

Mapping Field Variation: Journalism in France and the United States

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Given that a field approach to news media research has emerged out of France, it is surprising that field studies tell us so little about the distinctive properties of French journalism.¹ In fact, the French “political/literary” press tradition is sharply opposed in many ways to America’s “informational” model. Rather than being downplayed, this difference needs to be emphasized and explained. Mapping and tracing the origins of this French specificity – especially in relation to its US “other” – offers a powerful opportunity to advance the field theory project.

As French press historian Pierre Albert observes: “French journalism has always been more of a journalism of expression than a journalism of observation. . . . As much as the presentation of facts, it is always interested in the exposition of ideas.”² A relatively greater mixing of “fact” and “opinion” in French journalism has been confirmed by a content analysis of political news in the leading French and US national newspapers between the 1960s and the 1990s.³ Research on US and French news coverage of the immigration issue between the 1970s and 1990s shows that the French press displayed a broader ideological diversity and performed a greater civic “mobilizing” role, while at the same time French news was presented in a more dramatized fashion than is typical of mainstream American journalism.⁴ Some of these differences also extend to television news in the two countries.⁵

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I should quickly add that "different" does not imply either better or worse. Media scholars Ben Bagdikian, Mark Pedery, and others have argued that the more openly interpretive, ideologically diverse, and politicized French (and other European) press represents a superior alternative to the American "ideology of objectivity."⁶ A worthy debate could be held over the advantages and disadvantages of each national "model." But my concern here is not so much normative as analytical: *Why* do the two systems differ, and how can field theory help us answer such a question?

Of course, Bourdieu understood that fields and field configurations could differ cross-nationally.⁷ My point is simply that, at least for the case of journalism, rather than problematizing and theorizing such differences, he ended up eliding them. In so doing, Bourdieu was able to stress certain *general* dynamics of fields that operate in all cases. In what follows, however, I want to suggest a slightly different use of field theory, one that would highlight cross-national differences in order to draw out the *variable* qualities of fields and field configurations. This kind of project needs to proceed carefully and be mindful of the scientific cautions that guided Bourdieu's work. After laying this epistemological groundwork, I will then critically revisit elements of fields that Bourdieu has identified as theoretically significant: relations of the field at hand to heteronomous pressures (primarily economic and political), initial formation and subsequent historical trajectory of the field, and the internal morphological/demographic composition of the field. In this attempt to map two national journalistic fields – situated in their respective fields of power – we will be forced to make explicit what has remained until now too often implicit in field theory, that is, the element of variation. In the conclusion, we will consider which of these field aspects best helps us explain the distinctive production of news discourse in France and the United States.

Variable Qualities of Fields: Old Cautions, New Questions

Field theory is tailor-made for cross-national research, as Daniel Hallin notes in this volume. I want to emphasize here how cross-national research in turn offers an especially powerful means to elaborate and stretch field theory. However, there are important theoretical and methodological reasons why field theory has, to date, not been much used comparatively, which must first be addressed.

The first concern follows from field theory's insistence that analysis of the social world should be comprehensive, simultaneously examining historical geneses and trajectories, structural relations among fields, and the practices and worldviews of social actors within fields. Such comprehensive "thick description" is difficult enough to accomplish for a single field within a single national context, let alone cross nationally. Yet, as noted, there is an irony here: without cross-national comparison, significant aspects of a national field may become naturalized and thus remain invisible to the domestic-bound researcher. Cross-national research offers a valuable tool to help field researchers effect that all-important epistemological break with the commonsensical and hence ideologically-charged conceptions of their object of study.⁸

A second concern relates to the availability of adequate data. For Bourdieu, quantitative indicators can be very helpful for social analysis, but the researcher must fully understand the process by which they were constructed. If it is difficult enough to intelligently use data within one's own national context, in one's own language, the difficulties multiply exponentially with cross-national research. For such research to be successful, Bourdieu suggests, one has to enlist the help of foreign colleagues with "primary familiarity with the universe to be analyzed."⁹ This chapter, as well as this book, represents an effort to organize such scholarly cooperation. Data that adequately measure forms and volume of capital, field relations, and the social properties of agents can be quite difficult to obtain. In the meantime, one can only try to "offer a very worthwhile first pass . . . on the basis of a secondary analysis of data already compiled."¹⁰ For this particular "first pass," indicators are more suggestive than definitive. The discussion will be necessarily schematic but will hopefully open up a methodological debate over the possibilities and limitations of quantitatively measuring field relations.

A final field theory hesitation to cross-national research relates to the very project of theory building. Bourdieu distinguished his approach sharply from any positivist-style accumulation of social laws, arguing that field dynamics can only be understood in relation to concrete historical circumstances.¹¹ Given this caveat, Bourdieu also seemed to aspire to generalizable theory, writing at one point that "a particular case that is well constructed ceases to be particular."¹² No matter how well-constructed, however, research that confines itself to a single nation-state is limited in scope. Certain types of variation – especially at the broad system level – only become visible via cross-national research.

In sum, while there are dangers to avoid, they are outweighed by the potential benefits of careful cross-national research. We can fruit-

fully use field theory to understand French and American journalism, and in turn, the comparison may help improve field theory. We now turn to a systematic comparison of the journalistic fields of France and the United States in terms of (1) their economic organization, both external and internal, (2) their relation to the state, (3) their historical formation and level of autonomy, and (4) their internal morphology and demography.

Economic Pressures and the Spatial Structure of the Journalistic Field

In Bourdieu's writings on the media and in most field case studies, heteronomous constraints on journalism are portrayed as primarily economic. But economic pressures are not all the same. Which matter most? Almost in passing, Bourdieu mentions ownership and advertising as "important to keep . . . in mind,"¹³ and emphasizes that these offer only a partial explanation. The rest of the explanation, at least relative to economic pressures, seems to be there in Bourdieu's detailed discussion of competition within the field. Implicit in this description, I suggest, is the variable of field "internal organization," which can be more or less concentrated and centralized. (See table 5.1 for a complete listing of several basic economic indicators for the French and US news media.)

Advertising expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product are more than twice as high in the United States as in France — about 1.4 percent versus 0.6 percent of GDP, respectively. It is true that France has a vital and growing commercially-oriented magazine sector;¹⁴ the difference is most marked when one compares those media outlets which are at least partially concerned with political and national affairs. Compared to the United States' average of nearly 80 percent, French national daily newspapers earn just over 50 percent of their revenues from advertising (while advertising makes up slightly over one-third of earnings for French regional newspapers).¹⁵ Some of the leading French dailies, such as *Liberation* and *Le Monde*, have earned as little as 20 or 30 percent of their revenues from advertising. The conservative *Le Figaro* is the only major French newspaper to approach the United States' advertising average.¹⁶ Advertising is also restricted to a greater extent on French television, and is barred completely during television news broadcasts, both public and private.

Another major difference is that French media companies are less likely than US companies to be publicly traded on the stock market.

