



Adequate Information Management in Europe

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The Case of France

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Premise:

News management and the PR industry have not been much studied by French scholars. Most papers written on the subject are derived from studies on much broader topics. For example, when Florence Haegel studied the working of the *Mairie de Paris* (Haegel, 1994) she also analysed the relationship that exists between journalists covering the institution and the political actors within the City Hall (Haegel, 1992). Another example would be the ethnographic account Sandrine Lévêque gave of a press conference (Lévêque, 1992), which was a sub-product of her PhD on journalists covering 'social' matters (Lévêque, 2000). We can also mention the book by Jacques Walter (1995) on the invention of the '*dircom*', *directeur de communication*, managing the image and public relations of private companies and public bodies. Yet, these topics haven't been completely ignored by French Academia. Jean-Baptiste Legavre's PhD (Legavre, 1992, 1993) indeed explored the invention of a new 'role' in French politics: the political communication adviser (what the British would call 'spin doctors'). However, interdependencies between political actors and journalists/media have been of major concern for French scholars in both political science and sociology. Even if news management and PR never became major fields of French research, the sociology of journalism and the political sociology have intensively studied the interactions and interdependencies between the journalistic field and other social worlds (economics, politics, cultural, etc.).

The first part of this report will consist of a presentation of these works. The account given of French academic landscape on the subject, yet partial, will try to give an overview (both historical and conceptual) of French sociology of journalism. In the second part, we give some details to illustrate the peculiarities of French journalism relating back to the conditions of its historical appearance (in the late 19th century) and to the changes the journalistic field has been undergoing in the past 20 years. In a final section there will be a brief overview of available works on the European dimension of information. As it is a very new focus of interest in French Academia, most of these works are from the 21st century. Finally, we'll give some examples of the social history of the EU as a journalistic topic in French media landscape.

1: Information/news management.

A survey of French studies could start from a statement that looks like a paradox: before the eighties there was no such thing as a sociology of journalism in France. News management and the PR industry have not been much studied by French scholars. As already stated, most papers written on the subject are derived from studies on much broader topics.

The presentation developed here of French research since the eighties is two-fold. It highlights firstly the appearance of studies on journalism in the middle of the eighties and the institutional conditions of this take-off. In a second and more substantial part, it will offer an overview of the academic research since the end of the eighties. With the risk of over-simplification, three themes will allow us to make sense of the variety of this research: the institutionalisation of journalism, the study of specialised journalism, and the effects of the growing weight of economic imperatives (and technological changes) on journalistic activity.

1.1: The take-off.

The real take-off of research on the sociology of journalism can be dated from the middle of the eighties. One of its very first actors is Jean Padioleau¹. Writing, in 1976, an important paper on the journalists involved in education, he produced the first French contribution to the sociology of journalism. Ten years later, (1985) he published a large volume of comparative research on the functioning of *Le Monde* and *The Washington Post*. Four points can be highlighted concerning this research of quality, which will have a lasting influence on French sociology. The first one concerns the theoretical references: they are almost completely Anglo-American (Tunstall, Schudson, Molotch, Lester, Tuchman) and Padioleau made a strong contribution to the diffusion of Anglophone research in French universities. A second peculiarity of his research comes from its institutional dimension. Padioleau strove to understand how the division of tasks between journalists and publishers combines with professional cultures to produce styles of journalism deeply different between France and the USA. A third landmark was to notice that such a methodological choice does not mean limiting the analysis to the interactions visible in the newsroom. Conversely, Padioleau pays great attention to the relationship be-

tween journalists and sources, between the press and politics. The great value of Padioleau's works is that it also goes beyond a routinised opposition of French sociology concerning the choice between 'internal' and 'external' analysis. In his study on the specialists of education, he shows, conversely, how the 'journalistic rhetoric' translates, in a particular style of writing, a structure of interdependencies between journalists and their partners². The style of journalism, which he coins as 'critical expertise', appears as a solution for journalists wishing to escape from a style of reporting which could be perceived as political and partisan by powerful and oligopolistic sources (the Ministry, FEN – the trade union of teachers). The claim of 'expert' and technical knowledge of the stakes of the education system allows them to use a critical repertoire that is both neutral and 'official'.

