

Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison by Rodney Benson Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison by Rodney Benson Review by: Roger Dickinson American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 120, No. 4 (January 2015), pp. 1247-1250 Published by: The University of Chicago Press Stable URL: <u>http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/679065</u> Accessed: 12/05/2015 21:12

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Yanuz anticipates for American entrepreneurs working in the United States. The concept of "the outsider" thus fails to accommodate the fluid nature of entrepreneurs' cultural statuses as they move internationally. While the insider/outsider typology encourages consideration of immigrants' unique advantages, it ultimately fails to provide scholars with a portable concept that captures the relative nature of transnational cultural identities.

Despite these limitations, *The Outsider Entrepreneurs* has much to recommend it. The book helps to move the fields of entrepreneurship and international business in a fresh direction. As Yanuz points out, "Although internationalization is about crossing borders, current research has not examined whether people who have already crossed borders also become international entrepreneurs" (p. 18). The book encourages scholars to consider how immigrants' perspectives and experiences might facilitate and constrain their capacity to act as international entrepreneurs in high-growth, high tech industries. In doing so, this project supports the turn in entrepreneurship research to examine a diversity of immigrants, rather than focusing exclusively on low-skilled immigrant entrepreneurs. Scholars of entrepreneurship and international business will find in this book a novel exploration of the relationship between immigration and international expansion.

Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison. By Rodney Benson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv+280. \$95.00.

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What are the social forces shaping the production of news, how do they operate, and can they be changed? These are the questions that Rodney Benson sets out to answer in his latest book, *Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison*. It is an ambitious enterprise. Media sociologists have long recognized the central nature of news as an object of study. Despite media sociology's numerous analyses of news outputs, news-room culture, and the news industry, involving quantitative and qualitative content analysis, organizational studies, and newsroom ethnographies, few have been able to offer the comprehensive, multilevel analysis that this important field of enquiry demands. Benson attempts to extend and improve upon those venerable traditions of media scholarship by bringing together a study of news content and the organization of news production with a comparative study of the political economy of the news industry in a time frame spanning more than 30 years. He is assisted in this by Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and the concept of the "journalistic field." This

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choice, claims Benson, enables him to straddle what he calls the theoretical "chasms" separating previous studies of news in order to provide a more complete account of the ways news is produced and the factors that shape it. Were this goal not ambitious enough, Benson's second and perhaps more important objective is to make proposals for the news media's reform and improvement.

Benson's approach is to compare, from the early 1970s to the mid-2000s, the reporting of news about immigrants and immigration in the United States and France—countries whose histories and traditions in both respects are sharply contrasting. Immigration is a key topic because globally it has increased during this period, because it has an impact on most people's daily lives, and because the broader processes of migration and their meaning and significance for both "host" and "parent" nation states reach most of us only through the media. Benson wants to ask whether the media are up to this task and whether different types and styles of journalism, different media, and news outlets funded in different ways handle the topic differently.

Benson's highly detailed account of his very systematically designed and meticulously conducted research amounts to a textbook model for future studies in this vein. He examined the news output of seven French and eight U.S. newspapers and three French and four U.S. television channels for the presence or absence of distinct story frames (ways of understanding an issue or news event)—examples include the immigrant as "victim," "hero," or "threat." He charted the range of institutional fields that are represented—by witnesses, event participants, spokespeople, commentators when these frames were used. To gather data on the journalistic field, he interviewed more than 90 journalists, politicians, and immigration activists.

Two of the most valuable features of the book lie in the author's deft handling of the voluminous sociological literature on news, news production, and the analysis of news content and in a lengthy and highly illuminating appraisal of Bourdieu's conceptual framework. Throughout the book, the linkages between the study's empirical components and its theoretical grounding are well articulated and admirably clear. Benson wants to demonstrate that the "mezzolevel" analysis that field theory provides illuminates the processes of news production and journalistic practice more powerfully than has been the case to date. Bourdieu argued that rather than understanding a sphere of social practice from its individual location-the newsroom of a large regional newspaper, say, or the studios of a national news broadcaster, or reading off a set of professional practices from their location on the spectrum of ownership, public to private-the everyday enactment of a social practice such as journalism can be understood in terms of its own "field characteristics," "field dynamics," and "rules of the game." The task for the sociologist of journalism is therefore to chart what goes on inside a given national journalistic field and to examine how the push and pull of professional, economic, and political forces shape this differently according to context.

