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Introduction: Field Theory as a Work in Progress

Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu

The concept of the journalistic “field” as developed by Pierre Bourdieu and colleagues offers a new way of understanding and explaining the constraints and processes involved in news media production. Scholars and students already familiar with such spatial metaphors as Jürgen Habermas’s “public sphere” or Manuel Castells’s “media space” may find “field” not only a more empirically useful conceptual tool but also one that opens up new kinds of intellectual inquiries.¹ While Bourdieu is best known for his extensive and wide-ranging studies of education, art, and literature, news media have also been integral to his analyses of class and culture.² Journalism, however, became a central part of his research program – and that of his research team at the Center for European Sociology (Centre de sociologie européenne, or CSE) – beginning in the 1990s when a newly commercialized television sector so transformed social relations in France that it literally became impossible to speak of them without also speaking of the media.

Since *On Television*³ appeared in English translation in 1998, public and scholarly interest in Pierre Bourdieu’s approach to media research has grown. Taken out of the context of Bourdieu’s immense oeuvre, the book is deceptively simple. As a result, some critics and readers have too hastily dismissed *On Television* as “the same old Frankfurt school” or “Althusserian,” without really understanding what the book, and more importantly, Bourdieu’s larger theoretical project, has to offer. This slim paperback is best understood as a provocation and an introduction: a provocation to a broader public debate about the social and intellectual effects of commercial televi-

sion, but also an introduction to an innovative theoretical approach and empirical research program.

With the privatization of the largest French television channel in 1986, side effects long taken-for-granted by North Americans, British, Australians, and other "anglo-saxons" – sensationalized, depoliticized and trivialized news – quickly emerged, giving rise to Bourdieu's impassioned public intervention. *On Television* thus served as a wake-up call for many around the world that there was nothing "natural" about an advertising-saturated, audience-ratings-driven media culture. In addition, by virtue of its origins within a markedly distinct continental European context, Bourdieu's critique of commercialism provides a fresh perspective on a classic Anglo-American debate.

It is the second agenda, however, that of less politically-charged (though hopefully quite politically relevant) theory and research, that motivates this book, via which we hope to introduce Anglophone scholars to the broad scope of a "field theory" approach to media studies only hinted at in *On Television*.⁴ In earlier books such as *Distinction*, Bourdieu wrote about the media, but he focused more on the consumption rather than production of news. In more recent books such as *The Rules of Art* and *The Field of Cultural Production*, Bourdieu elaborated more fully on processes of cultural production, but wrote little specifically about journalism.⁵ This volume, featuring previously untranslated essays by Bourdieu and his close associate Patrick Champagne, is intended to fill this gap. By showcasing work from Bourdieu's colleagues at the CSE in addition to more distantly related but sympathetic researchers throughout France, we purposely seek to highlight the collective nature of the field theory research project. In addition, this volume demonstrates the growing interest in the field theory approach from leading US media scholars, including Daniel C. Hallin, Eric Klinenberg, and Michael Schudson.

In this introduction, we begin by situating Bourdieu's unique approach to media studies in the context of his broad theory of fields. We then compare and contrast Bourdieu's field theory to the dominant Anglo-American theories of news media. We conclude by discussing the challenges still facing field theory as a "work in progress" and highlighting the unique contributions to this project by the authors in this volume.

Field Theory and Journalism

Bourdieu's field theory follows from Weber and Durkheim in portraying modernity as a process of differentiation into semiau-

tonomous and increasingly specialized spheres of action (e.g., fields of politics, economics, religion, cultural production). Both within and among these spheres – or fields – relations of power fundamentally structure human action. Individuals do not simply act to maximize their rational self-interest. For Bourdieu, the sources of competition go much deeper, via his extension of Saussurean linguistics to the social sphere. What is "real" is "relational"⁶ and thus to exist socially is to mark one's difference vis-à-vis others in an ongoing process that is enacted for the most part unconsciously without strategic intention. "To think in terms of field is to think relationally," Bourdieu emphasizes, adding that "in analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions."⁷

Fundamental to Bourdieu's understanding of structure and agency, that is the ways in which society shapes individual actions (and vice versa), is the notion of habitus. Habitus is defined as: "a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices. . . configurations of properties expressing the differences objectively inscribed in conditions of existence."⁸ Or as he notes elsewhere, "To speak of habitus is to assert that the individual, and even the personal, the subjective, is social, collective. Habitus is a socialized subjectivity."⁹ Such language may be off-putting to Anglo-American individualistic sensibilities. Nevertheless, the notion of habitus expresses a reasonable hypothesis: that individuals' predispositions, assumptions, judgments, and behaviors are the result of a long-term process of socialization, most importantly in the family, and secondarily, via primary, secondary, and professional education. Habitus is not unchangeable. In fact, it is constantly being modified. Nevertheless, early experiences and practices, shaped by one's location in the social class structure, shape those that follow.¹⁰ By incorporating temporality, habitus combats naïve assertions of structural determinism. In other words, any explanation of attitudes, discourses, behavior, etc. must draw on an analysis of both structural position (within the field, the field's position vis-à-vis other fields, etc.) and the particular historical trajectory by which an agent arrived at that position (habitus). Two other important terms for Bourdieu are "illusio" which refers to an agent's emotional and cognitive "investment" in the stakes involved in any particular field, or simply, the belief that the game is worth playing. Agents who believe a given "game" is worth playing will also tend to share a "doxa," that is, a "universe of tacit presuppositions" (see p. 37) that organize action within the field.

In the ongoing struggle that is society, two forms of power, or what Bourdieu terms "capital," are crucial: economic and cultural.¹¹ By

economic capital, he means simply money or assets that can be turned into money. Cultural capital encompasses such things as educational credentials, technical expertise, general knowledge, verbal abilities, and artistic sensibilities.¹² The social world, as a whole, is structured around the opposition between these two forms of power, with economic capital, on the whole, being more powerful; and with fields inside fields inside fields (like a series of Russian dolls) parallel to each other in their internal organization (see p. 55). This similarity within a difference is what Bourdieu means when he describes fields as "homologous."¹³

The specific form of economic and cultural capital varies within each field, however. Inside the journalistic field, economic capital is expressed via circulation, or advertising revenues, or audience ratings, whereas the "specific" cultural capital of the field takes the form of intelligent commentary, in-depth reporting, and the like -- the kind of journalistic practices rewarded each year by the US Pulitzer Prizes. Each field is thus structured around the opposition between the so-called heteronomous pole representing forces external to the field (primarily economic) and the "autonomous" pole representing the specific capital unique to that field (e.g., artistic or scientific skills). Fields are arenas of struggle in which individuals and organizations compete, unconsciously and consciously, to valorize those forms of capital which they possess.¹⁴ The resistance encountered when agents attempt to move from the heteronomous to the autonomous pole, before having paid all the necessary "dues" -- as in the 2003 controversial awarding of an American literary prize to popular novelist Stephen King¹⁵ -- is a good indicator of the ongoing power of distinctions between a cultural "sacred" and economic "profane" to structure action within cultural fields. Nevertheless, many agents do succeed in amassing both forms of capital. In journalism, media outlets such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* have accumulated significant economic capital even as, and largely because, they embody professional excellence. Indeed, organizations or individuals who dominate a field are generally those who successfully convert one form into the other, and in so doing, amass both "social capital"¹⁶ of friendship and colleague networks, and "symbolic capital"¹⁷ through which their dominance is legitimated.