Table 5.1 French and US national journalistic fields: economic indicators

Economic indicators	France	United States
Media advertising as a percentage of gross domestic product ¹	0.62	1.36
Advertising as a percentage of newspaper revenues	50	79
Subscriptions as a percentage of all newspaper sales	28	81
Average daily circulation and location of major national newspapers ²	<i>Le Parisien/Aujourd'hui en France</i> 513,000 <i>Le Monde</i> 399,000 <i>Le Figaro</i> 359,000 <i>Liberation</i> 160,000 <i>Les Echos</i> 141,000 <i>La Croix</i> 98,000 <i>L'Humanité</i> 52,000	<i>USA Today</i> 2,136,000 (no local circulation base) <i>Wall Street Journal</i> 1,801,000 (New York) <i>New York Times</i> 1,113,000 (New York) <i>Los Angeles Times</i> 1,006,000 (Los Angeles) <i>Washington Post</i> 747,000 (Washington, DC)
Percentage of public with cable television	15 ³	68
Local broadcast television channels	4	1,733 ⁴

Sources:

Media advertising as a % of GDP: figures are for 2003. ZenithOptimedia Press Release, April 23, 2004, www.zenithoptimedia.com/pubadexf.htm, and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Main Economic Indicators, June 2004, www.oecd.org/home/.

Advertising as a % of Newspaper Revenues: US figure is for 1987, from C. Edwin Baker, *Advertising and a Democratic Press* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994), p. 16; French figure is for 1998, from Valérie Devillard, Marie-Françoise Lafosse, Christine Letanturier, and Remy Rieffel, *Les Journalistes français à l'aube de l'an 2000: Profils et parcours* (Panthéon-Assas, Paris, 2001), pp. 28–9.

Subscriptions as a % of Newspaper Sales: French figure is for 1998, from Devillard et al., *Les Journalistes français*, p. 28; US figure is for 2001, from Newspaper Association of America, *2001 Circulation Facts, Figures and Logic*.

Average Daily Circulation and Location of Major National Newspapers: "Top 20 Daily and Sunday Paper Lists," (average daily circulation for six months ending September 30, 2002), *Editor & Publisher*, November 6, 2002; Diffusion totale (total circulation) (for 2003), Diffusion Contrôle, Association pour le Contrôle de la Diffusion des Médias (Paris). Percentage of Public with Cable Television: French figure is from *Tableaux de l'économie française* (Collection "Références," INSEE, Paris, 2003–2004, pp. 28, 181); US figure is from Table No. 1103: Utilization of Selected Media, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, US Census Bureau, 2002. No data on US satellite usage is provided.

Local broadcast television channels: French figure is for 1998, from Devillard et al., *Les Journalistes français*, p. 29. US figure is for 2003 and is from an FCC News Release, February 24, 2004 ("Broadcast Station Totals as of December 31, 2003").

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The publicly-traded corporation is the dominant organizational form in the United States for the 80 percent of newspapers that are chain owned, as well as radio and television channels, both network affiliated and "independent."¹⁷ In contrast, only a handful of the leading French media outlets, such as the national commercial channels TF1 and M6, and the cable movie and sports channel Canal-Plus (owned by Vivendi), are listed on the French stock market. Public stock ownership of media companies has been hindered by a 1986 law that limits the amount of foreign investment, as well as a provision that specifically prohibits a newspaper company from being publicly listed.¹⁸

Lacking significant advertising revenues as well as stockholder-driven pressure, French newspaper companies tend to be less profitable than their American counterparts. Socpresse, with a recent net income/total revenues ratio of 8.8 percent, has been considered the best performer among French newspaper companies.¹⁹ In contrast, the Tribune Company, which owns the *Baltimore Sun*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and several other papers, fired the *Sun's* editor in 2004 because he was not doing enough to maintain the corporation's reported 2003 net earnings of 28.4 percent.²⁰ Since 2000, net income as a percentage of annual sales (a more conservative measure) has ranged from 13.1 to 27.6 percent at Gannett (owner of *USA Today*) to 9.4 to 14.7 percent at the New York Times Company.²¹

Conventional economic indicators thus portray a US journalistic field far more commercialized than its French counterpart. Yet if we stopped here, we would remain far from a complete understanding of our two cases. Although not fully developed by Bourdieu, a field analysis could take into account another set of economic factors, conceptualized in relation to the spatial and temporal structuring of journalists' relations to one another, and news outlets' relations to their audiences — aspects related to what Michael Schudson has termed the "structural ecology" of the public sphere.²² A spatial analysis of the field would thus consider such supplemental factors as the extent to which the field is centralized or fragmented,²³ and the intensity of organizational and individual competition within the field.

The French national journalistic field is more concentrated than its American counterpart. In France, more than 60 percent of journalists live in the Paris metropolitan region (Ile-de-France); in contrast, American journalists are spread out far more evenly across the country.²⁴ At the level of elite journalism, even if New York is the media capital of the United States, it must at least partially share that

honor with other cities (Washington, DC, Los Angeles, and to a lesser extent Boston and Chicago) in a way that Paris clearly does not. Audiences are also much more concentrated in France, especially for television news. France's TF1 evening news alone captures 40 percent of the television audience on any given night, and most of the rest of the news audience is split among the two public channels France 2 and 3, and to a lesser extent the commercial channel M6 (with only news shorts) and the Franco-German cultural channel Arte.²⁵ As of 1998, there were only four local broadcast television channels in all of France (though the France-3 public television channel tailors its local news broadcasts by region); only 15 percent of the French public subscribes to cable television. In contrast, the three American network evening news shows combined are watched on a regular basis by less than 30 percent of adults, and the US audience is split further among more than 1,000 local channels (most of which have news broadcasts) as well as several national cable television news channels.²⁶ Since the 1980s, with the rise of the *New York Times* national edition, *USA Today*, multiple cable news channels, and of course the internet, American journalism may have become more "nationalized,"²⁷ yet relative to France, the US journalistic field remains clearly more decentralized. In contrast with the situation for the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, which compete for readers only to a limited extent, the daily competition between *Le Monde* and its main competitor, *Libération*, can in fact be quite intense, and this competition also encompasses to a certain degree *Le Figaro*, *Le Parisien*, *L'Humanité*, *La Croix*, the business daily *Les Echos*, and the weekly *Le Canard enchaîné*. Direct economic competition among these daily newspapers is supplemented and amplified by professional competition from the two major national television news broadcasts (TF1 and France 2), as well as several nationally-distributed radio channels. Contributing to this more competitive environment for the French media is a different relationship between news outlets and their readers. Not only do most French newspapers rely on circulation rather than advertising for revenues, as noted, but in addition they depend on daily sales rather than long-term subscriptions. Whereas subscriptions make up 28 percent of all sales for French national daily newspapers, they constitute more than 80 percent of total sales for US newspapers.

French and American national journalists, not surprisingly, perceive their respective competitive environments differently, although there is, of course, significant variation within each national field

depending on one's position in that field.²⁸ French journalists at the leading national newspapers and newsmagazines are intensely aware of their cross-town competitors, whose news decisions in turn may have immediate effects on sales or audiences; in contrast, the regionalized and subscription-based US press is more insulated from such pressures. As a managing editor of the *Los Angeles Times* told me, "There is competition among the major [national] papers, but it's not about business."²⁹

In sum, thinking of field "ecology" in variable terms allows us also to conceptualize and measure commercial competitive pressures in a much more precise manner.³⁰ While the American journalistic field largely consists of multiple, partially overlapping local fields, the French journalistic field is highly concentrated socially, professionally, and economically. Despite lesser commercialization in aggregate terms, the French journalistic field is thus organized in such a way as to actually intensify commercial and other competitive pressures.