The emergence of a French sociology of Journalism also is indebted in the early eighties to Remy Rieffel who, in 1984, wrote *L'élite des journalistes*. The book, based on the analysis of a questionnaire, offers the first global empirical study dedicated to the most powerful and visible journalists of the field. Rieffel's theoretical positioning is in many ways rather unusual according to the mapping of French academia. He mobilises theoretical frameworks (field, disposition) borrowed from Bourdieu and combines them with analytical tools, produced by Crozier and even by the 'methodological individualism' of Boudon, that he considers as more able to escape from a deterministic approach, to highlight the autonomy of actors, and to perceive role-tensions and ruptures in their behaviour. Rieffel's work has the substantial interest of offering a rich and precise mapping of the French journalistic elite, highlighting its patterns of education and training, the professional trajectories, the visions of roles and professional achievement, but also the economic situation of journalists. His chapters on the relationship with sources show the strength of institutional sources and definers, the closing of the upper crust of journalism in a partnership with the other social elites and its potential for connivance. This study also makes visible the weight of representations shared by the elites, and the will of the most prominent journalists to win a kind of intellectual legitimacy, thanks especially to the important activity of book writing.

The book born from the PhD of Hervé Brusini and Francis James (1982) must also be mentioned in this survey of the early research. The semiological tropism

of French researchers remains visible in this study that investigates how TV journalists produce a representation of the news which offers the audience a coverage of events that gives the feeling of 'truth'. The question here is to understand the journalistic definitions of good information. All the research suggests the slow shift between two regimes of 'veridiction' (truth-saying). The early years of French TV are those of the 'inquiry television', based on the production of images or an analogon of the 'real'. This period is dominated by an empiricist coverage: to make and show images and sounds of the event, to produce snapshots of raw reality, to prevent the intrusion of editing or over-interpretative comments. This pattern of coverage was criticised at the end of the sixties. The arrival of more educated journalists, the rise of specialisations, and a self-critical reflection would then combine to give birth to a new pattern of coverage: 'investigative journalism' (*Journalisme d'examen*). This style of reporting shifts the focus of journalistic work from *showing* to *explaining*, putting emphasis on issues rather than on events. The journalist's task is, from now on, to make sense of what raw sounds and images cannot explain. The studio takes on a growing importance, becomes the place from which specialised journalists and experts examine, where new tools such as schemes, figures or models are able to show the invisible.

Bourdieu and researchers from his team also published in 1984 their first texts specifically dedicated to journalism. A short case study by Bourdieu, which studied the result of a kind of poll, ranking French intellectuals, was published by the literary magazine *Lire*. A close examination of the sociological peculiarities of these people allowed voters to elect the symbols of intellectual accomplishment, revealing the influential weight of journalists and of the dual personalities of novelist-journalist, academic-columnist and book-writers whose fame was often boosted by journalists' reports. One only has to understand the structure of this population of voters in order to understand the final ranking of intellectuals that would be shameful to forget (Levi-Strauss, Braudel, Foucault) against cultural producers that are well-known for *being* well-known, but whose symbolic capital is more created by the media than by the support of peers in the artistic and academic fields (BHL, Serres, Glucksman, Morin). This small text produced in the early eighties, (it was in fact written in 1981), poses questions about the power to label those who are 'great' thinkers, as conceived by journalists.

This same year, (1984), Louis Pinto published a study of the rather left-wing weekly newsmagazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*. If Pinto's research mobilises an in-depth inquiry among the staff of the weekly, it is nevertheless more a book on the sociology of culture applied to a weekly than a sociology of journalism centred on the organisational functioning of the newsroom. Pinto's study highlights the homology between the *habitus* and mood of this team of journalists and columnists, and of a readership located in the upwardly mobile new middle- and intellectual classes of the public sector. It appears, retrospectively, as a significant contribution to the sociology of the political functions of the journalistic field.

