Bourdieu in Finland: an account of Bourdieu's influence on Finnish sociology

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Introduction

This paper is roughly divided into two parts. First, I outline the reception of Bourdieu's thought in Finland. It aims to be both a descriptive and analytical account on how Bourdieu's theories arrived in Finland. In person Bourdieu visited Finland only once, in 1995 [see the story of his visit to the University of Joensuu in Eastern Finland: Salo 2005]. In the second part, I discuss briefly some Finnish applications of Bourdieu. In this connection, I also try to say something about the applicability and "Frenchness" of Bourdieu's theories.

Before going to the topic itself, a few words should be said about the historical background of Finnish intellectual life [cf. Rahkonen 1995]. As to the Finnish history of ideas, until World War II Finnish culture and academic life was more or less a backyard of Continental Europe, of German culture in particular, but even to some extent that of France. The founding father of Finnish sociology and the then professor of sociology – the very first one! – at the LSHS School of Economics and Political Science (1907-1931), Edvard Westermarck (1862-1939) was anti-Darwinian and represented the British evolutionary school of social anthropology [see Dahrendorf 1995]. Between the World Wars Finnish sociology was basically synonymous with social anthropology [Allardt 1994]. After the World War II there was a strong Anglo-American turn in the Western world, and that was also experienced in Finland. Since then North American influence has...