

[Nick Couldry](#)

## Media meta-capital: extending the range of Bourdieu's field theory

**Article (Accepted version)  
(Refereed)**

**Original citation:**

Couldry, Nick (2003) Media meta-capital: extending the range of Bourdieu's field theory. [Theory and society](#), 32 (5-6), pp. 653-677.

DOI: [10.1007/1-4020-2589-0\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-2589-0_8)

© 2003 [Kluwer Academic Publishers](#)

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/17655/>

Available in LSE Research Online: September 2013

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

This document is the author's final accepted version of the journal article. There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

**MEDIA META-CAPITAL : EXTENDING THE RANGE OF BOURDIEU'S  
FIELD THEORY**

DR. NICK COULDRY

[Media@lse/](mailto:Media@lse) Department of Sociology,

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK

Tel 0207 955 6243

[n.couldry@lse.ac.uk](mailto:n.couldry@lse.ac.uk)

[to be published in *Theory and Society* 2003/4]

# **MEDIA META-CAPITAL: EXTENDING THE RANGE OF BOURDIEU'S FIELD**

## **THEORY**

### **ABSTRACT**

This article addresses a general problem in media sociology - how to understand the media both as an internal production process and as a general frame for categorising the social world – with specific reference to a version of this problem in recent work on media within Bourdieu's field-based tradition of research (work previously reviewed by Rodney Benson in *Theory and Society* 48). It argues that certain problems arise in reconciling this work's detailed explanations of the media field's internal workings (and the interrelations of that field's workings to the workings of other fields) and general claims made about the 'symbolic power' of media in a broader sense. These problems can be solved, the author argues, by adopting the concept of metacapital developed by Bourdieu himself in his late work on the state, and returning to the wider framework of symbolic system and symbolic power that was important in Bourdieu's social theory before it became dominated by field-theory. Media, it is proposed, have meta-capital over the rules of play, and the definition of capital (especially symbolic capital), that operate within a wide range of contemporary fields of production, and this level of explanation needs to be added to specific accounts of the detailed workings of the media field. The conclusion points to questions for further work, including on the relative strength of the state's and the media's metacapital which must be carried out through detailed empirical work on a global comparative basis.

## **MEDIA META-CAPITAL: EXTENDING THE RANGE OF BOURDIEU'S FIELD THEORY**

The question of media power in a broad sense – how are we to theorise the long-term impacts of the existence and actions of media institutions on social space?<sup>1</sup> – remains one of great difficulty. The media are both a production process with specific internal characteristics (possibly a field of such processes) and a source of taken-for-granted frameworks for understanding the reality they represent (an influence, potentially, on action in all fields). Accounts of media and media power which concentrate exclusively on either questions of ‘production’ or on questions of ideological ‘effects’ are likely, therefore, to be unsatisfactory. A version of the former problem faces recent work on media within Pierre Bourdieu’s tradition of field-based research, in spite of that work’s other virtues. The solution lies in drawing more extensively than such research has done to date on Bourdieu’s own theory of the state, particularly the concept of the state’s ‘metacapital’ over all fields, which offers, as we shall see, a useful analogy to, although not a direct explanation for, the way media institutions impact on an increasingly large range of other fields. This, however, represents a significant extension of the parameters of field-theory, as usually understood.

This argument requires some historical context. Media are one area where the dialogue between Anglo-American sociology and what can justifiably be called Bourdieu’s ‘school of sociology’<sup>2</sup> has been limited, although, as Rodney Benson<sup>3</sup> showed recently in

this journal, media attracted considerable attention in the 1990s not so much from Bourdieu himself as from his research associates, particularly Patrick Champagne.<sup>4</sup> One reason, perhaps, for this limited dialogue is an underlying historical and theoretical tension between Marxist-influenced Anglo-American accounts of media power directed at the media's ideological impacts on the whole of society and Bourdieu's tradition of field-based research that is hostile precisely to general theorising about social space.<sup>5</sup> For that reason, there is no simple basis of exchange between recent Bourdieu-inspired work on media and other better-known theorisations of media and media power.

This is worth explaining in a little more detail, in order to contextualise the extended version of Bourdieu's field theory proposed in this article. If the influential 1970s and 1980s British and American tradition of critical media sociology approached the media's contribution to social reality through ideology<sup>6</sup>, arguing that the media reproduce and disseminate ideological contents originally generated elsewhere (above all, the state), the causal relationship between media-channeled ideology and people's beliefs proved elusive;<sup>7</sup> in any case, this work told us little about the status of media institutions themselves in society generally or in specific sectors of social life.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, postmodern social theory<sup>9</sup> did address the impacts of media institutions on social structure, but only through suggestive pronouncements, rather than empirically grounded detail, so there is no basis of reconnection with Bourdieu's work here. Within a third perspective, Luhmann's systems model of 'the reality of the mass media'<sup>10</sup> offers (in its own terms at least) a rigorous account of how media work within social reality, but one which excludes ideological effects. The truth or falsity of specific media representations

is irrelevant according to Luhmann,<sup>11</sup> who concentrates on the broad functional interrelations between media ‘system’ and social ‘system’, thereby obscuring precisely the contingencies underlying the media process that are most ideological: the tendency for this person or thing, rather than that, to be heard or seen. So while in its respect for the internal workings of media as a productive system Luhmann’s work has something in common with Bourdieu, the former’s neglect of issues of conflict and power moves as far as possible from the political commitment of the latter, who in this respect is much closer to Anglo-US ideology critiques.

Bourdieu’s own work on media and that of researchers close to him could not insist more strongly on the wider social and political consequences of the media process. The result has been some of the boldest criticisms of ‘media culture’ in any tradition, a further reason for the recent unpopularity of such of its work (mainly Bourdieu’s *On Television and Journalism*) as has reached audiences in Britain and the US, where sweeping criticisms of contemporary media have in some quarters become unfashionable. Take this remark from that book: ‘one thing leads to another, and, ultimately television, which claims to record reality, creates it instead. We are getting closer and closer to the point where the social world is primarily described – and in a sense prescribed – by television’.<sup>12</sup> The French version is more vivid: ‘*on va de plus en plus vers des univers où le monde social est décrit-prescrit par la télévision. La télévision devient l’arbitre de l’accès à l’existence sociale et politique*’.<sup>13</sup> The hybrid word ‘*décrit-prescrit*’ captures, if polemically, the naturalising effect of an institutional sector which generates the very categories through which the social world<sup>14</sup> is perceived: a classic Durkheimian point.