Spatial, relational metaphors are used by Bourdieu to express his conception of the ordering of journalism, other fields, and the broad social world, all of which he conceptualizes in "chiasmic" (cross-like) terms.¹⁸ The vertical axis measures the overall volume of capital, whereas the horizontal axis measures the proportion of cultural to economic capital (by convention, Bourdieu has located the

cultural pole on the left and the economic pole on the right). As one moves from left to right in all social spaces, the proportion of (dominated) cultural capital decreases and the proportion of (dominant) economic capital increases. From bottom to top in the space of social classes, the overall volume of all forms of capital increases. Thus, at the "top" of the social space, one finds the "field of power" organized around the same basic cultural/economic opposition but with all actors possessing relatively high volumes of at least some form of capital.

The journalistic field is seen as part of the field of power; that is, it tends to engage with first and foremost those agents who possess high volumes of capital. Within this field of power, however, it lies within the "dominated" field of cultural production -- a field within this larger field. At its "left" cultural pole, journalism is part of the field of "restricted" cultural production (produced for other producers -- small literary journals, avant-garde art and music, etc.), while at its "right" economic pole, it belongs to the field of large-scale cultural production (produced for general audiences -- mass entertainment, etc.). In its dominant tendency, the journalistic field belongs to the latter. That is, compared to other specialized fields within the broader field of cultural production, the journalistic field is "characterized . . . by a high degree of heteronomy" which is to say that "it is a very weakly autonomous field." Nevertheless, Bourdieu insists that even the journalistic field is best understood as a microcosm set within the macrocosm -- it obeys "its own laws, its own nomos" (p. 33). Via this conceptualization of the field, Bourdieu thus attempts to avoid the "reductionist" danger -- or what he calls the "short-circuit fallacy" -- of directly reducing journalistic or any other process of cultural production to broad societal level processes, whether political, cultural, or economic.¹⁹

If cultural and economic resources structure fields along one dimension, the "old" and "new" represent the second major structuring dimension. Drawing here on the Durkheimian tradition of social morphology, Bourdieu posits that influxes of new agents into the field can serve either as forces for transformation or conservation. At the managerial or elite professional level, new agents can only establish themselves by marking their difference with those already in the field, and thus have the greatest incentive to found a new kind of press outlet or adopt a distinctive editorial voice. For example, Champagne and Marchetti show in chapter 6 of this volume how the changes in recruitment of medical journalists helped trigger dramatic changes in the reporting of medical news. A large mismatch between the quantity of new entrants relative to available positions,

especially at the entry levels, may also have conservative effects. Increased competition for scarce jobs may make journalists more cautious and conformist, contributing to simple reproduction of the field.²⁰ Changes in the class composition of new entrants can be another source of dynamism in the field. Following from Bourdieu's notion of habitus, one can examine various characteristics of those entering the field – their social/economic origins, where they went to school and received professional training, and how they rose in the profession. According to Bourdieu, journalists from high cultural or economic capital backgrounds are most likely to have the motivation and capacity to change the field based on the experience of their “deviant trajectories.”²¹

Despite the inherent dynamism and conflict inside fields, most of this activity will tend to largely reproduce the structure of the field, Bourdieu suggests, unless and until it is also subject to pressures from neighboring fields. Such external shocks could include new political orders brought about by democratic processes, dramatic changes in the overall legal and economic policy environment, as well as specific media regulations, social and cultural movements, and economic crises. Any of these shocks may transform the relative “attraction” of the autonomous and heteronomous poles of the journalistic field and other fields of cultural production. Bourdieu uses the metaphor of Einsteinian physics: “the more energy a body has, the more it distorts the space around it, and a very powerful agent within a field can distort the whole space, cause the whole space to be organized in relation to itself” (p. 43).

Transformations of the journalistic field matter, Bourdieu argues, precisely because of the central position of the journalistic field in the larger field of power, as part of an ensemble of centrally located fields – also including social sciences and politics (both state and parties or associations) – that compete to impose “the legitimate vision of the social world” (p. 36). Because fields are closely intertwined and because journalism in particular is such a crucial mediator among all fields, as the journalistic field has become more commercialized and thus more homologous with the economic field, it increases the power of the heteronomous pole within each of the fields, producing a convergence among all the fields and pulling them closer to the commercial pole in the larger field of power. This is the chief thesis of *On Television*; but it is not the whole of field theory – it is field theory used to describe one particular historical configuration and transformation of fields. Our aim with this book is to show how field theory may indeed be used to describe and account for a variety of other types of situations.

One final comment seems in order here. While field studies in recent years have primarily emphasized processes of cultural production, Bourdieu's theory clearly makes room for reception as well (see especially *Distinction*). Once again, Bourdieu sees these two processes as homologous or running parallel with one another. In other words, since both production and reception are shaped by the same processes of class distinction, without any overt coordination, they will in a sense end up at the same place. In the essay included in this volume, Bourdieu thus writes, “To understand a product like [the French newsmagazines] *L'Express* or *Le Nouvel Observateur*, there is little point in studying the target readership. The essential part of what is presented in *L'Express* and *Le Nouvel Observateur* is determined by the relationship between *L'Express* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*.” And this is so, Bourdieu stresses, because “there is a homology between the space of the microcosms of production and the encompassing social space” (p. 45).