Published the same year in *Actes*, the paper by Patrick Champagne (1985), which later became a classic, on *La manifestation* (The Demonstration) offers another dimension of the research on journalism that was developing then at the CSEC. This case study analyses a huge demonstration, organised in Paris by the farmers' trade union, and its press coverage. The goal of demonstrators is, from now on, less a 'first degree' action by creating a new power balance with immediate results on the adversary (Employer, State), than a 'second degree' influence, which is based on the production of a public identity of the group that both strengthens the representativity of its spokesperson and – mainly – triggers what he calls a 'paper-demonstration'. The real stake of the demonstration becomes the 'press review' and T.V. coverage the following morning. The press and media behave as relays and loudspeakers for the protest against the ruling powers. Without using the same words, Champagne's study suggests conclusions quite similar to those of Schlesinger (1990) about the impact of 'source-professionalisation'. More specifically, Champagne shows in this paper how, in such situations of creation of media events, 'the press field tends to be today a sub-field inside the political field' (p 35).

According to Pierre Bourdieu, communication plays a central role in the political field insofar as the mobilisation's function overcomes the expression of ideas and ideals and the representation's function.

Some French studies, run at the end of 1980's, have demonstrated the growing importance of local political communication. They establish two facts: the existence of specific departments, under various forms, within French local authorities, and the looseness of

the notion of 'communication' that prevents any statistical approach. In 1992 in Picardie (a French region), sixteen local authorities had a communication department in 1992 where there was only one in 1980. The budgetary growth was visible too. For instance, the *conseil regional* spent less than eight million francs in 1985 and twenty-five million in 1992. The city of Amiens spent four hundred thousand francs in 1985 against twelve million francs in 1992 (Dubois, 1993). Monique Fourdin (1994) studied about fifty towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants; the strengths of the municipal communication departments varied from two people (Limoges) to about a hundred (Paris). But the most relevant fact is that half of these cities had communication departments with five to ten professionals and about a third had between ten and twenty.

Jean-Baptiste Legavre 's PhD (Legavre, 1992, 1993) explored the invention of a new 'role' in French politics: the political communication adviser (what the British would call a 'spin doctor'). The author follows a *structuro-constructiviste* approach that takes into account the concept of 'social role', which emphasises the symbolic dimension of domination. The dissertation deals with the common origin of politicians and political communication advisers: *Science Po* became a central place for training the future political communication advisers. It deals also with the impact of social sciences on the political life: the experts appeal to science in order to inform and to legitimise their advice. But the dissertation concentrates essentially on their social role. They succeeded not only in making communication visible, but they also succeeded in asserting themselves and re-enforcing their knowledge and expertise. These are as much grounded in science as in elementary common sense. These political communication advisers would give an ambiguous impression of both power and weakness.

The book by Didier Georgakakis (2004), placed at a crossroads between a history of political communication and a sociology of the political, bureaucratic and intellectual spheres at the end of the Third French Republic, deals with the successive failures to erect a system of State communication. This topic has always been problematical and all the successive attempts to set up administrations to fulfil this goal gave rise to violent debates. The mere possibility that an administration would be responsible for the relations between State and Opinion awakens the spectre of 'Propaganda' and 'Totalitarianism'. The aim of this work is to

understand and to explain the reasons for the failed institutionalisation of State communication in France, unlike in England and Germany. Georgakakis chose the end of The Third French Republic (1917-1940) and not the Vichy administration and Propaganda (1940-1945). It was a critical period when the myth of an antinomy between Propaganda and Democracy became so prominent.

1. 2: The main roads of development.

From the end of the 1980s, the French sociology of journalism has produced a substantial amount of quality research. Without hiding the arbitrary dimension of such a presentation, one may suggest three approaches to offer an overview of this production.