Similarly bold comments on the ‘symbolic power’ of the media, particularly television, are found in the work of Champagne, as we shall see (section 1b below). The question, however, on which this article focuses is whether these bold statements are theoretically compatible with the field-theory of media, the latter being the only developed theory of media that Bourdieu and linked researchers have offered. As that theory stands, they are not.

While we come later to the virtues of field-based media research (section 1(a)), there is also something paradoxical about it, at least viewed from other media research traditions, in that it avoids both a general account of the impacts of media representations on social space and a detailed account of media audiences. Its explanatory dynamics are located entirely in the internal workings of the journalistic field or in the specific connections between those internal workings and the operations of other fields which come into contact with it. The result is often to extend in interesting ways Anglo-US work on the sociology of media production.<sup>15</sup> The cost, however, is a tension (section 1(b) below) between the avoidance of theoretical issues that arise outside the field model and the bolder judgements about media that its proponents, probably justifiably, want to make.

This tension is linked to a wider division in Bourdieu’s work between his early, less field-focussed, work on symbolic systems and symbolic power (see section 1(c)) and his later work on fields. This is not so much a problem, as a genuine theoretical crux, since we are back here to the original difficulty for all theorisations of media with which this article began. Hence resolving the tensions of field-based accounts of media, as this article tries

to do, by drawing on Bourdieu's theorisation elsewhere of the state's social power (see section 2), has dividends, not only for our appreciation of the continuity of Bourdieu's work, but also for rethinking some of the aporias of 1970s and 1980s Marxist work on media ideology. It is ironic, no doubt, to be arguing - a quarter of a century since the heyday of Althusserian theories of the media's role among the 'ideological state apparatuses' - that the way forward for contemporary media analyses is via a linkage between Bourdieu's divergent theories of the media field and the state (Bourdieu himself having clearly turned his back on Althusserian models).<sup>16</sup> The difference, however, between the argument developed here and earlier Anglo-US approaches to media/ state is that, first, we will build on the achievements of Bourdieu's own sociology with its rejection of crude totalising accounts of power from 'the centre' and, second, we will seek in doing so to draw on the Durkheim-inspired insights into symbolic power elsewhere in Bourdieu's work. As to the latter Durkheimian tradition, including Bourdieu's own attempt to fuse Marx and Durkheim, it has been ignored in Anglo-US media sociology, with only a few exceptions.<sup>17</sup>

It is necessary to clarify, first, how the term 'media' will be used. By 'media' here is meant the media which, until recently, have been assumed to be society's 'central' media - television, radio and the general press. True, this cuts across a valid distinction between 'central' media and media more specialised in their audience, but this is necessary if we are to begin to address the dimension of media most challenging for field theory: precisely the broader social impact of '*les médias de grande diffusion*'<sup>18</sup>, both within and beyond specific fields.<sup>19</sup> True, this leaves to one side arguments about whether new



media (particularly the Internet and media digitalization) will undermine or simply refashion the social centrality currently attributed to television, radio and the press.<sup>20</sup> But this simplification is justified tactically for two reasons. First, it reflects the focus of media research in the Bourdieu tradition which has not to date analysed new media. Second, there are good reasons to be sceptical about how fundamentally new media, especially the Internet, are changing patterns of media consumption, let alone people's orientation to media as sources of social legitimacy.<sup>21</sup> The conclusion, however, returns to this and other broader issues raised by the analysis.

### ***1. The Incompleteness of the Media Field***

There is little doubt that, as a sphere of cultural production, the media can *prima facie* be analysed as a single field, or a collection of fields, (each) with a distinctive pattern of prestige and status, its own values. Indeed, according to Bourdieu, the media's intermediate position between the cultural and economic poles of the wider cultural field gives it a particular interest as a field. This section notes the positive contribution of field theory to media analysis, before identifying a key tension in its treatment of media power.

#### **(a) The Media as Field(s)?**

In the course of the 1990s, Bourdieu's research associates produced a number of illuminating studies of the workings of the 'journalistic field' (*champ journalistique*) or 'media field' (*champ médiatique*), both terms being used, although the former is more

common. The main argument running through this research was summarised by Bourdieu himself in his controversial lectures published in English under the title *On Television and Journalism*. The argument which is framed in relation to French media culture is essentially as follows:

1. the journalistic field has always occupied a pivotal role in the field of cultural production, because of its specific role in circulating to a wider audience the knowledges of other, more specialised fields. As such, the journalistic field faces contradictory pressures from economic (heteronomous) and cultural (autonomous) forces.
2. In the 1980s and 1990s a combination of factors (including challenges to *Le Monde*'s legitimacy as the main representative of 'serious' journalism and the increasing legitimacy of television, as a mode of popular journalism) led to an increasing influence of television over press journalism and the increasing predominance of economic influences in the media field as a whole.
3. The increasing heteronomy of the media field has had profound effects on other fields of cultural production through the specific form which their relations to the media field have come to take: an increased influence of television news criteria within journalism has increased the susceptibility of those other fields to external (economic) pressures, reducing their autonomy as fields and increasing their reliance, specifically, on the media field.

No doubt we have learnt much from field-based treatments of the media. First, there have been detailed accounts of the changing workings of the journalistic field (2. above) showing specific ways in which journalistic autonomy, not just in France but also in the US, has been reduced.<sup>22</sup> There remain, of course, numerous issues of detail, such as whether there is one such field or many, and, if many, how are they interrelated,<sup>23</sup> but they are of secondary importance, since for Bourdieu the exact boundaries of fields and sub-fields always remains a contingent question for detailed empirical enquiry, rather than a theoretical issue. Much more important are the advances that field research has brought to our understanding of journalistic sources and story-telling practices, augmenting previous Anglo-US work on the sociology of journalism carried out under very different economic and cultural conditions in the 1970s and early 1980s (see above).

The other way in which field research has contributed to our understanding of media is accounts of the changing interrelations between the media field and other fields of cultural production (3. above). These have been discussed in detail by Rodney Benson,<sup>24</sup> so will not be repeated here; they include studies of media's influences on the intellectual field, the judiciary and the medical field. Together they build a rich, historically nuanced, picture of the increasing influence in many fields of a generalist, economically driven journalism. These accounts rely not on any general notion of ideology, but on specific analyses of how the changing internal dynamics of the journalistic field (for example, struggles for dominance between specialist medical press and general news journalists) mesh with the dynamics of those other fields (for example, the emergence of new spokespersons and interest groups in and around the medical field): see for the medical

case Champagne and Marchetti's work discussed further below. It is clear that much is gained by breaking down otherwise highly general claims about 'media power' into specific, historically researchable questions about how external factors (the increasing economic pressures on media production) 'are "translated" by the internal logic of the news media field (and then, how this translated logic is translated into other related fields)'.<sup>25</sup>

There are, however, limitations to the field theory model developed in this work. As Benson argues, there is an ambiguity about what exactly is the source of the 'external factors' influencing the media field and the balance within those external factors of economic (market) and political (state) forces; this ambiguity relates to an ambivalence about how to analyse the state itself.<sup>26</sup> This affects how one can read the direction of influence between the media field and other fields (such as the medical field), given that economic and political forces affect each in quite specific ways.