Structural homologies are both an explanatory tool and a testable hypothesis about producer–audience relations. It would be wrong to claim that such correspondences constitute a sort of iron law, since fieldwork reveals many situations with a less than tight overlap between the spaces of production and reception. “Omnibus” media, including national broadcast television channels and newspapers with a regional monopoly, potentially appeal to audiences across a variety of class backgrounds. In France, a growing number of sociologists argue, with strong empirical data, that class or education alone no longer make sense of the growing complexity of cultural and media practices: individuals possess a variety of so-called “highbrow” and “lowbrow” cultural tastes.²² Far from being unstructured, however, reception processes continue to be patterned in significant, if increasingly complex, ways.²³ If Bourdieu's empirical findings on reception need to be updated, his conceptual tools are thus likely to continue to be useful in conducting such research.

Situating Field Theory

Field theory offers a new paradigm for the sociology of news, yet one that in many ways supplements rather than entirely supplants existing approaches. In what follows, we compare field theory to the predominant Anglo-American research paradigms – technological, political economy, hegemony, cultural, organizational, and new institutionalist.

Despite the use of a title that singles out a particular medium – television – Bourdieu is most emphatically not a “medium theorist,” to borrow Joshua Meyrowitz’s term. Bourdieu himself has clearly distinguished his approach from those of theorists, such as Régis Debray and others influenced by Marshall McLuhan, who have leaned towards technological determinism.²⁴ At the same time, he has acknowledged some important differences between television and print media, in particular, audience size, breadth and diversity, as when he distinguishes between “omnibus” media and more specialized, segmented media.²⁵ *On Television* raises many of the same concerns about the degradation of public discourse brought about by television, as does Neil Postman’s *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. However, whereas Postman emphatically links these features to unique characteristics of the television “medium” – the “inherent bias” of this technology to promote a discourse that “abandons logic, reason, sequence and rules of contradiction”²⁶ – for Bourdieu, the problem is not television per se, but commercial television governed by the logic of the “Audimat” audience ratings (the French equivalent of the US Nielsen system).²⁷

A more serious, empirical technological critique would be that Bourdieu did not pay enough attention to the internet and other forms of “new” media.²⁸ To be fair, the internet’s social penetration in France has been more gradual than in the United States. Bourdieu would doubtless be skeptical of claims that internet technologies represent a fundamental break with previous systems of communication. In any case, field theory could, and doubtless should, be enlisted in research that examines the complex interrelations between new media and old, in the context of their use in a range of fields of cultural production.

Theories concerned with economic power obviously provide a much closer point of comparison with Bourdieu’s model, though the fit between traditional political economy models (especially the “Frankfurt School”) and field theory is not nearly so close as some critics believe (see Neveu, chapter 10 in this volume). It is true that recent Bourdieu-inspired studies of journalism have emphasized increasing economic pressures, but this focus is certainly reasonable during a period marked by a dramatic rise of market power in France. Around the globe (and from across the ideological spectrum), media researchers and journalists alike have documented the same commercializing tendencies. While insisting on the power of the economic field in the contemporary historical context, Bourdieu distances his model from any form of orthodox Marxist teleology: “the relations between fields . . . are not defined once and for all, even in the most general tendencies of their evolution.”²⁹

Bourdieu’s notion of the journalistic field can also be distinguished from Habermas’s model of the “public sphere.” Despite some modifications in his model,³⁰ Habermas’s conceptualization of the mass media’s relation to the public sphere largely revolves around the single variable of commercialization. Historically, Habermas argues, the “press itself became manipulable to the extent that it became commercialized,” beginning in earnest in the mid-1800s; the public sphere was thus transformed from a forum for rational-critical debate into a “platform for advertising.”³¹ In contrast to Bourdieu’s understanding of the journalistic field as possessing some autonomy, Habermas portrays the press as completely lacking in defenses against the market and the “mass-welfare state.” Whereas Habermas writes in relation to democratic normative theory, Bourdieu maintains a more ambivalent or at least indirect relation to such concerns. Normatively, if Habermas wants to restore the possibility of attaining an “ideal speech situation,” Bourdieu is interested foremost in maintaining the optimum social conditions for the production of specialized knowledge and modern forms of enlightened citizens. More crucial for our purposes, however, are the empirical and analytical affinities between the two. As we emphasize in the concluding section of this introduction, “public sphere” as an empirical concept would be much improved through the kind of detailed specification of structures and processes that field theory could provide.

Hegemony theory is sometimes seen as another variant of political economy, which on first glance bears some resemblance to field theory. The notion of hegemony derives from Antonio Gramsci, who called special attention to the role of intellectuals in shaping a society’s “common sense.” Stuart Hall, Todd Gitlin, Dan Hallin, and others were among those first to adapt the notion of hegemony to media research. Hallin argues that hegemony captures the “process by which a world-view compatible with the existing structure of power in society is reproduced, a process which is decentralized, open to contradiction and conflict, but generally effective.”³² Likewise, field theory is concerned with how macrostructures are linked to organizational routines and journalistic practices, and emphasizes the dynamic nature of power. But the field and hegemony models part company in their conceptions of power and the potential for its transformation. Hegemony analyses usually entail functionalist-style conclusions, that is, that media systems will tend to “hold . . . communication within limits relatively less threatening to the established order.”³³ In field theory, journalistic fields do *not* always reinforce the power status quo, but under certain conditions may actually transform power relations in other fields. And because power is concep-

tualized as itself divided (between forms of cultural and economic capital, and, at least potentially, among various fields), the mechanisms by which transformation as well as reproduction can occur are laid out much more clearly.

In relation to political economy, broadly speaking, field theory thus explicitly rejects the Chomsky-style notion that the news media's behavior can be explained solely by reference to their capitalist ownership and control.³⁴ In contrast to such mechanical thinking, field theory is dedicated to understanding the web of mediations which intervene between Marx's "infrastructures" and "superstructures." For instance, Bourdieu has been attentive to the innumerable mismatches between individuals and the positions they hold, between dispositions and situations, as well as temporal incoherences (effects of "hysteresis") which lead persons to judge and act today according to dispositions previously acquired under quite different social conditions.³⁵ In contrast to the Marxist contention that the "dominant ideas are the ideas of the dominant class," Bourdieu explores the specific social worlds in which such ideas are actually produced with careful attention to their specific institutions, relationships, and material and symbolic stakes and functioning. Bourdieu thus underlines the possibilities for the autonomy of journalistic and other cultural fields, including the paradoxical manner in which such autonomy comes to be institutionalized, as in, for instance, statutes which serve to protect the university or public television, both institutions of the state, from the state itself.