Reconceptualizing Autonomous Political Power

In Bourdieu's model, the cultural logic of any given field confronts heteronomous power, conceptualized as the (singular, if complex) dominant power in the society at large, and in this one respect, shares an unfortunate tendency in much of the sociology of news to lump together a variety of heterogeneous influences under the broad category of "external" factors.³¹ Most often, this external pressure is described as purely economic; at other times, as in the text published in this volume, Bourdieu joins the economic and political (p. 41). Perhaps more than in the United States, French state and market power have traditionally been tightly interlinked; government officials and corporate managers alike are trained and form lasting social networks at the same elite *grandes écoles*. This situation nevertheless remains a particular variant of a general relation; it remains important to analytically distinguish political and economic power, and indeed all forms of power. Elsewhere Bourdieu has emphasized that all fields retain to a certain degree their own specific logics. And, if this is the case, the political field, as well as all other fields — particularly the scientific, artistic, religious, and literary (including philosophy, which exerts a significant moral power in France) — also have to be considered in their potential to exert cross-cutting heteronomous power in relation to each other, as well as over the journalistic field. Such a conceptual adjustment threatens the graphical

clarity of the typical representation of a field in terms of two opposing poles: Coming to terms with this more complex, multivalent (but not necessarily broadly pluralist) conception of power represents a significant challenge for field theory.³²

What then is the distinctive power of the political field? Bourdieu sees the political field in terms both broad (the entire field of power) and narrow (state agencies and elected bodies);³³ the focus here will be on the latter. In his essay, "Rethinking the State," Bourdieu lists multiple forms of capital: economic capital, informational (or cultural) capital, symbolic capital, and "capital of physical force." He expands upon Weber's definition of the state as that body which possesses a monopoly over the legitimate use of (physical) violence, preferring instead to emphasize that the state also monopolizes the use of "symbolic violence," primarily through its capacity to inculcate through the educational system and the legal system the dominant "classification systems" which in turn mold "mental structures and impose . . . common principles of vision and division."³⁴ This emphasis lies close to Stuart Hall's notion of the state as the "primary definer" of social problems and debates in the media, although cognitively, it goes much deeper than that. While the state clearly has an advantage in setting the journalistic agenda, empirical research has also shown that it does not monopolize symbolic power.³⁵

In short, if the political field (defined narrowly as state bureaucracy) wields symbolic power, this is not what sets it uniquely apart from other fields. Something important is lost in Bourdieu's reformulation. Where Bourdieu emphasizes a basic divide between economic and cultural capital, in his *Treatise on Social Theory* W.R. Runciman sees power embodied in three distinct forms: like Bourdieu, economic (means of production) and cultural/ideological (means of persuasion), but also coercive (means of coercion),³⁶ the latter of which restores Weber's assessment of the state's singularity. In its dealings with the news media, at least in western democracies, coercion may not seem an apt description of the state's normal procedures. But what are laws and regulations concerning the media if not guidelines ultimately backed up by the government's power to fine or imprison those who fail to comply? One important task then for a generalizable theory of journalistic-political field relations is to classify and analyze the various forms of state coercive power over the media. At the broadest level, we can say that these roles are either "restrictive" or "enabling."³⁷

Restrictive power sets limits on either access to or publication of certain kinds of information or opinion. In France, journalists are subject to criminal prosecution if they publish restricted government

information, violate personal privacy laws, or engage in defamation; although enforcement varies, there has been no substantial weakening of these laws.³⁸ In contrast, the trend in US federal court interpretations of the First Amendment has been a decrease in the state's capacity to inhibit journalistic investigations of government agencies or politicians' private lives. Since the mid-1980s, the US Federal Communication Commission's jurisdiction over the television networks and cable systems has also been progressively weakened.³⁹

The state is "enabling" when it literally enables the media to exist or thrive via indirect (technology, distribution networks) or direct financial aid; in contrast to limiting speech, it enables or expands the range of speech made available to the public.⁴⁰ Enabling arguably presents a hybrid form of power. To enable via subsidies is to exert a sort of economic power, and indeed, Bourdieu at one point categorizes government subsidies as just another form of "economic censorship" along with "the companies that pay for the ads."⁴¹ However, funding from the state, in which profits and audiences are not as crucially at stake, indeed are often explicitly not at stake, is not the same as funding tied to market imperatives.

The French state clearly plays a more active enabling role vis-à-vis the media than does that of the United States. The Paris-based newspapers *La Croix* (Catholic), *L'Humanité* (Communist), *Présent* (far right) and *Libération* (left leaning) have all at various times met the requirements of low advertising receipts and circulation of less than 150,000 in order to receive direct subsidies in defense of "press pluralism." The French state also provides general subsidies to all newspapers, such as reimbursements for telephone and fax expenditures, postal shipping, etc.; furthermore a tax on television sets provides significant funding for the public channels.⁴² It is important to acknowledge that US journalism has also long benefited from government subsidies, including cheap postal rates, regulations that stabilize the industry and a government public relations infrastructure that provides an "information subsidy" by facilitating the gathering of news.⁴³ However, the US government has generally not provided direct subsidies or benefits to particular news organizations and the overall level of state aid to the press is much lower than in France.

In sum, while state policies, both restricting and enabling, sometimes reinforce the power of the market, there is always the possibility that they may not. It is thus somewhat surprising that Bourdieu largely ignores media policy, because the French case (far more than the American case) powerfully highlights this realm of state auton-

omy from the market. For many years, the French state-owned radio channel France-Inter has offered daily "press reviews" (*revues de presse*) which included the non-mainstream media. As the host of the show commented in an interview: "I often cited *La Croix*, which is a remarkably well-done small newspaper, and I often cited *L'Humanité* because it would be a catastrophe if *L'Humanité* were to one day disappear, an ecological catastrophe, in the sense of ecology of ideas."⁴⁴ This passage illustrates a clear way in which the French state encourages a form of journalism that is not market oriented, and thus represents a distinct heteronomous power over the journalistic field.