This article, however, will be concerned with a different issue, namely the implications of the type of influence which field research posits from the media field to other fields. How fields interrelate has always been a difficult question for a research programme whose first concern is always with the internal workings of particular fields.<sup>27</sup> To understand field interrelations field theory has relied on the notion that sets of fields change in tandem through 'homologies' between their internal operations, but as Swartz points out 'homology' just defers explanation to the question of what forces drive the actors in those fields. In Bourdieu's earlier work, this was above all 'habitus',<sup>28</sup> but, given the bias of

habitus towards influences from long-standing dispositions, it is much less clear what underlying mechanism field theory has at its disposal to explain the convergences of sets of fields in a fast-changing economic and cultural environment.<sup>29</sup>

So far this problem is a general one. The two next sections specify more clearly what is at stake here, linking to broader questions of symbolic power which cannot be contained within the framework of field theory.

### **(b) Specific Problem Cases for a Field Theory of Media**

I want first to show, more directly, that using field theory as an exclusive framework of explanation creates difficulties, or gaps, in Bourdieu's and his research associates' account of the media.

Let's turn to Bourdieu's main explicit treatment of the media, the two television talks collected under the title *On Television and Journalism*.<sup>30</sup> This book has been criticised for some of its more sweeping generalisations about the way media represent the social world (their 'trivialisation' of it). I am not convinced by these criticisms, particularly given the background of empirical work on media fields on which Bourdieu implicitly relied. My interest instead is with the gap between Bourdieu's detailed discussion of how the media field(s) operate as fields of production and his reference to the overwhelming 'symbolic power' of television. Implicitly the gap is filled by the convergences assumed between changes within the journalistic field (television's increasing dominance, with its

greater susceptibility to economic influences translated through appeals to audience ratings) and changes in other fields (their increased openness to relations within the journalistic field). But how exactly does this convergence work?

There must be some causal mechanism that explains how what actors in particular non-media fields do is changing. There is more than one type of explanation that could fill this gap in relation to any one non-media field: (1) specific factors (for example, an increasing dependence on markets or audiences reachable only through media) that make media coverage of increased importance to actors in that particular non-media field; (2) specific factors making media coverage more important to actors in a range of related non-media fields (for example, the pressures from the state to make various types of service politically 'accountable', as currently in the educational or health fields); or (3) general factors that have increased the perceived importance of media coverage across all fields. Only the first type of explanation remains within the framework of field theory. The second involves acknowledging changing pressures from other sources on a range of fields, so moving beyond what the intensified economic forces which Bourdieu sees as operating through the proxy of the media field. The third type of explanation raises questions about the simultaneous influences of media on all fields and possibly on the whole of social space, exactly the type of explanation that field research would normally rule out on principle. Yet Bourdieu's account of television does not satisfactorily resolve the choice between these alternative explanatory paths.

A similar problem emerges in Patrick Champagne's work on media. Champagne<sup>31</sup> in *Faire L'Opinion* analyses the media's impacts on contemporary politics through an account of the complex interrelations of the journalistic and the political field. The journalistic field has a relationship with the political field so close that Champagne is tempted to refer to it as 'a journalistic-political field' or 'space'.<sup>32</sup> That relationship, argues Champagne, has transformed the definition of politics,<sup>33</sup> but not for the good. The political field has become increasingly insulated from external influences and conflicts (i.e. from those that politicians are meant to represent). By a 'circular logic',<sup>34</sup> both journalists and politicians 'react' to a version of public opinion which they have largely constructed, through the framing of questions for opinion polls, the reported reactions to those polls' results, and through the influence of journalists' accounts of politics. The same circular logic constrains those outside the political hierarchy who might otherwise break through it; two decades after Baudrillard,<sup>35</sup> but with much greater sociological authority, Champagne<sup>36</sup> argues that demonstrations are often created for the media, as a means of communicating through, and therefore on the terms of, the media.<sup>37</sup>

There is much that is interesting here, but the question again is its theoretical completeness. First, there is something like a sleight of hand in the idea that the previously separate journalistic and political fields have merged. This enables Champagne to talk of the influence of journalists' definitions of 'events' on politicians' definitions of events, without addressing the crucial difficulty: how exactly have representations made by actors in one field come to have such influence on the actions and thoughts of across in another field? Elsewhere, Champagne attempts to harness the

question of media influence on non-media actors back into field theory by claiming that people's differential ability to work well with the media somehow reflects, by a homology, the structures of capital in the fields to which those actors primarily belong:

Everything happens as if the journalistic event was a transposed form, in the relatively autonomous logic of the journalistic field, of the economic, institutional, cultural or symbolic capital which social groups [wanting to be represented in the media] have at their disposal [i.e. for application in their own fields].<sup>38</sup>

It is unclear however how this homology works. Interestingly, Champagne introduces the notion of a new specific type of capital - 'media capital' (*capital médiatique*)<sup>39</sup> to capture people's relative ability to influence journalistic events.<sup>40</sup> But there is only the briefest explanation of this new term,<sup>41</sup> even though it implies an effect that field theory cannot easily encompass. Where, we might ask, is media capital acquired and exercised? In the media field or in the (political, medical, academic, etc) field where the agent in question primarily acts? Perhaps the point of the term 'journalistic-political field' is that such questions don't matter when analysing the media's interactions with politics. But suppose we repeated this move in explaining all non-media fields and their relation to media. The result would be either to fuse all fields influenced by media into a single 'journalistic-cultural field' or to generate a whole parallel set of hybrid 'journalistic-specialist' fields (medical, political, and so on) each with its own version of 'media capital'. Either way, the strength of the field model – its differentiation of the specific dynamics of particular fields - would have been blunted.



