers on the circulation of authors and of theories. The project was notably supported by the European Center for Sociology and Political Science (CESSP), which allowed for a number of doctoral students in the laboratory to participate.

Wiebke Keim presented what she called the *making of the Handbook*. She emphasized the good rapport of its international team, doubtless resulting from the fact that its members were at the start of their careers, which alleviated potential power dynamics. In response to student requests, their project was to produce a reference book. One of the challenges was: how to recruit young researchers, in order to increase the visibility of their work? Thus, recruitment was a simple call for proposals. From a practical point of view, Wiebke Keim emphasized the creation of the index at the end of the work, indispensable in such a voluminous book. She also evoked the difficulties of working on an international scale,

for example when to schedule meetings or the choice of publisher. Concerning the latter, Wiebke Keim discussed the difficulties in listing all the project coordinators on the book's cover, even though this is a common practice in the natural sciences.

In brief, for anyone interested in the analysis of the international circulation of ideas through a sociological lens, these two books will be excellent working tools, which have successfully transformed Bourdieu's initial article into a true collective research program.

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# RISING COMPLEXITIES IN EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND INEQUALITIES

*British Sociological Association (BSA), Bourdieu Study Group Mid Term International Conference, September 3-5, Vienna*

Flora Petrik

More than fifty years ago, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron revealed how educational practices and structures play a central role in reproducing social hierarchies. Their studies showed that while education is often celebrated as a means of emancipation and progress, it also serves as an accomplice in perpetuating inequality. Yet, to effectively challenge these mechanisms, the ways in which education sustains unequal relations must be continually re-examined, locally contextualised, and empirically explored.

Co-organised by the BSA Bourdieu Study Group, the University of Vienna, University of Innsbruck, University of Tübingen, and the Vienna Chamber of Labour, the BSA Bourdieu Study Group Mid-Term International Conference, held from 3–5 September 2025 in Vienna,

Austria, brought together a community of researchers committed to exactly this endeavour. Under the title “Rising Complexities in Education: Opportunities and Inequalities,” the event fostered collective reflections on contemporary mechanisms of reproduction and transformation in and through education. This fourth biennial conference continued the series of previous mid-term meetings (Bristol 2016, Lancaster 2018, Barcelona 2023). Its aim was to explore how Bourdieusian theory – and its contemporary developments – can be mobilised to analyse and ultimately help overcome educational inequalities.

The conference brought together 181 delegates from nearly all continents. Across three days, participants engaged in seven symposia, one roundtable, and 32 paper sessions, covering themes such as class and higher education, migration and family, gender and habitus, reflexivity in teaching, and methodological innovation in Bourdieusian research. A lively book fair-style session showcased recent publications on Bourdieu, education, and inequality, creating a welcoming space for informal exchange between authors and attendees.

A recurring thread throughout the event concerned how Bourdieusian concepts can be rethought in relation to contemporary debates on complex inequalities, political activism, and postcoloniality. This theme was particularly prominent in the keynote speeches and panels.

Opening the conference, Ann-Marie Bathmaker (University of Birmingham) delivered a keynote titled “Making Sense of the Opportunities and Constraints of Vocational Education Pathways: Between Bourdieu and a Better Place.” Her talk revisited the enduring tension between structure and agency in Bourdieusian thought through the lens of vocational education.

Three keynote panels further deepened the conversation on the tensions and developments within Bourdieusian theory:

“Bourdieu Between Theory and Practice – Thinking Activism and Political Change with Bourdieu” brought together Sol Gamsu (Durham University), Carli Rowell (University of Sussex), and Aina Tarabini (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) to discuss how Bourdieu’s ideas can shape activism and social transformation.

“Democracy in Danger? Democratic Participation and the Role of Education” assembled Ilkim Erdost (Vienna Chamber of Labour), Jürgen Czernohorszky (Executive City Councillor, Vienna), Harriet Rowley (University of Manchester), and Tom Kehrbaum (Labour Union Education Sector), who explored how educators, interest groups, and grassroots initiatives collaborate to promote educational equality.

“Bourdieu Beyond the Global North – Bridging Bourdieu and Postcolonial Perspectives” featured Grace Ese-osa Idahosa (University of Cambridge) and

Denisse Sepúlveda (Centre for Economics and Social Policy and Universidad Mayor, Santiago de Chile), who discussed the intersections and tensions between Bourdieusian and postcolonial schools of thought.

The conference concluded with Steven Threadgold’s (University of Newcastle) keynote, “Bourdieu in a Digitalised and Financialised World.” His address connected Bourdieusian theory to pressing contemporary issues, considering how digitalisation and financialisation reshape social life and inequality.

What distinguished this conference was not only its intellectual richness but also its strong sense of community, combining rigorous theoretical engagement with an ethos of care and solidarity. The venue itself – the Vienna Chamber of Labour – served as a powerful symbol, bridging the worlds of academia and policy and reminding participants of the enduring relevance of Bourdieusian sociology for understanding and transforming structures of power and inequality.

The BSA Bourdieu Study Group will continue to host events at the intersection of social theory, inequality, and education. Bringing together such an international, interdisciplinary, and committed group of scholars reaffirmed that critical, reflexive, and socially engaged research is not only possible but necessary. In this sense, “Rising Complexities in Education” was less a conclusion than an invitation.