Historical Formation of the Journalistic Field and Cultural Inertia

According to Bourdieu, the "rules of the game" that are established at a field's founding tend to endure. They are not inviolable – inevitably they are modified over time – but field and institutional theorists stress continuity as early contingencies become routinized and naturalized, thus establishing a "path dependency" that is difficult to modify.⁴⁵ As Bourdieu notes,

the stakes of the struggle between the dominants and pretenders [within any given field of cultural production, including journalism], the issues they dispute . . . depend on the state of the legitimate problematic, that is, the space of the possibilities bequeathed by previous struggles, a space which tends to give direction to the search for solutions and, consequently, influences the present and future of production. (My italics).⁴⁶

Analysis of the formation and partially contingent transformations of a national journalistic field thus adds an important historical, contextual explanation missing from most political economy, organizational, or cultural studies of news production. These distinct histories both illustrate and explain the endurance of distinct "informational" and "political/literary" approaches to journalism in the United States and France, respectively (see box 5.1).⁴⁷

Since the early 1980s, both the American and French media have been subject to greater commercial pressures. In the United States, an intensification of profit pressures has produced alienation in the newsrooms and more superficial, lifestyle- and personality-oriented news coverage.⁴⁸ In France, the most dramatic transformations came

Journalism's journey in France and the United States

In both France and Great Britain's North American colonies, the earliest newspapers (Theophraste Renaudot's *Gazette* in 1631, Benjamin Harris's *Boston Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick* in 1690) emerged under monarchical rule, and were subject to strict political censorship. Early on, however, the French made a greater, and more normatively charged, distinction between "news" and "views." Some historians argue that because this early French press endured so much longer than its "Anglo-Saxon" counterparts under strict monarchical rule, its well-known self-censorship earned mere "information" a bad reputation.⁴⁸

With the political upheavals of the late eighteenth century, newspapers in both France and the United States became much more openly politicized and played an important role in the formation and consolidation of their respective democratic republics.⁴⁹ In France, however, this politicization was joined to a more literary and "explanatory" approach to journalism. The full title of a prominent early, and enduring, journal testifies to this twofold allegiance: *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*.⁵⁰ In contrast to the US First Amendment, which simply asserts a general right of "speech . . . and of the press," the eleventh article of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen explicitly emphasized "the free communication of thoughts and opinions." Thus, in the French case, freedom of the press was from the beginning justified and defended as the right to opinions rather than "mere" information.⁵¹

After 1793, the paths of the French and US press began to diverge even more sharply. With the 1799 coup d'état of Napoleon Bonaparte and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy in France, overt state censorship of the press became the norm over the next eight decades. Thus, the particular French notion of journalistic autonomy was crucially influenced by this long formative period in which the French press was highly censored, and the early journalistic heroes were of necessity also political dissidents, some of whom were imprisoned or killed for attempting to exercise their metier. If the American press also remained highly partisan (closely allied to the major political parties) through the nineteenth century,⁵² the stakes were not nearly as high. Somewhat less elitist (and certainly less literary and stylized) than its French counterpart at the outset, the US press even while retaining its partisan allegiances became significantly more populist, information oriented — and commercially profitable — beginning in the 1830s with the

advent of the so-called penny press.⁵³ These developments did not go unnoticed in France, and a few enterprising businessmen, particularly Emile de Girardin, France's major press baron who dominated the French press from 1828 until his death in 1881, looked toward the United States and England and saw in their rising popular, apolitical, and sensationalist press a particularly profitable model of journalism that might also thrive even under the threat of censorship. This politically opportunistic advocacy of information-oriented newspapers only led many French journalists and intellectuals to celebrate all the more the virtues of a literary, opinionated, and politically engaged press.⁵⁴

If this US-French distinction between a journalism of facts and one of ideas was thus established early on, a distinctive American justification of information-oriented journalism around the notion of "objectivity" was not consolidated until at least the 1920s. While it does seem to correlate with an increasing dependence on advertisers rather than readers for funding, as well as the creation of local monopoly newspapers per markets, Schudson argues that the rise of the objectivity doctrine also had much to do with the broader Progressive political and intellectual movement in the United States which stressed the value of rationalized social scientific and public administrative expertise.⁵⁵ With the launching of journalism schools and professional awards such as the Pulitzer prizes, American journalists increasingly sought to rationalize their professional practice, set standards for journalistic excellence, and raise their public prestige.

Another prerequisite for this kind of "objective" nonpartisan (which is not to say nonideological) journalism seems to be a relatively high degree of elite political consensus in the society. Although the United States was certainly riven by regional, race, and even class differences, political opposition was relatively well maintained within a broad ideological acceptance of the governmental system and the capitalist economy. In France, however, a highly "polarized pluralistic"⁵⁶ political system made adopting a neutral position outside and above the fray virtually impossible. When it was finally granted a measure of autonomy from the state during the Third Republic, with the passage of a new press law in 1881, an "independent" French press found itself on the shaky ground of a tenuous republican political consensus still very much threatened by antidemocratic currents on both the right (Monarchists, and later Fascists) and to a lesser extent the left (Communists, after 1920). Among these factions there was very little mutual trust, and the press continued to be seen as an appropriate means, in which lies, bribes, and scandal were acceptable, to attain mutually exclusive political ends. Because the parties themselves differed so fundamentally,

the press was not allowed to avoid choosing sides and thus remained politicized even as it became more commercialized.

This process repeated itself after World War II, when most of the major French newspapers were not allowed to reopen because of their collaboration with the pro-Nazi Vichy regime. In fact, the whole notion of a commercial press was once again discredited because of this collaboration, and this reopened a new era for an engaged, politicized press, which continued in its "purest" form at least through the mid-1970s, with Jean-Paul Sartre's founding of *Liberation*. Postwar legislation sought to protect the French press's independence against capitalist concentration and commercial pressure, laying the groundwork as well for an entirely state-owned television sector that endured, more or less in the same form, until the early 1980s.⁵⁷

Of course, the United States did not experience anything like this level of internal political upheaval during the twentieth century. Commercialization has proceeded steadily, as has widespread acceptance of the professional ideal of objective journalism.

with the adoption of a Nielsen-style audience rating system, the privatization of the largest public television channel (TF1), and the creation of new commercial channels, all during the mid-1980s. It was these barely decade-old changes that Bourdieu criticized in *On Television*, providing the basis for his argument that the journalistic field was not only being fundamentally transformed but was modifying the relations of power throughout French society.

While increasing commercialism (if perhaps somewhat overstated in the case of France) is a reality, comparative and historical research suggests continuity as much as change. Distinctive differences endure, certainly in French ways of practicing journalism (e.g., a lesser concern with "sourcing" every fact or opinion included in a story),⁵⁹ in the final presentation of the journalistic "product" (e.g., greater mixing of editorials, cartoons, interviews, and news stories on the same pages), and in the mixing of news and opinion within articles.⁶⁰ Even as *Le Monde* was solidifying a partnership to publish a weekly supplement of the *New York Times*, in English, *Times* journalists in Paris interviewed in 2002 generally echoed the views of foreign journalists stationed in Paris of an earlier generation: that French journalists were more concerned with "writing style" and "expressing their opinions" than in digging up "facts."⁶¹

To the extent that Bourdieu has overstated the extent of change in French journalism due to either increasing commercialism or American influence,⁶² I want to suggest it is only because he did not take seriously his own admonition against committing the "short-circuit fallacy," that is, eliminating serious consideration of the intermediary social space of the field that operates according to "its own logic."⁶³ *On Television*, while paying close attention to internal dynamics of the journalistic field, primarily shows us how journalistic practices *reflect* or at least *accommodate* themselves to commercial imperatives. What is missing from this analysis is the crucial question of how these practices also serve to *refract* or even *resist* such external pressures.

Can we say no more than that field internal "logics" will tend to persist even when conditions external to the field change? Even if we were so limited, this discovery represents a significant improvement to existing theories of news production. Precisely because the sociology of news has failed to take note of the mezzolevel institutional environment of the field – a social space with its own specific logic and a potential capacity to resist external pressures – it has not been able to explain why widespread commercialization does not always lead to wholesale change. In other words, the precise form that a specific journalistic capital takes – e.g., the valorization of opinion and style in France, of information in the United States – *does* help explain continuity in cross-national variation. *Generally* speaking, this part of the puzzle must remain rooted in the historical particular.