The difficulty can be illustrated further by returning to Champagne and Marchetti's analysis of the changing interrelations of media and medical fields around the AIDS crisis in late 1980s France.<sup>42</sup> Our concern here is solely with the way the causal interrelation of these two fields is theorised.<sup>43</sup> What is striking in Champagne and Marchetti's discussion is a dissonance between their detailed explication of the changing dynamics of, respectively, the subfield of medicine-focussed journalists and the medical field, and their very bold statements about 'the growing omnipresence and power accrued to the media and particularly television'.<sup>44</sup> Their analysis of the latter is concerned particularly with the ability of television to define and then generally impose a particular definition of the medical 'scandal' which cut across older, more nuanced and scientifically accountable definitions of medical news:

[1] So the power of the press in the constitution of 'scandals' is fundamental, not the power of the "press of scandals" [yellow press] . . . but that of the main press [*la grande presse*] and especially the Parisian press. It is without doubt hardly an exaggeration to say that what is 'scandalous' is what the journalistic field, acting together, considers as such and goes on to impose on everyone [*parvient surtout à imposer à tous*] . . . [2] What is astonishing in the affair of the contaminated blood is that the qualification of facts as scandalous, far from being evident and immediate, has been the result of a singular battle which notably opposed, over many months, certain victims of the blood contamination against the State, the judiciary and journalists, then

opposed journalists to the medical and political sectors, and finally opposed journalists against each other.<sup>45</sup>

Again note the disjuncture between the second process described (the various inter-field factors which contributed to the definition of this particular case of contaminated blood as a scandal) and the first process (the general power of journalists acting together (*dans son ensemble*) to define whatever is ‘scandalous’ and impose that definition across the board). The first process cannot be reduced to the second, since the latter is general and the former is specific; why not argue, for instance, that the contaminated blood scandal was a wholly exceptional instance, resting on a very specific historical coincidence of battles in the journalistic and medical fields? If so, the first process needs its own explanation: how exactly is it that the main press can ‘impose’ their definitions ‘on all’ and who do we mean by ‘all’? Just some (but an ever increasing number of) specialist cultural fields? Or all fields? Or the whole of social space, including newspaper readers, some of whom may not belong to any field and certainly not the journalistic or medical fields?

It is striking that readers of these press debates are largely absent from Champagne and Marchetti’s account, apart from a passing reference:

So a vision of things is collectively constructed which owes all its force to the fact that it is close to what preexists in the popular consciousness, journalists never having

more force on these occasions than when they speak to '[public] opinion' what it wants to hear.<sup>46</sup>

Benson plausibly reads this as a hegemony-style argument,<sup>47</sup> but if so, like any hegemony style argument, it must say something about the impacts of hegemonic representations on those who are assumed to believe them. This is precisely what cannot be done satisfactorily within the confines of a field-based account, because many or most of those over whom hegemony is assumed to be exercised are not members of the fields in question; they may be professionals who belong to other fields or people who belong no field at all.

The point here is that field-based accounts of media are irrevocably pushed towards a type of explanation which spills out beyond the field model – if that is they are to sustain the bold claims about the media's broader 'symbolic power' which gives this analysis much of its critical edge.

At this point we need to be clear about what exactly we mean by 'symbolic power'. There is a weak and a strong definition of symbolic power between which we must choose. John Thompson's work<sup>48</sup> valuably insists on the symbolic as an important dimension of power alongside the political and the economic. Thompson defines 'symbolic power' as the 'capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others and indeed to create events, by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms'.<sup>49</sup> This definition helpfully captures in general terms the

power of a number of social institutions over symbolic production: the media, the church, educational institutions. But it is a weak concept of symbolic power, because it does not allow for the possibility that certain types of concentration of symbolic power (for example in media institutions) require a special analysis. In particular, Thompson<sup>50</sup> rules out a possibility, suggested by Bourdieu's work, that certain forms of symbolic power are necessarily misrecognised. A strong concept of symbolic power, by contrast, suggests that some concentrations of symbolic power are so great that they dominate the whole social landscape; as a result, they seem so natural that they are misrecognised, and their underlying arbitrariness becomes difficult to see. In this way, symbolic power moves from being a merely local power (the power to construct this statement, or make this work of art) to being a general power, what Bourdieu once called a 'power of constructing [social] reality'.<sup>51</sup> It is the second, strong definition of symbolic power that Bourdieu presumably has in mind when he talks of the symbolic power of television. Such symbolic power legitimates key categories with both cognitive and social force<sup>52</sup> and is defined 'in the very structure of the field in which belief is produced and reproduced'.<sup>53</sup> This power, although it is relevant to the way certain types of capital are constituted as symbolic capital in the context of particular fields, is relevant also to the wider field of power, and indeed social space as a whole. How exactly the media's symbolic power in this broad sense should be theorised consistently with field theory is, as we shall see, illuminated by Bourdieu's late writings on the state.

### **(c) The Media as Symbolic System**

This problem can be reformulated as a question about the treatment of symbolic power in Bourdieu's work more generally.

The analysis by Champagne and Marchetti of the media's growing influence over the medical field turns, as we have seen, on the pervasive influence of specific definitions of the 'scandalous' produced in a medical context. But this notion of 'scandal', whatever the origins of its formulation in particular cases, has much wider usage; it is arguably central to our understanding of the media's impacts on social space.<sup>54</sup> This opens a connection with a rather different type of argument (unconnected with field theory) found in Bourdieu's writings: the construction of the socially resonant systems of categories that Bourdieu calls 'symbolic systems'. In an early lecture on 'symbolic power'<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu used the term 'symbolic system' to describe both the university system and much earlier religious systems which each had authority to classify social space as a whole. Behind this lies Bourdieu's original Durkheimian notion that religious institutions exercise a 'monopoly of the legitimate exercise of the power to modify . . . the practice and world-view of lay people'.<sup>56</sup> A version of this idea pervades Bourdieu's whole sociology of education; it is present also in his interesting essays on 'rites of institution' and 'symbolic power',<sup>57</sup> which were developed in part with reference to societies without highly complex differentiations of labour.<sup>58</sup> Crucially the concept of symbolic systems (having been developed before fields came to dominate Bourdieu's research agenda) implies an explanatory framework which cuts across field theory. For a 'symbolic system' is a structure of misrecognition that works precisely because of its pervasiveness across social space, because of its totalising force.

Is it possible that the gaps we found in field theory-based accounts of the media can be addressed by using concepts (such as symbolic system), which are not tied to the explanatory framework of the field? This would, first, have the merit of linking recent work on media within the Bourdieu tradition more closely to other areas of Bourdieu's work. Specifically, it would clarify the persistence in, for example, Champagne's work of terms more natural in that earlier context, such as 'consecration',<sup>59</sup> that is the media's ability to sanctify certain things as having primary importance.<sup>60</sup> Second, and more important, a connection to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic systems allows into view the impacts which media might have on all fields simultaneously by legitimating certain categories with not just cognitive but also social significance.<sup>61</sup> This is the type of general media influence that, at the beginning of this article, I noted was difficult to integrate into production-focussed analyses.