If field theory cannot be simply labeled a variant of political economy models, it likewise rejects too close an association with cultural theories, at least those which portray symbolic systems as untethered from the social world. Bourdieu shares with Michel Foucault the relational understanding of language derived from Saussure "that a work does not exist by itself, that is, outside relationships of interdependence which unite it to other works." The problem, according to Bourdieu, is that Foucault refuses to acknowledge that there is something outside of such language games and that he thus "transfers into the 'paradise of ideas' . . . the oppositions and antagonisms which are rooted in the [social] relations between the producers and the consumers of cultural works."³⁶ One could offer a similar critique of Roland Barthes' semiology or more recently the culturalist sociology of Jeffrey Alexander.³⁷

Methodologically, many field case studies seem closest to the Anglo-American tradition of newsroom organizational ethnographies (although any complete examination of the field necessarily involves historical and statistically-informed institutional analysis as well).

Organizational studies emphasize the bureaucratic constraints imposed on journalists by their employing organizations and by the official agencies who serve as their chief sources. Field theory shares with the organizational approach a highly empirical approach and interest in the everyday practice of journalism.³⁸ Where field theory, at least in principle, differs from the standard organizational literature is in its more systematic attempt to incorporate empirical data on individual journalists, newsbeats, and media organizations into progressively larger systems of power.

Here perhaps is where the distinct characteristics of field theory become most evident. If there is some evidence that bureaucratic characteristics of newsrooms vary, the most significant differences seem to be cross-national.³⁹ Thus, while organizational dynamics are important, they probably exert their most powerful semiautonomous effects not at the level of individual organizations, but at the mezzolevel of the interorganizational "field," which tends to be national. This concept of field would also incorporate influences arising from characteristics of journalists as individuals (social and educational background) and as a corporate group defending (and struggling to define) a professional identity. In short, the "field" opens up a new *unit of analysis* for media research: the entire universe of journalists and media organizations acting and reacting in relation to one another.⁴⁰

In this sense, American "new institutionalism" and Bourdieu's field theory share many features in common. New institutionalists likewise argue that contemporary societies are composed of a number of competing and semiautonomous institutional orders or fields and that a focus on these "intermediate-level institutions . . . [helps explain] variation among capitalist countries."⁴¹ For example, Timothy Cook shows how the media system may act as a "political institution" in its own right, in that journalistic "production values" linked to increased market pressures have not only shaped how journalists frame their news reports, but have led policy makers to increasingly create and shape policies *in order* to achieve media attention.⁴² Like Bourdieu, Cook identifies elements that all actors within the field have in common, particularly the implicit codes and practices about what constitutes news. From where do these shared assumptions come? For both new institutionalist and field theories, there is no such thing as natural historical evolution; there is, however, "path dependency," in other words, the likelihood that the outcomes of past historical struggles will tend to have constraining effects on the future to the extent that these outcomes are transformed into implicit rules — common sense assumptions about how the world works that can scarcely be articulated let alone chal-

lenged.⁴³ Drawing on organizational sociology, new institutionalist Bartholomew Sparrow suggests another reason for homogeneity across media organizations: the desire to reduce risk amidst the uncertainty of the organizational environment.⁴⁴

For Bourdieu, however, institutionalization is a *variable*; the extent to which rules and practices are “institutionalized” is one important way in which fields differ from one another (and over time).⁴⁵ And if both Bourdieu and his new institutionalist cousins emphasize some form of uniform field or institutional logic, Bourdieu’s theory takes power dynamics more seriously, both within and among fields (or institutional orders). As a result, field analysis places greater emphasis than new institutionalism on competition and distinctions among journalists, and thus pays greater attention to such social phenomena as competition over scoops, the “revue de presse” in which journalists monitor the stories of their colleagues at other media outlets, struggles over access to sources, changes in the relative prestige of news organizations, in short, to the “relational” construction of journalistic identity. Moreover, Bourdieu’s model places a greater emphasis on individual class (*habitus*) backgrounds (of both journalists and their audiences) in addition to the already noted morphological aspects of fields, that is, the number of agents seeking entry into a field relative to the number of positions available, the geographical concentration of those agents, etc.⁴⁶

In sum, field theory positions itself precisely between those approaches (political economy or cultural) that commit the “short-circuit” fallacy and link news production directly to the interests of broad social classes or the national society, and those (organizational) that focus too narrowly on particular news producers. Field research thus calls for the examination of “institutional logics”: the simultaneous analysis of social structures and cultural forms, as well as the complex interplay between the two.⁴⁷

New Frontiers for Field Theory: Contributions of this Book

In this volume, we are fortunate to be able to include not only a never-before-translated essay by Pierre Bourdieu, but a range of empirical and theoretical papers by French and American media scholars who have found it extremely fruitful to think “with” (and even “against”) Bourdieu – in the process, we hope, expanding and stretching field theory’s capacity to explore and explain increasingly complex news

media environments. Chapter 2 was originally a university lecture delivered by Bourdieu in Lyons, France. Since it was prepared to be spoken, the tone is informal and accessible. Bourdieu sought to deepen understanding of field relations and structural tendencies, and thus he downplayed subtle dynamics of human agency developed elsewhere in his writings. But this brief text clearly states several of the main elements of field theory: the notion that reality is both relational and hidden from ordinary intuition, “field” as a concept meant to be put to work empirically, how use of the concept helps avoid the excesses of either “internalist” or “externalist” readings of texts, and the meaning of “autonomy.”

If Bourdieu’s essay focuses on journalism’s external relations with the political and social scientific fields, the chapter by Patrick Champagne looks more closely at the internal dynamics of the journalistic field. Taking as a starting point an increasing concern with ethics among French journalists, Champagne emphasizes how this “malaise” is no accident, but the result of the journalistic field’s increasingly ambiguous and tenuous position in the field of power: “Journalists are structurally condemned to produce . . . under political and/or economic constraints” (p. 50). Champagne’s essay is useful not only for the insight it gives us into the particular circumstances of the French journalistic field, but for the way it uses the French case as a means of illustrating general operations of journalistic fields everywhere, such as the process of “story pick-up” through which media outlets (some with more “consecrating power” than others) signal to each other what is important and what is not.

The following two chapters – Marchetti’s and Benson’s – attempt to draw out what is implicit but often underdeveloped in field theory: the element of variation. Dominique Marchetti’s empirical concern is with the various types of journalistic specialties. Marchetti’s focus on specific types of journalists, rather than journalists as a whole, follows from the basic relational insight of field theory that discursive disposition varies systematically depending on one’s relative position in social space. As Marchetti explains, “Because specialized journalists have different characteristics and thus different categories of perception for the same event, the handling of news will sometimes be noticeably different according to the specialty mobilized” (p. 70). Marchetti’s essay has the virtue of synthesizing the “thick descriptions” of dozens of individual case studies and then abstracting from these cases a number of variables that help account for differences among specialized subfields, e.g., “degree and forms of competition and collaboration,” “journalistic demographic characteristics,” and “mechanisms of professional socialization.”