A first approach deals with the slow process of the institutionalisation of French journalism. One of the first contributions comes from a journalist from *Le Monde*, Thomas Ferenczi (1993). Ferenczi studies the French press of the *belle époque* at the end of the 19th century and highlights one of the lasting peculiarities of the French journalistic field: its slow conquest of autonomy from the literary and political fields. All the evidence given by Ferenczi shows that just to earn his/her money from working in the press is not enough to establish the identity of the journalist, as working for the press is often considered as a staging post to the noble careers of politics and literature³. Centred on the period of the 1920's and 30's, Ruellan's study (1997) deals with the mobilisation of the journalists' trade unions and their struggle to win professional status, which would be confirmed by several laws and regulations in 1935-36. Ruellan shows in his research another peculiarity of French journalism. The attribution of the *carte de journaliste*, the administrative symbol of belonging to the profession, is only based on a matter of fact: to be a journalist means simply to earn most of his/her money from a collaboration with press and media. The access to the profession is neither based on specific studies, nor conditioned by the respect of a professional code, which would be controlled by a statutory body or institution. This fact demonstrates what Ruellan (1993) analyses as the 'professionalism of the blurred'. If the French journalist mobilises professional mythologies (the ace reporter, the elegance of style, the defence of democracy), he relies more on a know-how learned through a mimetic process inside the newsroom than

on formal or institutionalised prerequisites (diploma, Degree). Using the American concept of frontier, Ruellan suggests the utility of this 'blurred' professional identity. Far from being an element of weakness or danger, it opens to journalists a space of 'moves', an ability to colonise new types of media, to invent new definitions of their practices and skills⁴. The studies of the institutionalisation of journalism are, of course, deeply indebted to historians (Palmer, 1983; Martin, 1990 & 1997). The recent book by Christian Delporte (1999) deserves special mention. It develops a global approach to the period 1880-1950. One of the most interesting dimensions of this study is to analyse the vision of a French journalism whose modernisation (in the rise of reporting, the changes in the paste-up) would only have been a carbon copy of Anglo-American patterns (Chalaby, 1998). Without denying such influences, Delporte suggests however that there is a singularity of the French translation of these patterns, highly visible in the importance given to a literary dimension, even to the most 'American' genres, such as reporting. One should also mention, amongst recent research, the PhD of Anna Rossi (1999) on the genesis of journalism schools (more precisely on the history of the Parisian CFJ). This research shows how the patterns of education finally valued in this school are the result of an alliance between the executives of the newspaper companies and representative of the post-war 'modernist' wing of journalism, and how this choice symbolises the victory of a 'professional' vision of journalistic studies.

The importance of such research, located on the border between sociology and history, also helps us to understand a significant difference in academic studies in France and in the States. For reasons linked to the national traditions of research in social sciences, to the different speeds of institutionalisation of journalism (a process much slower in France), the question of institutionalisation (Darras, 1998) has never left the agenda of French research⁵. This situation explains why the process of rediscovery of institutions that Cook (1988, Chapter 4) describes, in an epistemological turn, un-American social science, has no equivalent in French Academia, where the neo-institutionalist influence is mainly located in policy studies.

French studies on journalism have also developed a mapping of the journalistic field and its components. Some basic studies have tried to identify the great trends of journalism. The big study undertaken by