This suggestion is encouraged by consideration of Bourdieu's later work on the French state. Bourdieu<sup>62</sup> takes over and extends Weber's<sup>63</sup> notion of the state, conceptualising the state as a monopoly of legitimate physical and symbolic violence. In this context he is required to make an important distinction: between (a) the level at which the state's own power (its symbolic power) is established and (b) the field in which agents (civil servants, politicians, and all those passing through the élite schools which, under the French system, control access to state positions) compete for the 'monopoly over the advantages attached to [the state's] monopoly'.<sup>64</sup> The former (a) Bourdieu refers to as the 'field of power' focussed on the state.<sup>65</sup> What is the nature of the power the state

exercises? Bourdieu has in mind not so much a power to act in the context of this or that specialist field, but preeminence over the definitions, for example, of legal and educational status.<sup>66</sup> The state's influence as a reference-point in social life works not in one field only, but across all fields.<sup>67</sup> The 'field of power' of which the state is the central reference-point is not therefore, I suggest, a 'field' in Bourdieu's normal sense. Rather it is better understood as a general space where the state exercises influence (very much like a general symbolic power) over the interrelations between all specific fields (in the usual sense),<sup>68</sup> indeed, perhaps, acts upon social space in general. We are close here to the issue Craig Calhoun<sup>69</sup> identifies, of how to understand the increasing 'convertibility' of different types of capital across the whole range of fields. The state (certainly not only the French state, even if the forms of influence vary in different countries) adds a specific dimension to this issue, because of its increasing influence over the educational field through which everyone passes (and indirectly therefore over the key entry-points into all or most specific fields of production). What is striking, however, is that Bourdieu never connected his or his fellow researchers' work on the media back to his theory of symbolic systems or the state,<sup>70</sup> notwithstanding the connections made elsewhere<sup>71</sup> between media and politics.

Can Bourdieu's late work on the state help us grasp how the media exercise a similar influence on social space, including all specialist fields of production?

***Metacapital: From State to Media***

In the discussions that form *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu was asked whether the state is a sort of ‘meta-field’.<sup>72</sup> His answer strikingly centres on the notion not so much of field, but of capital:

The concentration of . . . different types of capital goes hand in hand with the rise and consolidation of the various fields [i.e. the specific fields which historically have contributed to the power of the state]. The result of this process is the emergence of a specific capital, properly statist capital, born of their cumulation, which allows the state to wield a power over the different fields and over the various forms of capital that circulate in them. This kind of meta-capital capable of exercising a power over other species of power, and particularly over their rate of exchange . . . defines the specific power of the state. It follows that the constitution of the state goes hand in hand with the constitution of the field of power understood as the space of play in which holders of various forms of capital struggle in particular for power over the state, that is, over the state’s capital over the different species of capital and over their reproduction (via the school system in particular).<sup>73</sup>

While the ‘field of power’ ‘above’ particular fields is a term of long-standing in Bourdieu’s work, what is significant here is the structured way Bourdieu sees the state’s own ability to influence what can count as capital in other specific fields. First, Bourdieu sees as a key influence on all fields a force external to them, the workings of the state. The state acts directly on the infrastructure of all fields: it is ‘the site of struggles, whose stake is the setting of the rules that govern the different social games (fields) and in



particular, the rules of reproduction of those games'.<sup>74</sup> Put another way, the state influences the hierarchical relationship or 'exchange rate'<sup>75</sup> between the fundamental types of capital at stake in each individual field (for example, economic versus cultural capital).<sup>76</sup> This power of the state is, crucially, not derived from the workings of any specific field, even if it is quite possible to think of the immediate space of competition between, say, civil servants as a 'field' in its own right. As to the scope of this power, it presumably includes, although Bourdieu does not mention this specifically, influence over what counts as 'symbolic capital' in each particular field. The concept of 'symbolic capital' in Bourdieu generally means any type of capital (economic, cultural, and so on) that happens to be legitimated or prestigious in a particular field,<sup>77</sup> but the concept of metacapital introduces the possibility that definitions of prestige within specific fields may be determined by influences outside those fields, specifically the state's metacapital.

By analogy, I want to propose that we understand media power also as a form of 'meta-capital' through which media exercise power over other forms of power. This gives clearer theoretical shape to Bourdieu's own most interesting insights about the media. When Bourdieu discusses the increasing pressure of television on, say, the academic field,<sup>78</sup> there is of course a direct economic dimension (a large television audience means more books sold), but television exerts also, he suggests, an indirect pressure by distorting the symbolic capital properly at stake in the academic field, creating a new group of academics whose symbolic capital within the academic field rests partly on their appearances on television. There is no reason to suppose this type of shift occurs in just one field and not other fields; on the contrary, it is plausibly occurring widely across the

whole field of specialist production fields, so that we need an overarching concept such as 'meta-capital' to capture it.

Immediately, the question arises how these two types of metacapital - the state's and the media's - interrelate: I return to this in the conclusion. For now, let us concentrate on how the media's own metacapital might work, in particular how it might interact with the conditions obtaining in specific fields. Why assume that its influence is limited to specific fields of production? Just as the state's influence on cultural capital and prestige through the school system (part of what Bourdieu refers to as the state's meta-capital) is not confined to specific fields but radiates outward into social space generally, so the media's meta-capital may impact on social space through the general circulation of media representations. All actors in specific fields are likely also to be actors in general social space and general consumers of media messages. This suggests that the media's metacapital over specific fields might operate in two distinct ways: first, as Bourdieu explicitly suggests for the state, by influencing what counts as capital in each field; and second, through the media's legitimation of influential representations of, and categories for understanding, the social world that, because of their generality, are available to be taken up in the specific conflicts in any particular field. The second type of influence would take us into the media's agenda-setting role across many specific areas of life,<sup>79</sup> and the media's role as the 'frame' within which the generality of social 'issues' get expressed and settled.<sup>80</sup> Should we indeed understand the media as affecting the habitus of individual agents in all fields - a more radical causal link between media and what goes on in particular fields?<sup>81</sup> Clearly to pursue this would require an article in itself.

Instead, let us concentrate on the first, more direct, way of understanding how the media's meta-capital might work.