In chapter 5, Benson notes that Bourdieu-inspired French case studies of journalism have surprisingly little to say about what makes the French press distinctive. In the attempt to explain why a French “political/literary” journalism continues to differ from its American “informational” other, field theory is nudged in new directions. For instance, a French-American comparison powerfully calls into question Bourdieu’s elision of economic and political constraints, as in the phrase the “pole of economic and political power.”⁴⁸ This kind of compression of two analytically distinct forms of power provides no leverage to explain the different ways that US and French (not to mention British or other) state bureaucracies or elected bodies wield power over the news media, often in direct or indirect conflict with market logics. While national case studies emphasize how heterogeneous economic pressures combined with morphological shifts have seemingly transformed journalism (and surrounding fields), Benson shows how cross-national research calls attention to the relative lack of change. In order to explain enduring cross-national differences in journalistic practice, field theory would do better to document variations in pressures (both enabling and constraining) from the political field, historical path dependent processes of field formation, and internal structural-ecological properties of the journalistic field.

In perhaps the classic illustration of a complete (if necessarily compressed)⁴⁹ field analysis, Patrick Champagne and Dominique Marchetti (chapter 6) examine the scientific, political, and journalistic construction of the “contaminated blood scandal” – charges that during the mid-1980s top government health officials knowingly distributed HIV-infected blood to thousands of French hemophiliacs. They show how this media event, which emerged and reemerged several times between the mid-1980s and early 1990s, both reflected and helped to bring about a new discursive order in medical information: moving from one in which specialists generally set the agenda and tone of medical information released to the public to one in which journalists, under increasing economic pressures, are willing to use drama, emotion and unconfirmed reports in order to maximize audience share. Champagne and Marchetti analyze the complex interplay between on the one hand long-brewing structural changes in the journalistic, medical/scientific, and political fields, and on the other, a range of historically-contingent events and actions. Their case study shows how field theory can contribute to the “social problems” research tradition in sociology, offering a “structural constructivism” that allows for the simultaneous analysis of changing media (and other) institutions along with changing social problem definitions,

distinct research problematics too often separated by Anglo-American researchers.

In the next case study, a thorough mapping of the French subfield of economic or business reporting (chapter 7), Julien Duval analyzes the relative convergence and overlap among media outlets possessing various amounts of economic and professional capital. Overturning the conventional view that journalistic professionalism is opposed to commercialism, Duval finds that media outlets highly dependent on the economic field also tend to possess the most internal professional symbolic capital. Despite the centrality of correspondence analysis for so much of Bourdieu’s empirical research (*Distinction* and *The State Nobility*, especially), Duval’s study is in fact a rare and exemplary attempt to use this method to study the news media. Future research could build upon Duval’s template by mapping fields during two time periods and then linking these structural characteristics to “before” and “after” news content analyses.

In chapter 8, Eric Darras examines the leading US and French political talk shows, *Meet the Press* and *L’Heure de vérité* (Hour of Truth). Against the conventional wisdom of all-embracing media power, Darras shows that political talk shows serve as political institutions whose selection of guests and ideas is dictated far more by the logic of the political field (occupancy of powerful positions) than the journalistic/media field (appearance, self-presentation, etc.). Differences in the American and French shows are also best explained by differences in political systems and traditions rather than media systems. Darras’s analysis shows that Bourdieu’s field theory is clearly not a neo-Marxist dogmatism that always insists on the power of the economic field, but is rather an empirical tool to help examine the complex and varying relations and hierarchies of fields.

Eric Klinenberg (chapter 9) argues that field theory is especially useful for mapping the range of challenges facing youth media activists and other groups interested in effecting change within journalism. Bourdieu’s concept of capital (cultural, economic, social, and symbolic) provides additional explanatory power, since the varying distributions of capital among different agents determine their capacity for effective action. For Klinenberg, field theory also helps to call attention to the structural and conjunctural conflicts and affinities that unite or divide similarly disposed actors, and in this case helps to show how competition for resources split potential allies.

Part III – Critical Reflections – highlights three major aspects of Bourdieu’s field theory which are in need of further elaboration: audiences, autonomy, and intra- and interfield dynamics.

In chapter 10, in addition to helping situate field theory vis-à-vis the Frankfurt School and British Cultural Studies, Neveu argues that it is simply not true that Bourdieu or that field analysis in general has ignored audiences. Not, given Bourdieu's complex understanding of structure and agency, is it true that Bourdieu portrays audiences as somehow passive or "cultural dopes." At the same time, as this volume shows, field analyses often do emphasize production over consumption. As Neveu concludes in chapter 10, field theory can and must be developed so that its unique spotlight more fully illuminates all three interdependent aspects of field (production), form (discourse), and reception.

Is there a naive or overblown faith in the virtues of field autonomy present in Bourdieu's theory, if only implicitly? Michael Schudson's essay (chapter 11) directly confronts this important normative question, noting Bourdieu's own admission of the dangers of an "egoistic closing-in on the specific interests of the people engaged in the field" (citing Bourdieu, p. 45). Even more than the scientific communities which Thomas Kuhn criticized for their resistance to new ideas, journalism, Schudson argues, "has no systematic means for policing its own intellectual narrowness" (p. 219). Rather than attempting to preserve its autonomy, Schudson insists, journalism should remain open to the social, political, and even economic currents sweeping society. This normative issue certainly deserves further debate, and it may well be that autonomy is more desirable in some fields than others. We would only emphasize that such questions do not minimize what seems to us the unique empirical value of the notion of field autonomy: both objectively (the ways in which journalists are actually insulated from outside influences) and subjectively (journalists' professional self-understandings), autonomy offers a potentially significant and previously understudied variable shaping the practice of journalism.

In the closing chapter of this volume, Daniel Hallin praises Bourdieu's field theory for conceptualizing media as an institution within a wider social formation. As the co-author with Paolo Mancini in 2004 of an important work on comparative media systems,⁵⁰ Hallin systematically compares field theory with other models that have attempted to analyze media at the systemic level, in particular the neo-Parsonian differentiation theory of Jeffrey Alexander and Habermas's model of the public sphere. Hallin finds that field theory has certain advantages, avoiding the differentiation model's evolutionary assumptions and highlighting how markets as well as states limit autonomy. Whereas Alexander posits increasing differentiation, Bourdieu (and Habermas) see increasing de-differentiation of the

press vis-à-vis the economy – which Hallin regards as a reasonable if incomplete assessment of current trends. Hallin also sees room for further development of field theory – to take more seriously cooperation as well as competition among journalists, to link more explicitly structural transformations with the systematic data on the discursive "representation of different social interests," and to better account for heteronomous interfield conflicts, especially between the political and economic fields.