the *Institut Français de Presse* (1992) has offered the first precise sociography of the profession⁶. A foreign reader would find a very useful and shrewd approach to the evolutions of French journalism in the synthesis produced by Charon, who offers an overview of the main trends and of the challenges faced by an activity threatened with ‚bursting‘ (1992) into separated sub-worlds. But the main trend of the recent studies has been to explore the many dimensions of specialised journalism. Without claiming to offer a complete survey of the case studies recently published, one can mention articles and books on political journalism (Champagne, 1990; Darras 1998, Le Bohec, 1997; Legavre, 1992; Neveu 2000a), sports and health journalism (Champagne & Marchetti, 1994), economic journalism (Riutort, 2000, Duval, 2000), social journalism (Leveque, 2000), scientific journalism (Tristani-Potteaux, 1997), columnists (Riutort, 1996). Such studies also covers investigative reporting (Hunter, 1997, Marchetti 2000), journalists covering the E.U (Baisnée, 2000), TV and radio Journalists (Le Roux, 1996, Mercier, 1996, Rieffel, 1993, Chardon & Samain, 1995; Siracusa, 2001), local press journalists (Le Bohec, 1994; Haegel, 1992), and journalists with insecure jobs (Accardo, 1998).

It would not be reasonable to give a serious account of these research works – among which are many theses – in a few lines. One should firstly mention that an important part – a majority, even – of these studies are inspired in a more or less systematic way by a field study approach. The best way to suggest a rough description of the contribution of these recent researches is probably to focus on a few federative themes.

The first one concerns the importance of news-beats and news sections as structures of organisation and division of the journalistic work. Many studies highlight how the restructuring of the newsroom into specialised services, with their ‚objects‘, their writing codes, their skills and peculiarities of recruitment is, a central element in understanding the struggles inside the journalistic field

This attention to the specialisations and news-sections has helped researchers to pay more attention to the huge differences in the interdependency structures between journalists and their partners.

Political journalism is the specialist journalism that has been the most studied in recent times. The pecu-

liarity of French research is also apparent here from the choice of its objects – media events, monographs on newspapers. or political programmes on TV rather than electoral campaigns⁷ – and more from the central importance given to a reflection on the nature and social logic of ‚public opinion‘. Patrick Champagne has produced one of the most global syntheses of this research in *Faire l'opinion* (1990). He emphasises how the importance given to opinion polls (the *vox populi*) has been a resource for journalists when facing politicians, and how the new definitions of rules and interactions in television political debates has pushed the politicians into having to learn new skills, new abilities in communication. But his reflection suggests firstly that political journalists are structurally embedded in a network of interdependencies that connects them to politicians, spin-doctors and social scientists specialised in polls, producing what he describes as ‚a generalised domination‘ (pp 276-282). In this network of power, the moves in the power balance between journalists, publishers, politicians and spin-doctors are less important than the power *shared* by this group of opinion makers, through the selection of the issues of the agenda, the reduction of the *demos* to the figures of opinion-polls, or the redefinition of politics as a strategy of communication and of selection from the narrow range of ‚reasonable‘ policies. Other studies have explored the process of popularisation of politics by its blending with entertainment on TV programmes. They suggest that this change has guaranteed neither good ratings, nor a better understanding by laymen of the stakes involved (Neveu, 1995).

Other legacies from this research on specialised journalism must be emphasised. One should mention first the studies concerning the strategies used by journalists to legitimise themselves. This process is visible in the transformation of their identity into a kind of trademark and audience-guarantee quoted in the media market, but also in their efforts to gain a kind of intellectual status, able to give them a symbolic authority in the public sphere. Pierre le Roux's study (1996) of TV journalists offers a stimulating case study on these questions. Le Roux highlights the importance of the strategic uses of their private life and character by journalists from the ‚people‘ sections of the press and media, who in this way manage a public ‚strategic identity‘, a popularity which strengthens their professional identity and fame⁸. Mobilising sophisticated data-treatment techniques, he shows, too, how the most prominent journalists have conquered,

in a quarter of century, a kind of 'right' to publish books in increasingly legitimate genres (*Essais*, study of social problems) – their professional position offering a promise of high media-coverage of these books, thanks to reciprocation with colleagues.