We might understand the media as altering what counts as symbolic capital in particular fields through its increasing monopoly over the sites of social prestige. Indeed, by altering in parallel what counts as symbolic capital in a range of different fields, media may affect the 'exchange rate' between the capital competed for in different fields (Bourdieu makes just this point in relation to the state's meta-capital). This is quite consistent with Bourdieu's point that capital is only realised by agents in specific forms in specific fields.<sup>82</sup> The symbolic capital (among, say, chefs) that derives from doing a successful television cookery series is not necessarily convertible into symbolic capital in a very different field, such as the academic field; this is because the former need involve few, if any, of the specific attributes valued by media in representatives of the latter. But this does not make the parallel structural transformation by media of the conditions operating in all fields any less significant, nor rule out the possibility that media-based symbolic capital developed in one field can under certain conditions be directly exchanged for symbolic capital in another field. So in Britain recently a well-known television gardener has quickly become a successful popular novelist; clearly this depends the pole of the field of cultural production (mass production or specialist) to which you are closest. Even so, the relationship between media as institutions and all other fields (from politics to the visual arts to sport) has been transformed, when being a player in the former has a significant chance of bringing with it influence over the terms on which people acquire symbolic capital in the latter. When the media intensively cover

an area of life for the first time (in the past decade, gardening or cooking), they alter the internal workings of that sub-field and increase the ambit of the media's meta-capital across the social terrain. This is one important way in which over time media institutions have come to benefit from a truly dominant concentration of symbolic power ('symbolic power' in the strong sense, of a power over the construction of social reality).

It is important to emphasise, however, that this analysis does not supersede the accounts of the journalistic field discussed in section 1, any more than Bourdieu's concept of the state's metacapital rules out analysing government bureaucracy in terms of a field of those who work for the state. The wider implication, however, of Bourdieu's work on state power, which I am extending to media power, is that in contemporary, highly centralised societies certain institutions have a specific ability to influence all fields at once. This links Bourdieu's field theory more explicitly with his other work on symbolic power and symbolic systems, for what is at stake at the level of metacapital is precisely the type of definitional power across the whole of social space which the latter concepts capture.

There is much of course that could be said further to justify the idea that media have metacapital of this sort; I have tried to develop elsewhere a linked argument based on detailed qualitative research.<sup>83</sup> Instead, before concluding, let me look briefly at how this theoretical idea might be empirically tested.

### *Ways forward for Empirical Research*

There are a range of questions which could be asked about how the media's meta-capital is, or is not, progressively altering the operating conditions in any particular field of production:

1. Is media exposure a significant, or even a predominant, form of symbolic capital in that field? (Clearly, for every (sub-)field there are detailed questions about what sort of media exposure counts there, and these are answerable only in terms of the categorisations operating in that (sub-)field, but the importance of the general question remains; examples of (sub-)fields where this question is worth investigating have already been mentioned, such as gardening or cookery, and other examples will be discussed below)
2. If the answer to (1) is yes, to what extent is this changing that field's relationship to other fields where media exposure is also regarded as a significant component of symbolic capital, by allowing successful players in the former to exchange their success there for symbolic capital in the latter?
3. Against the background of (1) and (2), we can turn to the questions more regularly asked previously within field theory: what are the conditions of entry into the specialised media production field (and all its sub-fields), and how are those conditions changing as media-derived capital becomes significant increasingly across the whole range of fields?

These questions raise a further important issue (4): will the increasing influence of media over what counts as symbolic capital across all fields lead, in the longer-term, to the increasing convertibility of media-derived symbolic capital derived across social space as a whole? If so, is a new form of capital (that we might, following Champagne, call ‘media capital’) beginning to emerge: that is, capital for use in any field based on prestige obtained through media exposure? In the long term, ‘media capital’ might emerge in its own right as a new ‘fundamental species of capital’ that works as a ‘trump card’ in all fields<sup>84</sup> - just as economic capital is, and for the same reason: because of its high degree of exchangeability or liquidity<sup>85</sup> - even if the means by which ‘media capital’ can be accumulated or exchanged distinguish it sharply from economic capital. For now, however, this last point must remain speculative.

These questions intersect with existing work and debates on the media’s influence on particular fields. First, the idea that the political field is being transformed fundamentally by politicians’ need for media exposure has been familiar for some time;<sup>86</sup> Champagne’s suggestion of the fusion of the political and media fields (noted above) is also relevant here. Second, Bourdieu’s own strictures on television’s distortion of the proper values of the academic field<sup>87</sup> offer at least a provocation to research into how academics’ notions of symbolic capital are being changed through media, but detailed research needs to be done. A third interesting area is the visual arts, where (as Julian Stallabrass has argued)<sup>88</sup> media exposure has increasingly become the stuff of artistic success, as well as the subject of artistic reflection (Tracey Emin’s and Gavin Turk’s work, to name just two UK artists of international reputation). Particularly difficult, if potentially also the most far-

reaching in its consequences, would be research on the economic field: to what extent is media exposure becoming not only a sign of prestige among business players, but an asset that can be directly converted into economic capital? In limited forms such as ‘stars’ or ‘brands’, this has long been the case,<sup>89</sup> but there is a more general question about how far media exposure as a token of anticipated economic success makes something like ‘media capital’ increasingly integral to business at all levels. Qualitatively rich studies of contemporary business and finance cultures and their interrelations with the media field would be welcome.

These questions, in effect, continue Bourdieu’s interest in ‘the production of belief’,<sup>90</sup> but apply it across all fields and their interrelations. We need to study the categories (in a Durkheimian sense) through which an increasingly pervasive ‘mediatization’,<sup>91</sup> of public and private life may be becoming normalised, even legitimated.

### ***Conclusion***

This article has developed in theoretical terms a proposal for supplementing existing field-based accounts of the media’s operations with an analysis of the media’s meta-capital over all fields and social space. The aim has been to open up possible answers to questions unresolved in purely field-based accounts of media. The aim has also been to show how, by a modest extension of the field-based model that draws on the rest of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework, we can more satisfactorily deal with the difficulty of

explaining media as both production process and symbolic system with which the article began.