Conclusion: Two Modes of Incorporation

Having argued that field theory and its associated terms – especially capital and habitus – offer a coherent and powerful analytical model for media research, we want to emphasize that we are not insisting that Anglophone researchers simply "take it or leave it." Just as French field researchers have borrowed fruitfully from Anglo-American political economy, organizational, and institutional studies, we would expect that non-French researchers will make their own judgments about what is new, interesting, insightful or useful. At the same time, we would caution against an "anything goes" approach: the better one understands the precise meanings of Bourdieu's terms, the more one is likely to be in a position to test, use, and actually improve upon them, as well as engage in a dialogue with the increasing numbers of other researchers also using the model. We conclude simply by noting two modes of appropriation that make the most sense to us.

The first, more modest incorporation of field theory would begin by building upon the categorizations of influences on news production offered by such media scholars as Herbert Gans, Todd Gitlin, Michael Schudson, Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese.⁵¹ These categorizations include both broad macrolevel factors (political, economic, and cultural) and microlevel factors including journalists' personal and professional characteristics and the organizational dynamics brought to light by the classic newsroom ethnographies of the 1970s. Influences emerging from the semiautonomous journalistic field – a mezzolevel organizational, professional and ideological space – represent an additional variable not previously considered. Future challenges, taken up by several authors in this volume, would thus include such questions as the following: How precisely do journalists and journalistic organizations exert influence on one another in ways that supplement or contradict constraints emerging within the single newsroom? And, to the extent that journalistic production

is not the simple reflection of economic imperatives, or political pressures, or national cultural idioms, in what ways do (various kinds of) journalistic fields resist or reshape such outside pressures?

If incorporating field effects into existing models in the sociology of news can thus be seen as potentially quite productive, there are also benefits that would accrue from a more theoretically ambitious project. Advocating the concept of hegemony for media analysis, Todd Gitlin once wrote that it offers "not so much an alternative as a more ample theoretical domain."⁵² While one can, as above, analytically separate the independent effects on news discourse produced by various kinds of structural factors, there are limitations to such an approach. Precisely because these effects are not independent, but act in relation to one another, the need for a more "ample" theoretical model remains. As Craig Calhoun notes, in reference to Habermas, what we crucially lack is an analysis of the "internal organization" of the public sphere, in other words, a mapping of the public sphere as a "socially organized field, with characteristic lines of division, relationships of force, and other constitutive features."⁵³ Leading scholars have anticipated or recently taken up this challenge, from Hilgartner and Bosk's "public arenas" to Asard and Bennett's "marketplace" model to Hallin and Mancini's "media systems."⁵⁴ However, like Calhoun as well as Philip Schlesinger,⁵⁵ we are inclined to believe that field theory offers the best developed means of providing this comprehensive mapping not only of the media space, but of increasingly "mediatized" societies.⁵⁶

In sum, whether field theory is used in a limited, or ample, form, we believe its virtues are numerous. First, field theory provides a means of incorporating history into the very heart of media analysis. Fields cannot be understood apart from their historical genesis and trajectory; likewise, individual agents' actions are not simply determined by social position, but are the result of a complex, always partially contingent interplay between one's social and educational trajectory and the position within a field where one finds oneself at any given moment. History is also behind whatever semiautonomous institutional logic a field offers up as a partial barrier against the varieties of heteronomous power (themselves also the cultural products of historically contingent struggles). Second, we gain a tool for relational and spatial social analysis. This relational approach helps us locate, situate, and explain the very real differences among media outlets according to their position of different types and quantities of capital. Finally, field theory provides perhaps the best defense against Schlesinger's warning of "media-centrism," helping us situate journalism in its larger systemic environment. Against the fruitless question of asking whether the press

is or is not "independent," research could help pinpoint the journalistic field's relative position vis-à-vis the range of other societal fields that compete to shape our vision of the social world. In enumerating these virtues, we are not unaware, as we hope this introduction demonstrates, of critiques and challenges of methods, empirical foci, and theoretical assumptions. As more and more researchers engage with the model, we expect that some of these challenges will be worked through, while new ones will emerge. Field theory itself will be tested and modified in the process. That is as it should be, for a theory that is and must remain a work in progress.

Notes

- 1 See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1989) and Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1997), ch. 6.
- 2 One of Bourdieu's earliest major articles was focused on media. See Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, "Sociologues des mythologies et mythologies de sociologues," *Les Temps modernes*, 211 (1963), pp. 998–1021, discussed with excerpts in chapter 10 by Erik Neveu. See also P. Bourdieu, "The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods," *Media, Culture and Society*, 2/3 (July 1980), pp. 261–93 (republished in *The Field of Cultural Production* (Polity, Cambridge, 1993, and Columbia University Press, New York, 1993), pp. 74–111), which examines theater criticism in newspapers, and *Distinction* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1984), esp. ch. 8. Early Bourdieu-inspired research on news media was also conducted by Louis Pinto, *Le Nouvel Observateur, ou l'intelligence en action* (AM Métaillé, Paris, 1984) and Patrick Champagne, *Faire l'opinion: le nouveau jeu politique* (Minuit, Paris, 1990).
- 3 Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television* (The New Press, New York, 1998).
- 4 This chapter builds upon the authors' previous efforts to analyze field theory's unique contributions to media research. See Rodney Benson, "Field Theory in Comparative Context: A New Paradigm for Media Studies," *Theory and Society*, 28 (1999), pp. 463–98, and "Bringing the Sociology of Media Back In," *Political Communication*, 21 (2004), pp. 275–92; and Erik Neveu, "Field Theory as a Work in Progress," paper presented to the France-Berkeley Fund conference on Contemporary Media and Politics, Berkeley, CA, May 2000, and *Sociologie du journalisme* (La Découverte, Paris, 2001), esp. pp. 34–42.
- 5 See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1995, and Polity, Cambridge, 1996), *The Field of Cultural Production*.