However, this question can be reformulated in more general, variable terms, in terms of what has sometimes been called "cultural inertia":⁶⁴ Under what conditions does the semiautonomous logic of fields prove more or less powerful in resisting external pressures? Drawing on Bourdieu's general model, one could posit that those national journalistic fields which have been able to institutionalize "negative sanctions" against heteronomous practices (those originating in an external institutional logic, whether the political, economic, or even religious or activist fields) and "positive incitements to resistance and even open struggle against those in power" will be more likely to maintain continuity in their professional practices over time.⁶⁵ Bourdieu mentions these aspects only as "indicators" of a field's autonomy; he does not explain how and why they might emerge. But one implication surely seems that reform movements such as that on behalf of "public journalism" in the United States or efforts to create and maintain journalism schools, awards for journalistic excellence, ombudsperson positions and/or critical journalism

reviews may have a significant semiautonomous power to shape the news.⁶⁶ Likewise, in France, "journalists' corporations" which emerged out of a professional reform movement in the 1960s continue to sometimes exert a countervailing pressure against market or political pressures inside individual newsrooms.⁶⁷

Such hypotheses must remain at this point only exploratory. The notion of field "inertia" needs to be developed so that it is not simply tautologous, that is, used as a catch-all explanation for those cases when change does *not* occur. Change obviously does occur sometimes; indeed, the set of practices and norms surrounding the ideal of "objectivity" in American journalism represents one such change (from a previous more openly partisan approach). The challenge remains to specify why some fields – in some national contexts, historical periods, or particular endeavors – are more resistant than others to changes induced by heteronomous pressures.

Morphological and Demographic Factors

For Bourdieu, individual morphological and demographic factors – number of agents entering the field in relation to available positions, social characteristics, education and training, etc. – are also central to understanding reproduction and change within fields. As noted at the outset, finding data from two national settings that accurately measure the same phenomena is a major challenge for cross-national research. It poses a particular problem for morphological data, since national categories of educational attainment, class, and other individual characteristics are rarely equivalent. With these caveats in mind, I present here a portion of the available statistics.

Bourdieu seems to make three kinds of morphological claims. First, he emphasizes processes of distinction. Since to exist in a field is to mark one's difference, every new generation of journalists (as with other cultural producers) has an incentive to "import innovation regarding products or techniques of production."⁶⁸ This process thus helps account for the appearance of constant change within the field, and indeed "appearance" is the key word here. This continual process of distinction is unlikely to transform the field, Bourdieu insists, unless aided by transformations in neighboring fields or in the society as a whole.⁶⁹

A second claim is that a simple increase in the number of individual cultural producers in the field, as well as an increase in the

volume of the "audience of readers and spectators" will have transformative effects.⁷⁰ For the journalistic field, one field study suggests that a massive increase in the sheer number of new entrants attempting to find positions contributes to increased job insecurity, thus strengthening the hand of economic power over journalists as a whole.⁷¹ Various indicators show that competition for jobs within the journalistic field is quite high in both countries, and has intensified in recent years. In the United States, the gap between the number of journalism jobs and the number of students enrolled in university journalism/mass communication programs has significantly widened. While the number of mainstream news media jobs increased by only 10,000 between 1982 and 1992 (from 112,000 to 122,000), total enrollment of students in journalism programs during the same time period increased more than 50,000 (from 91,000 to 143,000).⁷² Since the early 1990s, reflecting a shift toward more "flexible labor," US newspaper, television and radio newsrooms have engaged in mass firings, reducing the number of journalistic positions available. In France, research has also demonstrated a massive increase in journalistic "job precarity," that is, the percentage of journalists who are hired only on a part-time or freelance basis, from about 5 percent in the 1970s to 17.9 percent in 1999.⁷³

Finally, Bourdieu has emphasized the particular class composition of morphological shifts. On the one hand, he suggests that "deviant trajectories" – in particular, individuals who experience downward mobility – are a major source of mismatch between disposition (habitus) and (field) position that may threaten to unsettle a field.⁷⁴ But since such deviant trajectories are quite rare, field theory largely emphasizes how the social and educational attributes of new journalists serve primarily to reproduce the field. Systematic, direct information about the class backgrounds of journalists is scarce for both France⁷⁵ and the United States – in part because of the difficulties inherent in asking such questions, in part, perhaps because of the doxic assumption of journalists and many social scientific researchers that class no longer matters. Educational background often serves as a rough proxy for class. According to the most readily available survey data, US journalists as a whole are more likely to have a university bachelor's degree (or its equivalent) than their French counterparts.⁷⁶ Relative to average societal education levels (in terms of years of study, at least), journalists in the two countries are more closely comparable.⁷⁷ At the elite national media outlets, moreover, American and French journalists are both disproportionately recruited from elite institutions of higher education, such as "Sciences-Po" in France and

Ivy League universities in the United States.⁷⁸ As an element in the formation of agents' habitus, specialized education or journalistic professional education offers another potential area for research. Julien Duval (see chapter 7) shows that specialized economic education contributes to decreased intellectual autonomy for business journalists. Of course, the converse can sometimes be true. In his study of foreign correspondents in El Salvador, Mark Pedelty found that journalists "trained in fields other than journalism," such as theology, or art, or even economics, often produced the most in-depth, critical reporting.⁷⁹ Conceivably, professional training in journalism could also contribute to field autonomy; however, because access to such training, especially at elite levels (Columbia Journalism School, the Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme in Lille, France), is so powerfully determined by class background, it may just as often reinforce the upper-middle class "bias" of the field.⁸⁰

In sum, aggregate indicators of number and type of agents competing within a field are obviously an important aspect of the *mechanisms* of reproduction and change. But to the extent that such morphological and demographic factors tend to move in the same direction as external pressures, it seems that they provide little in the way of a crucial *additional* explanatory factor. To help us understand and explain cross-national differences in journalistic fields, it may be, in fact, that morphological factors tell us very little. Nevertheless, morphology effects offer a unique and intriguing hypothesis that deserves further testing.

Conclusion

In his field theory, Bourdieu has emphasized "general properties"; it seems reasonable to suppose that such properties may also encompass variation. Cross-national research, by comparing the broad systematic characteristics of fields and field configurations, brings this kind of variation to the fore. Moreover, it can help us begin to sort out which properties exert the most powerful effects on journalistic production. Of course, a comparison with an N of 2 that varies on multiple factors cannot provide definitive answers to such questions. But I have hoped to show how a French-American comparison extends field theory, and in the process, modifies many of the assumptions in the sociology of news.

We began by noting that the French and American press differed on several important dimensions. French journalistic discourse tends to include a greater mix of information and opinion, to feature a wider range of ideologies, and to do more to promote political participation. Conversely, despite the serious reputation of such newspapers as *Le Monde*, observers have noted the extent to which the French national press dramatically constructs a "political spectacle," to borrow Murray Edelman's term.