The importance given by research to specialised journalism carried the threat of a fragmentation of research into a mosaic of sub-fields, of constructing a catalogue of case studies without any federative interpretation. The rising importance given to a reflection on the weight of market logic and technological changes in journalism has avoided such a drift. It has, conversely, emphasised how these changes had an impact on the whole journalistic field. Since the beginning of the 80's, the challenge represented by the interference of politics in journalistic work has been replaced by the economic and financial challenge. We face a context in which information is more and more conceived as common merchandise, similar to other goods. Therefore, journalists have to protect their autonomy within their editing (in the face of the commercial services) and by withstanding the pressures of advertisers. Many events have triggered a strong social debate on the impact of market-logic on the press and media. Let's quote, among many changes linked to the construction of multimedia conglomerates in France, the highly visible and often cynical weight of the ratings on the functioning of TV networks⁹ and the creation of news bulletins (with famous cases of fake-reports). The deep crisis of the national daily press and the strategies of readership reconquest it triggers are also highly visible. Researchers, too, have focused their studies on these challenges, because such a move has been made compulsory by the changes in the media and press, by the debate in these worlds; also because it arose from the very evolution of research logic.

The most visible and discussed intervention on these questions comes from Bourdieu's little book, *On television*, published in 1996. The book highlighted the growing influence of commercial imperatives in journalism, the financial weight of advertising, the race for ratings, and the quest for profitable products in all the niches of press production. It focused on the role of television as the vanguard and Trojan horse of these trends, as the press was increasingly making the choice of mimetic strategies in its own coverage of the news (Champagne 2000). Bourdieu also suggested how the 'grip of journalism' was coming from its ability to influence indirectly, by ricochet. Com-

ing back to the themes of his 1984 paper, he showed how the power of consecration gained by journalists had a deep effect on the fields of cultural production, preferring, for instance, to appreciate the qualities of novels or research according to their proximity to a journalistic *episteme* and style, or to the ability to deal in real time with the problems labelled as important by the journalistic *zeitgeist*, rather than on the basis of the earlier process of peer evaluation. To sum up, the journalistic field is dependent on the commercial logic and economic power while acting negatively on other fields of cultural production.

If Bourdieu's book sums up a reflection, his status has triggered many misunderstandings among its foreign readership. Bourdieu has never claimed here to produce one of its major sociological studies (the book is not titled: *the journalistic field*), its target is more a reflection on the impact of television on cultural production fields; and the very style of this small book shows that its goal is to be read by people who would not normally read sociology. And indeed, nearly 100,000 copies were sold. A forthcoming book (Benson & Neveu, 2004) dedicated to 'Bourdieu and the journalistic field' shows that the legacy of Bourdieu on these questions is much richer and more sophisticated than this small leaflet, dedicated to the development of a debate on television. To go beyond this approach, one should look at other case studies for its precise empirical testing. Pinto (1994) offers such a case study when he studies the consecration by journalists of new formats of 'philosophy' drawn up for the newsmagazines (Also see Bouveresse, 1996). But the most rigorous demonstration is to be found in Marchetti's PhD (1997) on the coverage of the 'tainted blood affair' by medical journalists. Thanks to considerable fieldwork, Marchetti shows the changes in the recruitment of journalists, and their less deferential relationship to medical authorities, combined with the quest for audiences and a more intensive competition between newsbeats to transform the scoop and the discovery of a scandal into the absolute weapon, both in the struggles within the journalistic field and in audience strategies. Many studies, sometimes using an ethnographic approach, have explored the consequences of these changes. The events are transformed into camera-fodder and framed before the shooting of the report according to the prerequisites of network editors (Balbastre, 1995). Journalists with insecure jobs experience personal dramas and lose any autonomy at the newsdesk (Accardo, 1998).