- 6 Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Space," in *Practical Reason* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1998, and Polity, Cambridge, 1998), p. 3.
- 7 Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992 and Polity, Cambridge, 1992), pp. 96-7.
- 8 Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 170.
- 9 Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 126.
- 10 Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 133; see also Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2000, and Polity, Cambridge, 2000), ch. 2.
- 11 "Social space is constructed in such a way that agents or groups are distributed in it according to their position in statistical distributions based on the *two principles of differentiation* which, in the most advanced societies . . . are undoubtedly the most efficient: economic capital and cultural capital" (Bourdieu's italics). See Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Space," p. 6.
- 12 Cultural capital may take multiple forms: embodied (manners of the diplomat), objectified (owning a Monet painting), or institutionalized (cultural capital as certified by an authority: the Pulitzer or Nobel prize). See Pierre Bourdieu, "Les Trois états du capital culturel," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 30 (1979), pp. 3-6.
- 13 For the best explication of the concept of field, see Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, esp. pp. 94-115. See also David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997), pp. 117-42.
- 14 Is society composed entirely of fields? Bourdieu's choices of research topics suggest he primarily viewed fields as relatively elite realms of cultural, political or economic entrepreneurial activity. Moreover, the distinction that Bourdieu usually makes between "fields" and "social space" as a whole clearly implies there are spaces that are not fields. The term "field" seems to encompass at least a mezzolevel of social interaction and imply a certain amount of institutionalization and status competition. For example, there is little in Bourdieu's model to support the notion of "fields of domestic and intimate relations" as suggested by Louis McNay ("Gender, Habitus and Field," *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16, 1999, pp. 95-117).
- 15 "Told of Mr. King's selection [to receive the National Book Award's 'annual medal for distinguished contribution to American letters'], some in the literary world responded with laughter and dismay . . . [Said one cofounder of the award granting foundation] 'You put him in the company of a lot of great writers, and the one has nothing to do with the other. He sells a lot of books. But is it literature? No.'" From David D. Kirkpatrick, "A Literary Award for Stephen King," *New York Times*, September 15, 2003, Arts Section, p. 1.
- 16 Bourdieu defines social capital as follows: "Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition." (*An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 119). See also Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1992, and Polity, Cambridge, 1992), pp. 112-21.
- 17 Bourdieu writes that symbolic capital is manifested through "the recognition, institutionalized or not, that [one] receive[s] from a group." See Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed., John Thompson (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1991, and Polity, Cambridge, 1991), p. 72. Thompson, in his introduction to that same volume (p. 14) defines symbolic capital as "accumulated prestige or honor." Recently, Nick Couldry offers the intriguing argument that media constitute a new form of symbolic power - "media meta-capital" (in essence, celebrity) - that increasingly trumps the power of symbolic capital emerging within specialized fields of cultural production. Couldry elaborates and extends the concept of "media capital" introduced by Champagne (*Faire l'opinion*, pp. 237 and 243 for example). See Nick Couldry, "Media Meta-Capital: Extending the Range of Bourdieu's Field Theory," *Theory and Society*, 32 (2003), pp. 653-77.
- 18 For visual representations of field relations, see Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 38, and Benson, "Field Theory in Comparative Context," pp. 466, 472.
- 19 For discussion of the short-circuit fallacy, see Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 181 and 188.
- 20 Alain Accardo, *Journalistes précaires* (Le Mascaret, Bordeaux, 1998).
- 21 On this general question of deviant trajectories, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1996, and Polity, Cambridge, 1996), pp. 183-7. In *Journalistes au quotidien* (Le Mascaret, Bordeaux, 1995), p. 48, Alain Accardo also posits that for working-class journalists the tension of living between two habitus can contribute to the formation of a critical perspective toward standard journalistic practices, though such potentially subversive elements are normally overcome by the overwhelming bourgeois character of the media field.
- 22 See, e.g., Olivier Donnat, ed., *Regards croisés sur les pratiques culturelles* (La Documentation française, Paris, 2003) and Bernard Lahire, *La Culture des individus* (La Découverte, Paris, 2004).
- 23 A recent study of French detective novels ("neopolars"), for instance, found that contrary to the received wisdom that their audience is largely composed of academics and intellectuals, working-class as well as upper-class readers are also quite common. Instead of concluding that readership is thus randomly distributed, a closer analysis has revealed that working-class readers tend to be former Left party or union

- activists, while most upper-class readers have risen socially or culturally to that status (and thus, the detective novels, generally situated in working class milieu, constitute a sort of "remembrance of things past"). See Erik Neveu and Annie Collovald, *Lectures du roman policier* (BPI, Paris, 2004).
- 24 Bourdieu, *On Television*, p. 50. Régis Debray's notable history of French intellectuals, translated into English as *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France* (Verso, London, 1981), owes much to Bourdieu's analysis of the increasing mediatization of the intellectual field; the same cannot be said of Debray's current approach, which he terms *médiologie*. See Régis Debray, *Media Manifestos: On the Technological Transmission of Cultural Forms* (Verso, London, 1996).
- 25 For Bourdieu, however, the category of "omnibus" extends to all media outlets which "maximize their clientele by neutralizing their product" (*Distinction*, p. 442), such as most regional newspapers as well as broadcast television. On the logic of (commercial) television, see also Patrick Champagne, "La Loi des grands nombres: Mesure de l'audience et représentation politique du public," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 101-2 (March 1994), pp. 10-22.
- 26 Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Penguin, New York, 1985), pp. 84, 105. Elsewhere, Postman concedes that television is not everywhere the same; nevertheless, he insists, American commercial television is the expression of the medium's inherent "full potentialities as a technology of images" (p. 86).
- 27 In this sense, Bourdieu's analysis bears some resemblance to that of Raymond Williams's *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Routledge, London, 1974).
- 28 See, e.g., Couldry, "Media Meta-Capital," p. 673.
- 29 Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 110.
- 30 See Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 421-61; and "Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere," in *Between Facts and Norms* (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1996), pp. 329-87.
- 31 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, pp. 181, 185.
- 32 Daniel C. Hallin, *We Keep America on Top of the World: Television Journalism and the Public Sphere* (Routledge, London, 1994), p. 12.
- 33 Hallin, *We Keep America on Top of the World*, p. 80.
- 34 Bourdieu, *On Television*, pp. 16, 39.
- 35 On the "hysteresis effect," see, e.g., Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 109.
- 36 Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 178-9.
- 37 See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (The Noonday Press, New York, 1990 [1957]), and, for example, Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith, "The Discourse of American Civil Society: A New Proposal for Cultural