There remain, however, some unsettled theoretical questions. First, what is the relationship between the media and the state, and their respective meta-capitals? Leaving aside the possibility that we should see the media as part of the state,<sup>92</sup> which seems confusing at best, this difficult question can be only be taken forward through empirical explorations which (as Loic Wacquant has suggested for the state itself) need to be brought together on a global, comparative basis.<sup>93</sup> They will involve detailed analysis of how the state and media compete as reference-points for defining key terms in specific fields: one example might be the definitions in play in the regulation of crime, where the media's impacts on perceptions of the 'crime problem' are attracting increasing attention from sociologists.<sup>94</sup> Second, what is the relationship between the media's and/or the state's meta-capital and that, potentially, of other central social institutions - the educational system, religious institutions, corporate power? We might even want to conceive of Bourdieu's field of power entirely openly as a space where media, state and these other institutions compete for definitional power (metacapital) over specific fields. Certainly there are interesting (again comparative) questions to be considered here, although it is more plausible, as Bourdieu's treatment of the state's metacapital suggests, to see the state as the cumulative concentration of the definitional powers of earlier symbolic systems (such as the educational system) which have now been absorbed into the state. It is the historically established ability of the state to range across many different fields that justifies attributing to it metacapital; only the media, I suggest, are



plausible rivals to the state here in most contemporary societies, in which case the second question soon reduces to the first. Third, it is important in formulating such questions to bear in mind the global space of power in which these processes are played out, particularly when the usefulness of the national framework for sociological questions has recently been challenged.<sup>95</sup> It remains, however, to be seen, notwithstanding the growing importance of global media flows, whether the key social fields of contestation are operating on other than a national level. Clearly there are difficult questions here of integrating national and transnational scales into field theory. Finally, as noted earlier, the long-term impacts of recent less centralised means of media production and distribution (especially the Internet) on both the media field and the media's meta-capital will need to be considered. Once again, the answers will lie not in general theorisation but in detailed analysis of how and in what ways and to what extent the rules, categories, and capital on the basis of which agents in particular fields orientate themselves towards media institutions are changing.

The unanswerability of such questions here is not, however, a fault of the preceding analysis, but an example of the continued stimulation which Bourdieu's field model can provide to new forms of empirical research on the workings of media power.

### **Acknowledgements**

This article has benefited in particular from detailed criticisms of an earlier version by Rod Benson and David Swartz. Thanks also to Keith Negus, Roger Silverstone, Don

Slater and Jason Toynbee for their helpful comments. An earlier version was published in the [Media@lse](http://www.lse.ac.uk/depts.media/) Electronic Working Paper Series, available from [www.lse.ac.uk/depts.media/](http://www.lse.ac.uk/depts.media/)

---

<sup>1</sup> This is arguably the fundamental question of media ‘effects’ , as Lazarsfeld and Merton long ago argued, even if they regarded such questions as (within their research paradigm at least) unresearchable: see Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, “Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organised Social Action” in W. Schramm (ed) *Mass Communications* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969 [1948]).

<sup>2</sup> David Swartz, “In memoriam: Pierre Bourdieu 1930-2002,” *Theory and Society* 31(2002): 547-553, at 547.

<sup>3</sup> Rodney Benson, “Field Theory in Comparative Context: a new paradigm for media studies,” *Theory and Society*, 48 (1998): 463-498.

<sup>4</sup> Benson discusses *inter alia* the work of Patrick Champagne (*Faire L’Opinion*, Paris: Editions Minuit, 1990) and the articles by various authors including Champagne in Bourdieu’s journal *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* (volume 101-2, 1994). See now volume 131-132 (2000) in the same journal.

<sup>5</sup> David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 128-9.

---

<sup>6</sup> Stuart Hall “Encoding/Decoding” in S. Hall et al (eds) *Culture Media Language*, (London: Hutchinson, 1980); David Morley, *The Nationwide Audience* (London: BFI, 1980); cf Douglas Kellner, *Media Cultures*, (New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Cf Nick Couldry, *The Place of Media Power: Pilgrims and Witnesses of the Media Age* (London: Routledge, 2000), 8-10.

<sup>8</sup> For an exception, see Stuart Hall, “The ‘Structured Communication’ of Events,” Stencilled Occasional Paper no. 5. (Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1973).

<sup>9</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983); Paul Virilio *Speed and Politics* (New York: Semiotext(e):1986); compare Scott Lash, *Sociology of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1990); Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> Niklas Luhmann *The Reality of the Mass Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 75.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism* (London: Pluto, 1998a), 22; cf Patrick Champagne, “The View from the Media” in P. Bourdieu et al. *The Weight of the World*. (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), 46-59.

---

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Sur La Télévision* (Paris: Liber, 1996), 21.

<sup>14</sup> In fact, Bourdieu avoids this term: the literal translation would be ‘social and political existence’.

<sup>15</sup> Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1978); Richard Ericson, Patricia Baranek and Janet Chan, *Representing Order: Crime, Law, and Justice in the News Media* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1992); Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 65-66.

<sup>17</sup> See within Marxist-inspired work Philip Elliott, “Press Performance as Political Ritual” in H. Christian (ed) *The Sociology of Journalism and the Press*. (Keele: University of Keele, 1982), 141-177 and Graham Murdock “The Reenchantment of the World: Religion and the Transformation of Modernity” in S. Hoover and K. Lundy (eds) *Rethinking Media, Religion and Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 85-101 (both UK) and outside the Marxist tradition Roger Silverstone, *The Message of Television* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981) and “Television Myth and Culture” in J. Carey (ed) *Media Myths and Narratives* (Sage: Newbury Park, 1988) in the UK and the otherwise mainly US essays in Carey *ibid.*. More recently, see Couldry, *The Place of Media Power* and *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach* (London: Routledge, 2003).

---

<sup>18</sup> Patrick Champagne and Dominique Marchetti, “L’information médicale sous contrainte,” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 101-102 (March 1994), 45

<sup>19</sup> On the neglect by field-based research of the wider social space that falls outside particular fields, see Bernard Lahire, “Champ, Hors-champ, Contre-champ” in B. Lahire (ed) *Le Travail Sociologique de Pierre Bourdieu – Dettes et Critiques* (Paris: La Découverte/ Poche, 1999), 23-58.

<sup>20</sup> W. Russell Neuman (1991) *The Future of the Mass Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> Cf James Curran and Jean Seaton *Power without Responsibility* 5<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Routledge, forthcoming), chapters 16-18; Couldry, *The Place of Media Power*, chapter 9.

<sup>22</sup> Gilles Balbastre, “Une information précaire,” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 131-132 (2000): 76-85; Patrick Champagne, “Le médiateur entre deux Monde,” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 131-132 (2000): 8-29; Julien Duval “Concessions et Conversions à l’Economie: Le journalisme économique en France depuis les années 80s,” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 131-132 (2000): 56-75; Beatrice Joinet, “Le ‘Plateau’ et le ‘Terrain’”, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 131-132 (2000), 86-91; Dominique Marchetti, “Les Révélations de ‘Journalisme de l’Investigation’”, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 131-2 (2000), 30-40; and for the US case, see Rodney Benson, “La logique du profit dans les

---

médias américains”, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 131-132 (2000): 107-115.