This brief summary of recent research may suggest the image of an over-focusing on the impact of irresistible market logic. The conclusions of recent research are in fact subtler. They also show – as does a study on D.I.Y. magazines (Akrich, 1992) – the existence of strong differences in the degree of dependence on sources. They suggest the possible ambivalence in the quest for a bigger audience that can also boost a more ‘ethnographic’ journalism, paying more attention to the real life relationship of laypeople to social problems (Neveu, 2000b). They highlight, too, the appearance of new frames of public debate, mobilising a ‘public opinion’, which from now on is not limited to opinion polls, but rests on the voice of ‘ordinary Frenchmen’ and laypeople (Mehl, 1996). If they remain deeply dependant on audience imperatives, these renewals do provoke a change in the questions debated (Neveu, 1999). Finally, recent research also brings into the analysis the question of the influence of new communication technologies. Dominique Wolton had indicated as early as 1991 the appearance of what he coined as the ‘CNN Paradigm’: a journalism based on live coverage: a kind of immersion in the event whose paradoxical result is to drown the interpretative landmarks under a flow of images and sound bites. The recent research of Ruellan and Thierry (1998), based on a study of nearly ten French newsrooms, reveals the new division of work: the growing opportunities of hierarchical control of the production and writing of journalists opened by the computerisation of journalistic work. They also emphasise the rising fascination of press journalists for speed and ‘real time’ coverage, but also the process of decentralisation of the newspaper production that became possible with such technological changes.

Let us repeat that this survey cannot offer a complete panorama of French research. Some researchers who have a significant visibility in French academia are mentioned too briefly here. Michel Mathien (1992) develops in his Strasbourg research, inspired by *systemism*, stimulating analysis of the daily routines and interactions of the work in the newsroom. Jean Marie Charron is one of the most attentive observers of the evolutions of the different kinds of press (see 1999 on magazine press especially). His research matches the conclusions of the Canadian scholars de Bonville and de La Garde when he suggests the possible absorption of journalism into a great nebula of ‘communication’ activities. Using the theoretical framework of Luc Boltanski combined with rich fieldwork, Cyril Lemieux

has quite recently developed an exploration of the ‘professional fault’ and of its representation by journalists (2000). The lacunae of this presentation also come from the difficulty of reviewing a growing number and variety of research papers. Let’s simply notice that a new trend in this research consists in developing studies that link the activity of journalists to an approach of the construction of social problems¹⁰ and which analyse the question of the framing of public debate on major issues. Such a trend is visible in papers by Patrick Champagne (1991, 1993) and Guy Lochard (1998).

2: National journalism culture.

2. 1: Political and media culture in the genesis and institutionalisation of French journalism.

There is a consensus to consider Theophraste Renaudot, founder in 1631 of *La Gazette*, as the first journalist in the modern sense. He aimed to collect data and news about the Royal Court, about Paris, about foreign countries, in order to counter false rumours. The expression ‘journalist’ was invented in 1684 by Pierre Bayle and increasingly took the place of the expression *gazetier* (related to gazettes) (Feyel, 1999). But the foundations were really laid down with the French Revolution and the recognition of the freedom of opinion and expression (*Déclaration des droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen*, 26 August 1789).

2.1.1: A strong and lasting tradition of state control upon the press and media.

The French situation of press freedom since the Revolution can be summarised in a paradox. The *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* written in 1789 is one of the world’s most famous texts concerning political freedom. Its eleventh article clearly guarantees freedom of speech and communication. One must notice however that, except during revolutionary periods (1798-1794; 1830; 1848), the history of the French press until the very end of the nineteenth century¹¹ is basically the story of lasting and burdensome state control. To suggest just a few landmarks: the regulations concerning the press under the Restoration (1815-1830) gave to the administrative authority (the *Prefet*) substantial power to fine newspapers and to prohibit their publishing, either temporarily or completely. Guizot, the great liberal theorist and surviving prime minister of

the *Monarchie de Juillet* (1830-1848), also concluded from a remarkably visionary reflection on the power of press¹² that authority *should* control such a weapon. He invented the *bureau de l'esprit public*, whose task was to produce op-ed and comments supporting the government line. The Prefects were then mobilised to suggest to the editors of the hundreds of small local dailies to print these materials; transforming them into loudspeakers of the government. Needless to say that the authoritarian Second Empire of Napoleon III was not specifically press friendly as it quickly institutionalised the French equivalent of the British 'taxes on knowledge' in a struggle against the revolutionary threats that the rising success of almanacs or serials¹³ published by dailies was supposed to boost.