- Studies," *Theory and Society*, 22 (1993), pp. 151-207. Barthes, unlike Alexander and colleagues, does suggest some link (if diffuse) between mass-mediated mythologies and social class relations.
- 38 See, for example, the two special double issues on journalism of Bourdieu's journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*: 101-2 (1994) and 131-2 (2000).
- 39 Frank Esser finds systematic differences in newsroom organization between British and German newspapers. See Esser, "Editorial Structures and Work Principles in British and German Newsrooms," *European Journal of Communication*, 13 (1998), pp. 375-405.
- 40 In practice, field studies tend to examine some (geographical or medium-related) sub-universe of a national journalistic field, but this still represents a clear break from the classic single newsroom study. See, e.g., Eric Klinenberg, "The Spectacular City," in *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002), pp. 185-224; Georgina Born, "Strategy, Positioning and Projection in Digital Television: Channel Four and the Commercialization of Public Service Broadcasting in the UK," *Media, Culture & Society*, 25 (2003), pp. 773-99; and Ida Schultz, "Relational News Values: Media Field, Journalistic Practice & Television News," unpublished manuscript (May 2004), Department of Communication and Journalism Studies, Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark. For a study that analyzes transformations (or the lack thereof) across the major news outlets of a national journalistic field - and how relations among outlets potentially shapes news coverage - see Rodney Benson, "The Political/Literary Model of French Journalism: Change and Continuity in Immigration Coverage, 1973-1991," *Journal of European Area Studies*, 10, 1 (2002), pp. 49-70. For an analysis of the British national journalistic field, see Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2000).
- 41 Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," in *Structuring politics: Historical institutionalism in comparative analysis*, ed. K. Thelen, F. Longstreth, and S. Steinmo (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992), pp. 10-11.
- 42 Timothy E. Cook, *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998).
- 43 John Mohr terms this process "the inertial effects of institutionalized forms of knowing and acting." See Mohr, "Introduction: Structures, Institutions, and Cultural Analysis," *Poetics*, 27 (2000), p. 58.
- 44 Bartholomew H. Sparrow, *Uncertain Guardians: The News Media as a Political Institution* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1999), pp. 14-17.
- 45 In *The Rules of Art* (p. 382, fn. 22), in an analysis that could easily apply to the "journalistic field," Bourdieu insists precisely on this reason for preferring the term "field" over that of "institution":

There is nothing to be gained by replacing the notion of literary field with that of "institution": besides the fact that it risks suggesting, by its Durkheimian connotations, a consensual image of a very confictual universe, this notion causes one of the most significant properties of the literary field to disappear – its *weak degree of institutionalization* [Bourdieu's italics]. This is seen, among other indices, in the total absence of arbitrage and legal or institutional guarantee in conflicts of priority or authority and, more generally, in the struggles for the defense or conquest of dominant positions.

- 46 For an extended discussion of field theory and new institutionalism in relation to news media research, see Rodney Benson, "News media as a journalistic field: What Bourdieu adds to new institutionalism, and vice versa," *Political Communication* (under review).
- 47 Mohr, "Introduction," p. 64; see also Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," in *In Other Words* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1990), and Polity, Cambridge, 1990), ch. 8.
- 48 See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1988, and Polity, Cambridge, 1988), p. 38, and p. 41 in this volume. See Benson, "Field theory in comparative context," pp. 482–3 for an earlier articulation of this critique relative to Bourdieu's writings on the news media. On the overall lack of attention by Bourdieu to contradictions in interfield relations, see Swartz, *Culture and Power*, p. 128.
- 49 For a more in-depth examination, see Dominique Marchetti, "Contribution à une sociologie des transformations du champ journalistique dans les années 80 et 90. A propos d' 'événements sida' et du 'scandale du sang contaminé,'" Paris, doctoral thesis in sociology (Pierre Bourdieu, director), Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1997.
- 50 Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004).
- 51 See Herbert Gans, *Deciding What's News* (Vintage, New York, 1980); Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1980), esp. pp. 249–51; Michael Schudson, "The Sociology of News Production Revisited (Again)," in *Mass Media and Society*, ed. J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (Arnold, London, 2000), pp. 175–200; and Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content* (Longman, New York, 1991). See Benson, "Bringing the Sociology of Media Back In," for a more elaborated discussion.
- 52 Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*, p. 251.
- 53 Craig Calhoun, "Introduction," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 38.

- 54 See Stephen Hilgartner and Charles L. Bosk, "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model," *American Journal of Sociology*, 94 (1988), pp. 53–78; Erik Åsard and W. Lance Bennett, *Democracy and the Marketplace of Ideas: Communication and Government in Sweden and the United States* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997); and Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*.
- 55 See Calhoun, "Introduction," p. 48, fn. 57, and Philip Schlesinger, "Rethinking the Sociology of Journalism: Source Strategies and the Limits of Media-Centrism," in *Public Communication: The New Imperatives*, ed. M. Ferguson (Sage, London, 1990), esp. pp. 77–9. Schlesinger sees field theory chiefly as an advance on Stuart Hall's overestimation of the power of official "primary definers" to shape the news: "The main value of Bourdieu's schema . . . lies in conceiving of dominance as a continual struggle for position involving the mobilization of resources in a process of change. Putting it differently, primary definition becomes an achievement rather than a wholly structurally predetermined outcome." This fluidity is definitely a part of field theory, and clearly distinguishes it from Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. But perhaps more than Schlesinger, we would emphasize field theory's structuralist credentials, that is, a structuralism of a particularly complex and nuanced sort.
- 56 On the notion of "mediatization," see John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1995, and Polity, Cambridge, 1995).

BOURDIEU AND THE JOURNALISTIC FIELD

**EDITED BY RODNEY BENSON
AND ERIK NEVEU**

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During the spring of 1999, Eric Darras played a crucial role in advancing this project by organizing an application to the France-Berkeley Fund. We proposed to bring together French and American social researchers studying recent transformations of the relations between news media and politics. Our application was accepted, and a conference held on the University of California-Berkeley campus in May 2000 offered a first opportunity to collectively discuss field theory in relation to media research. Neil Fligstein, director of the Center for Culture, Organizations and Politics (University of California, Berkeley) and Rémi Lenoir, director of the CSE, generously offered to jointly host the conference, whose participants in addition to the authors of this volume included Timothy E. Cook, Thomas C. Leonard, and Theodore L. Glasser.

Through dozens of e-mail exchanges and meetings in Paris and Rennes between 2001 and 2003, we considerably refined the focus and organization of the book. Ad hoc brainstorming sessions – in Paris with Patrick Champagne and CSE colleagues, in Toulouse with