Distinctive political field constraints, both restrictive and enabling — and, contra Bourdieu, clearly distinguished from economic field constraints — help explain the more politicized and ideologically diverse character of the French press. The unique historical formations and subsequent trajectories of the journalistic fields in France and the United States created a set of practices and norms, both codified and uncoded, that would seem to provide some level of resistance against external (primarily economic) inducements for change, also helping to explain the persistent character of differences between the journalism of France and the United States.

Lesser dependence on advertising and lesser profit pressures could conceivably explain the French press's greater civic orientation and ideological diversity, although one could quickly name even less commercialized (and more state dominated) media systems that are not particularly civic or diverse. The relationship at best, then, is diffuse. Moreover, those French news outlets that are the most commercialized along the American "model" (*Le Figaro*, even TFI) retain many distinctive characteristics of French journalism, including a greater focus on ideas and a greater mixing of fact and commentary.

On the other hand, spatial and temporal properties of journalistic fields significantly extend the power of economic models, in effect, showing how a less commercialized French journalistic field (in terms of advertising and ownership structure) could actually produce a more dramatized, event driven political spectacle. Somewhat surprisingly, morphological factors, much emphasized in national field case studies, seem to provide little leverage to explain French-American press differences. To be fair, significant problems exist in constructing comparable statistical indicators for these factors. More research is needed to specify and test the effects of variable morphological properties.

In sum, to put the case most starkly: While previous field research has emphasized how heteronomous economic pressures combined with morphological shifts induce change in journalism (and sur-

rounding fields), an even greater puzzle lies in explaining the limits of such change. The answer to this question seems to lie elsewhere in field theory – in a research project that has scarcely begun – namely, the elaboration of variable kinds of political (state) field pressures, structural-ecological properties, and historical path-dependent processes, which together produce more or less “cultural inertia” within the journalistic field.

Notes

- 1 In *On Television* (New Press, New York, 1998), Bourdieu rarely mentions the specificity of the French journalistic field, with the exception of a footnote in which he notes that the field was initially organized around an opposition between the “literary field,” which placed the greatest emphasis on style, and the “political field,” in which partisan engagements mattered most (p. 94, fn. 4).
- 2 Pierre Albert, *La Presse française* (La Documentation française, Paris, 1998), p. 41. See also Erik Neveu, *Sociologie du journalisme* (La Découverte, Paris, 2001), pp. 12–16.
- 3 Based on a paragraph by paragraph analysis by Rodney Benson and Mauro Porto of *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and the *New York Times* (a total of 626 articles from the French press and 358 articles from the US press), 19 percent of paragraphs in the French newspapers offered interpretation and opinion versus 5 percent of paragraphs in the *New York Times*. French news stories also offered more background contextual information. The proportions changed little between the 1965–7 and 1995–7 samples. Other findings reported in Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004), p. 99. See Daniel Hallin and Rodney Benson, “Two models of political journalism: the French and American news media, 1965–1997,” unpublished manuscript (2003) available from authors.
- 4 See Rodney Benson, “Shaping the Public Sphere: Journalistic Fields and Immigration Debates in the United States and France, 1973–1994,” PhD Dissertation in Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, 2000; and “The Mediated Public Sphere: A Model for Cross-National Research,” Working Paper #2001–7, Center for the Study of Culture, Organizations and Politics, University of California, Berkeley, August 2001, available at <http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/culture/papers.html>. My argument that the French press is more “dramatized” is based on the more dramatic visual and headline formulas used by *Libération* and since the mid-1990s, by *Le Monde* (*Libération* editor Serge July once proclaimed that his goal was to capture the “emotion of the news”) as well as by French

national newspapers’ relatively strong “crisis orientation.” See Jean-Claude Pétrier, *Le Roman vrai de “Libération”* (Éditions Juillard, Paris, 1994), p. 201; and J.W. Freiberg, *The French Press: Class, State, and Ideology* (Praeger, New York, 1981), p. 223.

- 5 In their 1988 comparison of French and US television news coverage of presidential political campaigns, Gerstlé et al. found that French television news focused more than twice as often on comparing the candidates’ positions on the issues and also offered slightly more general issues background. See Jacques Gerstlé, Dennis K. Davis, and Olivier Duhamel, “Television News and the Construction of Political Reality in France and the United States,” in *Mediated Politics in Two Cultures: Presidential Campaigning in the United States and France*, eds. L.L. Kaid, J. Gerstlé, and K.R. Sanders (Praeger, New York, 1991), pp. 119–43.
- 6 See, e.g., Ben Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, 4th ed. (Beacon Press, Boston, 1992), pp. 17, 204–5; and Mark Pedely, *War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents* (Routledge, London, 1995), pp. 9–12, and 219–30.
- 7 See, e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Space,” in *Practical Reason* (Polity, Cambridge, 1998, and Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1998), pp. 1–14.
- 8 For a discussion of the importance of making this epistemological break with “immediate knowledge” in the construction and subsequent carrying out of any research project, a notion influenced by the philosopher Gaston Bachelard, see Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Chamboredon, and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology* (de Gruyter, New York, 1991). For an elaboration of how cross-national comparative media research “cosmopolitanizes, opening our eyes to communication patterns and problems unnoticeable in our own spatial and temporal milieux,” see Jay G. Blumler, Jack M. McLeod, and Karl Erik Rosengren, “An Introduction to Comparative Communication Research,” in *Comparatively Speaking: Communication and Culture Across Space and Time*, eds. J.G. Blumler, J.M. McLeod, and K.E. Rosengren (Sage, Newbury Park, CA, 1992), pp. 3–18.
- 9 Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992 and Polity, Cambridge, 1992), p. 75.
- 10 Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 75.
- 11 Bourdieu declares at one point, “I believe indeed that there are no trans-historic laws of the relations between fields, that we must investigate each historical case separately” (*An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 109). But see David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997), who suggests conversely that “in his zeal to distinguish his work from grand social theory in the tradition of Parsons and Althusser, Bourdieu

- downplays the systemic character of his own thought and work" (p. 135).
- 12 Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 77.
 - 13 Bourdieu, *On Television*, p. 16.
 - 14 See Jean-Marie Charon, *La Presse magazine* (La Découverte, Paris, 1999).
 - 15 Valérie Devillard, Marie-Françoise Lafosse, Christine Letcinturier, and Rémy Rieffel, *Les Journalistes français à l'aube de l'an 2000: Profils et parcours* (Pantheon-Assas, Paris, 2001), p. 28.
 - 16 Albert, *La presse française*, p. 81 (1990 edition) and p. 83 (1998 edition).
 - 17 See Ronnie Dugger, "The Corporate Domination of Journalism," in *The Business of Journalism*, ed. W. Serrin (The New Press, New York, 2000), pp. 26-56. Some US newspapers, including the *New York Times*, issue a second class of controlling voting stock limited to members of the publishing family precisely in order to preserve some independence from profit pressures.
 - 18 See Ignacio Ramonet, "Le Monde, la Bourse et nous," *Le Monde diplomatique*, December 2001. However, legal loopholes exist. *Le Monde* director Jean-Manu Colombani secured the assent of the newspaper's journalists to allow a limited sale of public shares, a move which has now been postponed indefinitely (see Rodney Benson, "'La fin du Monde?' Tradition and Change in the French Press," *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 22, 1, spring 2004, pp. 108-26). Socpresse, the owner of *Le Figaro* and *L'Express*, was recently purchased by Dassault, a French electronics and aeronautics company traded on the US NASDAQ exchange. Notably, however, Serge Dassault, head of the company, has expressed his interest in owning newspapers in political/ideological rather than profit-oriented terms: "For me, it's important to own a newspaper in order to express my opinion as well as to be able to respond to certain [critical] journalists." From "Dassault prend le contrôle de la Socpresse," *Le Monde*, March 11, 2004.
 - 19 "Le Figaro s'offre une nouvelle formule pour enrayer la baisse des ventes," *La Tribune*, November 29, 1999, p. 20.
 - 20 Jacques Steinberg, "New Editor of the Baltimore Sun Becomes a Lightning Rod Again," *New York Times*, January 12, 2004, p. C-1. Figure refers to the US standard calculation of earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization.
 - 21 Source: Hoover's Online company profiles, accessed January 30, 2004.
 - 22 See Michael Schudson, "The 'Public Sphere' and its Problems: Bringing the State (Back) In," *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy*, 8 (1994), p. 539. For a specific elaboration of these points in relation to the journalistic field, see Rodney Benson, "Bringing the Sociology of Media Back In," *Political Communication*, 21 (2004), pp. 275-92.