## A PODCAST ON PIERRE BOURDIEU'S LIFE AND WORK

*Bildningspodden Podcast, September 24, 2025*

Raoul Galli and Mikael Palme



On September 24, 2025, an hour-long episode entitled *Pierre Bourdieu* was published in the Swedish-language podcast *Bildningspodden*, connected to the *Bildung* magazine *Anekdot* produced at the Faculty of Humanities at Stockholm University and funded by The Royal

Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

The main idea of the podcast episode being to introduce the academically interested public to Bourdieu, the invited guests were asked to imagine an average listener comparable to the *folk high school teacher*. The conversation covered a range of areas related to Bourdieu's life and work, as well as some professional and personal experiences of the two guests, relevant to understanding their initial and long-standing interest in Pierre Bourdieu's multifaceted contribution to the social sciences.

**Ruhi Tyson**, the host, started off: *Hello and welcome to Bildningspodden, which today will focus on the French sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu.*

*Pierre Bourdieu is one of the true giants of 20th-century sociology. He was a researcher and philosopher whose ideas had an enormous impact on both the social sciences and the humanities, but also on public debate in general. So, if you have read the culture pages or listened to a discussion about economics, it is not unlikely that you have heard his name and concepts such as cultural capital or habitus.*

*My name is Rui Tyson, and with me are Raoul Galli, PhD in social anthropology from Stockholm University, and Mikael Palme, associate professor in sociology of education at Uppsala University. With*

*Donald Broady, Mikael played an important role in the introduction of Bourdieu's work in Sweden in the 1980's, not least through the publication of translated original texts in the anthology *Kultursociologiska texter* (1991/1986).*

*Welcome both of you to Bildningspodden! Could you start by saying a few words about what it was about Bourdieu that caught your interest back then?*

**Raoul Galli:** Yes, for me it started before I came to the university. For some reason, I came across a book by journalist Annette Kullenberg, who had written several books on the *Swedish upper class*, which became of interest to me based on both my social origin and trajectory. I had experienced a *klassresa* (a common Swedish term for social mobility), both upwards and downwards, through my family, and I had developed a somewhat dual cultural perspective on things as a descendant of Italian immigrants in Sweden. These experiences, I think, contributed to the attraction of the work on "the French elite" by a certain "Pierre Bourdieu," whom Anette [Kullenberg] wrote about. Thinking about it, I recall that Mikael was also interviewed in the same book. If I remember correctly, it was called *Urp! sa överklassen* (1995) and was the sequel to Kullenberg's first book about the Swedish aristocracy and upper class, which was written in the 1970's. So that was my first encounter and what sparked

*my interest. Then I began studying sociology and anthropology, where we read a little Bourdieu. That was my introduction.*

**Mikael Palme:** In a way, it was a coincidence, because I had studied philosophy, both practical and theoretical, in Uppsala and was going to do a PhD in literary studies. It was a difficult time because I never really got around to doing anything that really interested me. Then I came across the book *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, the first of three mainly theoretical works that Bourdieu wrote as he developed his sociological conceptual world. The second was *Le Sens pratique*, and the third *Méditations pascaliennes*. In them, he addresses similar fundamental questions, and the texts are partly similar, with his social field concept being maturely explored in the last one. *Esquisse* was a kind of revelation for me, even though I only understood a fraction of it, and it prompted me to apply for a scholarship to study in Paris in 1977. At that point, I actually had contact with Bourdieu, because I wrote a seven-page confession about my situation. Then, one line came back: "You are welcome as an *auditeur libre*," that is, as a non-regular student. At that time, I was more familiar with Marxist and similar traditions, where external factors, ultimately the movement of capital, accounted for social structure and also for the acting human being. I met with a sociology that

*brought in real people and their history, experiences, assets, and, also, their tastes.*

The conversation then continued in a rather intense and winding manner, which the editorial team nevertheless managed to edit into a structure that works for the listener. Thematically, it can be divided into the following blocks, even though connections between them were repeatedly made:

- The guests' encounter with Bourdieu's work
- Bourdieu's scientific significance
- Bourdieu's trajectory from a small village in the Pyrenees to elite institutions in Paris and its significance for his sociology
- The evolution of key concepts in Bourdieu's work (habitus, symbolic capital, symbolic violence, misrecognition, cultural capital, social field)
- From honor to distinction to field-specific capital
- The guests' takeaways and reading tips for the listener

While international readers already well-familiar with Bourdieu will find no new information about Pierre Bourdieu's life and work, the podcast comprises discussions that relate his concepts to Swedish society, as well as some references to research on Swedish ground. Sweden – with its unique modern history marked by a previous, long social democratic hegemony promoting egalitarian

beliefs, followed by a decades-long shift to neo-liberal market policies – offers fertile ground for social research in a Bourdieusian tradition.

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS ABOUT “REFLEXIVITY”

We intend to devote an upcoming issue of *Practical Sense* to the theme of reflexivity. Aside from a paper about how Bourdieu and others have conceived of the idea of a reflexive social science, we are specifically interested in notes and reports about experiences with developing reflexive practices. These include specific research operations – interviewing, observing, gathering and analyzing quantitative data, combining methods, and the like – as well as, more generally, the question of how to construct the object. Included also are questions about teaching, pertaining to the issues Bourdieu discussed, among others, in “The Practice of Reflexive Sociology” (Part III of *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 1992, pp. 218-260). In addition to research and teaching, contributions can also bear on practices of publishing and, more broadly, to matters that concern the functioning of the social sciences in the media and the public sphere.

What are worthwhile experiences in this regard? Which devices and designs have proven fruitful? How can these experiences be described, understood and transmitted to others? Which have been particularly helpful, perhaps exemplary?

We welcome short articles, interviews, notes, and reading suggestions related to these themes. Please send your proposals and suggestions to [newsletter@fondationbourdieu.net](mailto:newsletter@fondationbourdieu.net) before March 1, 2026.

*The editorial team*