<sup>23</sup> Jean Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (London: Macmillan, 1998); Philippe Marlière, “The Rules of the Journalistic Field: Pierre Bourdieu’s Contribution to the Sociology of the Media,” *European Journal of Communication*, 13(2) (1998): 219-234.

<sup>24</sup> Benson, “Field theory in comparative context”, 471-77.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 498 n83.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 482-3.

<sup>27</sup> Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 128-29.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>29</sup> As Fabiani (“Les Règles du Champ” in B. Lahire (ed) *Le Travail Sociologique de Pierre Bourdieu – Dettes et Critiques* (Paris: La Découverte/ Poche, 1999), 75-91, at 87-91) points out, Bourdieu does have a range of mechanisms for explaining some such external influences (for example, the changing population of fields), but they are long-term historical factors and none of them would cover the type of direct influence I am discussing here.

---

<sup>30</sup> There are other places where Bourdieu treats media in the course of wider arguments: “The Production of Belief: contribution to an economy of symbolic goods” in R. Collins et al. (eds) *Media Culture and Society: A Critical Reader* (London: Sage, 1986), 131-163. at 142-9, and many passages in *Distinction* (London: Routledge, 1984).

<sup>31</sup> Champagne, *Faire L’Opinion*.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 261, 277.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 264

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 39

<sup>35</sup> Jean Baudrillard, ‘Requiem for the Media’ in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St Louis: Telos Press, 1981).

<sup>36</sup> Champagne, *Faire L’Opinion*, 204-222.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 232.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 239.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, 237, 243.

---

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 239.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Un capital de mobilisation et de sympathie parfois patiemment accumulé’ (*ibid.*, 246).

<sup>42</sup> Champagne and Marchetti, “L’information médicale sous contrainte.”

<sup>43</sup> For other issues, see Benson, “Field Theory in Comparative Context,” 475-477.

<sup>44</sup> Champagne and Marchetti, “L’information médicale sous contrainte,” 45.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 43 numbers added.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, : 46, added emphasis.

<sup>47</sup> Benson, “Field theory in Comparative Context,” 494 n50.

<sup>48</sup> John Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 269 n8.



---

<sup>51</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 166).

<sup>52</sup> Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 86-88.

<sup>53</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 88.

<sup>54</sup> John Thompson, *Media Scandals* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000).

<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ch. 7 [originally published 1977].

<sup>56</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, "Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber's Sociology of Religion" in S. Whimster and S. Lash (eds) *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 119-136, at 126.

<sup>57</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

<sup>58</sup> Cf Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

<sup>59</sup> Champagne and Marchetti, "L'information médicale sous contrainte," 64.

---

<sup>60</sup> It is true that, as Champagne and Marchetti use this word, it is tied explicitly to the workings of the journalistic field, but surely a ‘scandal’ cannot be a ‘scandal’ unless it is recognised as such in wider society?

<sup>61</sup> Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 87-88.

<sup>62</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996) and *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

<sup>63</sup> Max Weber *Economy and Society Volume 3* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).

<sup>64</sup> Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, 58-59.

<sup>65</sup> Bourdieu, *The State Nobility*, 264; *Practical Reason*, 42.

<sup>66</sup> Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, 40-45; cf *Language and Symbolic Power*, 239-241.

<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 229.

<sup>68</sup> Cf Bourdieu’s own comment (in Loic Wacquant, “From Ruling Class to Field of Power: An Interview with Pierre Bourdieu on *La Noblesse d’Etat*”, *Theory, Culture and*

---

*Society*, 10(3) (1993), 19-44, at 21). He also refers to the field of power there as ‘a system of positions’ (ibid., 20) between holders of different types of capital.

<sup>69</sup> Craig Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 139.

<sup>70</sup> For such gaps in Bourdieu’s vast work, see generally Danilo Martucelli, *Sociologies de la Modernité* (Paris: Folio, 1999), 129-132.

<sup>71</sup> Champagne, *Faire L’Opinion*.

<sup>72</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, *Introduction to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 111.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 114-115, added emphasis.

<sup>74</sup> Bourdieu in Wacquant, “From Ruling Class to Field of Power,” 42, added emphasis.

<sup>75</sup> Bourdieu, *The State Nobility*, 265.

<sup>76</sup> Bourdieu (in Wacquant, “From Ruling Class to Field of Power,” 23).

<sup>77</sup> For example, Bourdieu, “The Production of Belief,” 132, 133; *Language and Symbolic Power*, 230; *In Other Words* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 134-135.

---

<sup>78</sup> Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism*.

<sup>79</sup> M. McCombs and D. Shaw, “The Agenda-setting Function of the Mass Media”, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36 (1972), 176-187.

<sup>80</sup> Silverstone, “Television Myth and Culture”; Couldry, *The Place of Media Power*, chapter 3.

<sup>81</sup> On the implicit but sometimes undeveloped role of Bourdieu’s earlier concept of habitus in understanding the workings of particular fields of cultural production, and their interrelations, see Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 134.

<sup>82</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 98.

<sup>83</sup> Couldry, *The Place of Media Power*.

<sup>84</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 98.

<sup>85</sup> Scott Lash, “Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Economy and Social Change” in C. Calhoun, E. Lipuma, and M. Postone (eds) *Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 193-211, at 201, discussing Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 92-93.

---

<sup>86</sup> John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy* (London: Palgrave, 2001), chapter 9; Thomas Meyer, *Media Democracy: How The Media Colonise Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Margaret Scammell, *Designer Politics: How Elections are Won* (London: Palgrave, 1995).

<sup>87</sup> Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism*.

<sup>88</sup> Stallabrass, *High Art Lite*, (London: Verso, 2000).

<sup>89</sup> Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).

<sup>90</sup> Bourdieu, “The Production of Belief.”

<sup>91</sup> Rojek, *Celebrity*. Cf Thompson, *The Media and Modernity*, 46 on the ‘mediation’ of culture.

<sup>92</sup> Benson notes that sometimes this can be read into Bourdieu’s uses of the term ‘state’ (“Field Theory in Comparative context”, 482).

<sup>93</sup> Loic Wacquant, “On The Tracks of Symbolic Power: Prefatory Notes to Bourdieu’s “State Nobility””, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 10(3) (1993): 1-17.

<sup>94</sup> Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

---

<sup>95</sup> John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies* (London: Routledge, 2000).