- 23 Bourdieu (*An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 77) alludes to such spatial elements in a discussion of how one might go about comparing the academic fields in France and the United States: "one would need to take into consideration another difference: the specificity of the very structure of the American political field, characterized, very cursorily, by federalism, the multiplication of and conflicts between different levels of decision making."
- 24 Devillard et al., *Les Journalistes français*, p. 67. In comparison, the Northeast (with New York and Boston) is home to just 19.8 percent of all US journalists. See David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s: US News People at the End of an Era* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 1996), p. 7. Source: *Bilan de la société privée TFI* (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel, Paris, 2000).
- 25 Nearly twice as many persons in the United States are regular viewers of local rather than network television news (56 versus 30 percent). Viewing of all forms of television news has decreased in the 1990s, while use of "online" news has increased, with 15 percent reporting daily use in 2000. See The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Survey Report, "Internet Sapping Broadcast News Audience," June 11, 2000.
- 26 See Michael Schudson, *The Sociology of News* W. W. Norton, New York, 2003, p. 110.
- 27 For instance, competition among newsmagazines like *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *US News and World Report* as well as among local television news programs and the national cable news channels may sometimes approximate the competitive conditions of the French national journalistic field. Conversely, France's regional press, the total circulation of which is much larger than the national press (though it tends to be insignificant in generating national news), is largely organized around local monopolies as is the rule in the United States, and audiences for the national press are partially segmented by class or political leaning.
- 28 My assessment of the "subjective" feel of the US and French journalistic fields is based on interviews with journalists and observations inside newsrooms at the *Los Angeles Times* and *Orange County Register* (spring 1998), *Le Monde* (spring 1997, 1998, and 2002), *Libération* (1997 and 1998), *Le Figaro* (1997), and France 2 (1997 and 1998).
- 29 As Swartz notes (*Culture and Power*, p. 215), Bourdieu's field theory largely ignores organizations or organizational dynamics per se. Yet such a focus would seem to be a logical extension of the individual-level morphological aspects Bourdieu often emphasizes. In a classic article in the social problems constructivist tradition, Stephen Hilgartner and Charles L. Bosk ("The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model," *American Journal of Sociology*, 94 [1998], p.

71) posit that "the smaller the carrying capacity of an arena is (*ceteris paribus*), the more intense the competition." One could argue that because of lesser advertising, French newspapers print fewer pages and therefore have lesser carrying capacity than advertising-saturated, multisectioned newspapers.

31 Benson, "Bringing the Sociology of Media Back In."

32 See Rodney Benson, "Field theory in comparative context: a new paradigm for media studies," *Theory and Society*, 29 (1999), pp. 482-3. Elsewhere, I suggest that

the journalistic field could be seen as structured around an opposition between a cultural/state-civic pole on one side and an economic/state-market pole on the other. Autonomous cultural power would thus be seen to be crucially dependent on state subsidies, direct or indirect. But likewise, the dependence of economic power on the state, as in the case of privatizations, tax and monetary policies, would also be crucially acknowledged. Such a change in the model would also express the extent to which the state itself is not a singular entity, and in a very real sense is divided among and within its various agencies and elected bodies. Journalistic autonomy would consist precisely in the professional and organizational balancing of these two opposing poles.

See Rodney Benson, "News Media as a 'Journalistic Field': What Bourdieu adds to New Institutionalism and Vice Versa," *Political Communication* (under review).

33 See Benson, "Field theory in comparative context..." pp. 482-3.

34 Pierre Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," *Sociological Theory*, 12, 1 (March 1994), pp. 1-18, esp. p. 7. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Propos sur le champ politique* (Presses universitaires de Lyon, Lyons, 2000) and David Swartz, "The Social Basis of Symbolic Power: Bourdieu's Political Sociology," Paper presented to the American Sociological Association national conference, August 2000.

35 On the state as "primary definer," see Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, Tony Clarke, and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis* (Holmes & Meret Publishers, New York, 1978). For recent research (drawing upon Bourdieu's notions of multiple forms of capital) showing the limited capacity of the state and other powerful actors to impose their symbolic definitions upon "mediated" reality, see Acron Davis, *Public Relations Democracy: Public Relations, Politics and the Mass Media in Britain* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, UK, 2002).

36 See W.R. Runciman, *Treatise on Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, vol. 2, 1989) and the discussion of Runciman in Nicholas Garnham, *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2000), pp. 25-6.

37 In highlighting these two distinct types of state constraints, I draw upon and revise Raymond Kuhn's (*The Media in France*, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 49) fourfold typology of state roles. See also Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 41-4.

38 See, e.g., Antoine de Tiaré, "The Press and the State in France," in *News-papers and Democracy*, ed. A. Smith (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1980); and Emmanuel Derieux, *Droit de la Communication* (LGDJ, Paris, 1994), pp. 424-40. For French journalists' own conception of state constraints, see Bertrand Le Gendre, "La Justice gendarme de la presse: Les Tribunaux sont de plus en plus sévères à l'encontre des journalistes poursuivis pour diffamation," *Le Monde*, November 20, 1991, p. 1.

39 See Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, p. 230.

40 See C. Edwin Baker, *Media, Markets and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002), for a particularly lucid elaboration (and passionate defense) of enabling media policies.

41 Bourdieu, *On Television*, p. 16; see also de Tiaré, "The Press and the State in France," p. 146.

42 See Kuhn, *The Media in France*, esp. pp. 40-2.

43 See, e.g., Timothy E. Cook, *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998); and Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., *Beyond Agenda Setting: Information Subsidies and Public Policy* (Ablex, Norwood, NJ, 1982).

44 From Charles Silvestre, "Ivan Levaï n'en finit pas de passer la presse en revue," *L'Humanité*, November 16, 1996.

45 See, e.g., Walter W. Powell, "Expanding the Scope of Institutional Analysis," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, eds. W.W. Powell and P.J. DiMaggio (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991), pp. 191-4.