Benson's study makes cross-national comparisons of immigration news coverage by medium, news format, and funding model, simultaneously examining liberal and political economic perspectives on the news to test their predictive value and drawing out his Bourdieusian framework to provide a more nuanced appraisal of journalistic output and to test his findings against previous work. Refreshingly clear in his presentation, Benson manages to keep all these factors in the foreground as he summarizes and discusses his research. The detail provided is often genuinely arresting and, satisfyingly, confirms much of what previous research has suggested about the nature of news and its manufacture but can now be more fully understood through an analysis of the way characteristics of media systems and structures come to be refracted through distinctive, nationally located journalistic practices.

Benson shows, for example, how market pressures help to shape the news toward superficiality and sensationalism. The narrative news format characteristic of commercial U.S. television news, which tells stories of immigration mostly through the experiences and reactions of individuals (often using dramatic, emotionally affecting images), is contrasted with the multiperspectival journalism that most often distinguishes noncommercial forms. Benson's evidence on PBS is particularly strong. It shows that throughout his sample period, in contrast to the majority of the output of ABC, CBS, and NBC, this service consistently offered space for reflection and debate on immigration news, giving in-depth coverage of diverse opinion and critical points of view and representing civil society groups as well as official sources to provide more complete coverage of the topic.

Despite his emphasis on the press and broadcasting, Benson is alive to the transformative possibilities of the Internet and digital forms of news dissemination. In fact he seems to suggest in his concluding chapter that the affordances of digital media—the facility to provide links in online news reports to specialist, in-depth analysis and academic and expert sources, and space for audience interaction and debate—might help bring together the best features of the two news media systems he has analysed. Nevertheless, the book can be criticized for giving less attention than it might to ways in which the Internet is challenging our idea of what journalism is and what it is for.

That shortcoming apart, while many in the field may have begun to wonder whether the findings of the seminal studies of the 1970s—given the theoretical and methodological chasms between them that Benson identifies—are, after more than 40 years, still relevant, Benson does us the great service of reminding us that the questions that inspired these studies are

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still important and that their close examination remains vital. This approach is one of the book's strengths. No one with a serious interest in the study of journalism can afford to overlook Bourdieu's work. This book provides a very detailed demonstration of its value by one of Bourdieu's most able followers and succeeds in demonstrating how those chasms might be bridged and how more complete answers can be found.

Faith, Family, and Filipino American Community Life. By Stephen Cherry. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv+221. \$27.95 (paper).

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Owing to the U.S. census's emphasis on national origins, Americans often erroneously conclude that ethnic identities function as a cohering label for new immigrants and their descendants. We readily see regional differences in the United States but presume that such regional differences are not meaningful to those from other countries. Stephen Cherry's new work, *Faith, Family, and Filipino American Community Life*, challenges this assumption in his study of Filipino Catholic life in Houston.

Research in Filipino American studies has continued apace as the population has continually grown since the recent spurt following the changes to immigration law in 1965. As the second-largest Asian ethnic group, and the most Catholic in terms of religious affiliation, it is somewhat surprising that less than a handful of social science works have considered the impact of this faith tradition in the process of adaptation for recent Asian immigrants. Cherry's new work introduces readers to a group that is often invisible in immigration research and presents the first book-length study of the Filipino American Catholic immigrant experience outside of California.

Cherry's investigation focuses on the unique interconnected impacts of pre-Catholic and Catholic-era cultural tools and identities among the people of the Philippines. Filipino culture remains highly communal, and its smallest organizational form, the *barangay*, serves as a large extended family that joins multiple families within a local region. It's important to understand that, since the formation of barangays precedes immigration, the recreation of these groups in the United States consists of members of former barangays; loyalty and commitment to new barangays, or other associations, is often tenuous and subject to conflict and schism.

Despite the divisive tendencies of the barangays, Filipino immigrants appear very cohesive at a larger organizational level, the local Catholic parish. Given the centuries-old presence of Catholicism in Filipino culture,

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