46 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1995), and *Policy*, Cambridge, 1996), p. 206.

47 See, in particular, Jean K. Chalaby, "Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention: A Comparison of the Development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s," *European Journal of Communication*, 11, 3 (1996), pp. 303-26.

48 Thomas Ferenczi, *L'Invention du journalisme en France* (Plon, Paris, 1993), p. 12.

49 See Thomas C. Leonard, *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986) and Michael B. Palmer, "Les héritiers de Théophraste," in *Les Journalistes*, eds. J.-F. Lacan, M. Palmer, and D. Ruellan (Syros, Paris, 1994).

50 Ferenczi, *L'Invention du journalisme en France*, p. 27.

- 51 See Richard Barbrook, *Media Freedom: The Contradictions of Communications in the Age of Modernity* (Pluto Press, London, 1995), pp. 10–11.
- 52 Richard L. Kaplan, *Politics and the American Press: The Rise of Objectivity, 1865–1920* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002).
- 53 Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (Basic Books, New York, 1978).
- 54 See Palmer, “Les Héritiers de Théophraste,” pp. 146–58.
- 55 See Schudson, *Discovering the News*.
- 56 See Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 59–63.
- 57 On the postwar history of the French print and “audiovisual” press, see Benson, “La Fin du Monde?”; Clyde Thogmartin, *The National Daily Press of France* (Summa, Birmingham, AL, 1998); and Kuhn, *The Media in France*.
- 58 See, e.g., Doug Underwood, *When MBAs Rule the Newsroom* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1995) and Eric Klinenberg, “Media Convergence: Newsrooms, Technology, and Journalistic Production in a Digital Age,” unpublished manuscript, 2004.
- 59 Denis Ruellan, *Le Professionnalisme du flou: Identité et savoir-faire des journalistes français* (Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, Grenoble, 1993), p. 202.
- 60 Rodney Benson, “The political/literary model of French journalism: Change and continuity in immigration coverage, 1973–1991,” *Journal of European Area Studies*, 10, 1 (summer 2002), pp. 49–70.
- 61 See Benson, “La Fin du Monde?” p. 119; and Jean G. Padioleau, “Le Journalisme politique à la française: Regards étrangers,” *Esprit*, 74 (1983), pp. 147–55, as well as his classic comparative study, “*Le Monde*” et le “*Washington Post*” (PUF, Paris, 1985).
- 62 While Bourdieu does not explicitly argue that French journalism has changed due to the influence of American journalism, he implies as much at one point. For a field analysis to be complete, Bourdieu insists, “the position of the national media field within the global media field would have to be taken into account,” and he then goes on to specifically cite the “economic-technical, and especially, symbolic dominance of American television, which serves a good many journalists as both a model and a source of ideas, formulas and tactics” (*On Television*, p. 41). Historians (e.g., Ferenczi, *L’invention du journalisme en France*) have documented an extensive record of French admiration of American journalistic practices, yet invariably conclude that US influence has been only minimal.
- 63 Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 69.
- 64 See Mark A. Schneider, “Does Culture Have Inertia?” *Culture* (Newsletter of the Sociology of Culture Section of the American Sociological Association), 15, 3 (spring 2001).
- 65 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 220.
- 66 On the public journalism movement, see Jay Rosen, *What are Journalists For?* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CN, 1999).
- 67 See, e.g., Thogmartin, *The National Daily Press of France*, pp. 195–203.
- 68 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 225.
- 69 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1993), and Polity, Cambridge, 1993), pp. 57–8.
- 70 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, pp. 225, 232.
- 71 Gilles Balbastre, “Une information précaire,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 131–2 (March 2000), pp. 76–85.
- 72 Statistics from Weaver and Willhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, p. 31. A significant portion of US university journalism students intend to and eventually do find jobs outside of journalism, primarily in public relations and advertising. See David H. Weaver, “Journalism Education in the United States,” in *Journalism Education in Europe and North America: An International Comparison*, eds. R. Fröhlich and C. Holtz-Bacha (Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ, 2003), p. 52.
- 73 Devillard et al., *Les Journalistes français*, p. 40.
- 74 Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1996), and Polity, Cambridge, 1996), pp. 183–6.
- 75 Dominique Marchetti and Denis Ruellan, *Devenir Journalistes: Sociologie de l’entrée sur le marché du travail* (La Documentation française, Paris, 2001), p. 10.
- 76 Ninety percent of US journalists aged 25–34 in Weaver and Willhoit’s survey had a bachelor’s degree or higher, whereas 61 percent of French journalists in Marchetti and Ruellan’s study of “new” French journalists (62 percent of whom were 25–34; 78 percent of whom were 22–34) had a French license degree or higher. See Weaver and Willhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, pp. 34–7; Marchetti and Ruellan, *Devenir Journalistes*, pp. 20, 25.
- 77 Eleven percent of the total French active population have a license degree or higher (Marchetti and Ruellan, *Devenir Journalistes*, p. 25), while about 25 percent of American adults have a bachelor’s degree. This journalist–public gap suggests another line of field research, documenting the relationship between class demographics of particular news outlets and their publics. For instance, a 1999 French census study showed that regular readership of national newspapers (twice or more per week) varied sharply by educational background: While 30 percent of persons with more than two years education after the baccalauréat (somewhat more advanced than a high school degree) were regular readers, the figure dropped sharply to 5 percent for those with “no diploma” (“Le lectorat de la presse d’information générale,” INSEE Première, No. 753, Dec. 2000).
- 78 See, e.g., Rémy Rieffel, *L’Elite des journalistes* (PUF, Paris, 1984).

- 79 Pedely, *War Stories*, p. 229.
 80 See Weaver, "Journalism Education in the United States," and Jean-Marie Charon, "Journalist Training in France," in *Journalism Education in Europe and North America*, pp. 49-64, 139-67.

Notes to table 89

- * Percentages are calculated from raw data on 2003 domestic advertising expenditures in major media (print press, television, radio, cinema, outdoor, internet) and on Gross Domestic Product.
 b All French major national newspapers are based in Paris.
 c An additional 3.2 million households subscribed to satellite television (in part because cable is not available in their area), for a combined cable/satellite percentage of 27.4 percent.
 d 1,352 combined UHF and VHF commercial stations, and 381 combined UHF and VHF "educational" stations.

6

The Contaminated Blood Scandal: Reframing Medical News

*Patrick Champagne and
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New technologies and the increasing commercialization of news production have profoundly transformed the structure and functioning of the journalistic field. They have also increased the influence that the news media hold over a number of social universes. In particular, the miniaturization of news equipment and the speed with which information can be transmitted allow journalists to work "in real time" and therefore to be actors in as well as witnesses to the events that they cover. This omnipresence and increased power of the media have imposed themselves as an unavoidable given that each institution and group in society has had to confront, either by using the media, integrating its effects into the very functioning of these fields, or, conversely, by more clearly drawing the limits and attempting to reestablish the borders threatened by the intrusion of journalism.

A Very Media-Friendly Epidemic

Science news, and specifically health news, is in this regard a particularly interesting domain inasmuch as it obliges one to pose very forcefully the question of the limits of journalism. Who, in fact, is competent to speak in the mainstream media about science or