Finally, one must wait for 1881 and the vote of the great press law (29th July 1881) to see the freedom of press really and practically institutionalised in France. The first article states: 'printing and bookselling are free'. In other words, press freedom is inseparable from the freedom of undertaking. However, if this law guarantees both a true freedom of the press and the take-off of a popular press¹⁴, it would be too optimistic to consider that this law puts a final stop to all opportunities of state pressure on the press. To suggest a single example: the substantial budgets of the finance ministry dedicated to the advertising for the *bons du trésor* (public loans) are an efficient weapon to fund government-friendly titles and press companies.

If the control of state authorities on the press weakens since the Third Republic, one must immediately mention that the historical tradition of state intervention starts a second life with the appearance of radio and television. If some private radio stations are allowed to broadcast between the two world wars, the history of French radio between the late thirties and 1981 is the history of a state monopoly¹⁵. Even the 'private' radio stations broadcasting from Luxembourg or Monte-Carlo were under the control of a state owned holding (the SOFIRAD). The chairman of 'Europe 1' was sacked in 1968 as the government considered that its coverage of the demonstrations by the station had been over friendly. The situation of the television was even worse¹⁶, as the French cabinet has probably been the only one among western democracies to appoint a 'minister of information'. The Gaullist minister Alain Peyrefitte tells in an autobiographical book how he discovered, on becoming minister of information, two special phones on his office desk. These were direct

lines to the presidents of the two public channels, allowing him each evening to discuss the choice of the headlines for the news bulletins¹⁷. Borrowing from the British electoral system, the phrase '*winner takes all*' would perfectly fit the description of the French relationship between the state and Media until the middle of Mitterrand's first presidential mandate. The French model has nothing to compare with the consociational democratic systems of pillarisation like in the Netherlands or with the Italian *Lotizzazione*. To use another phrase coined by President Pompidou; the public service monopoly was 'the voice of France'; and to express what all the successive rulers considered *sotto voce*: their government *was* France. The conclusion of the syllogism was crystal clear in practice, as shown by the waltz of networks executives, editors in chief and anchormen after each political change. The government and its leading party owned the media – all the media.

2.1.2: Media, the press and partisanship.

A second structural element of the French press and media could be identified in the closeness of its connections with parties and politicians. Let's first repeat that state control was government control. If the limits of this independence can be debated the British model, symbolised by Reith's BBC, institutionalised real limits to the direct influence of Prime ministers and party leaders on public service broadcasting. Such was not the case in the French system.

Once more, Jean Chalaby's (1997) research is quite precious here. In his study of the Press baron as Weberian type, he shows that the great American and British 'press barons' were firstly capitalist entrepreneurs. Building editorial empires, gaining market shares and making profits were their goals, much more than being political actors or supporters of a party. Such was not the French situation. There are many reasons for this. Modern capitalism developed at a slower speed in an economic system dominated until the fifties by small entrepreneurs, and the funding of press by advertising was much less important. But one also must consider that many newspaper owners or editors, both at the local and national levels, firstly considered the press as a weapon for political struggle in their constituency. The ownership or control of a local daily was one of the basic imperatives of a politician 'grass-rooted' in his constituency. At the national

level, leading politicians could use it as a loudspeaker for bargaining or even for parliamentary blackmail¹⁸. Yet it would be risky to speak of the parties' influence on the French Press and journalism without paying attention to the weakness of parties and party discipline. The institutionalisation of powerful and organised parties has developed much later and in a much 'softer' way in France than in Germany or in the UK. This situation can make sense of the curious blend of commitment and disorder revealed by the fact that, out of (numerous) situations of political crisis, the political commitment of press and journalists can rarely be translated into a kind of pure and transparent political parallelism between parties and press. More precisely, as parties' borders and mapping were quite blurred and complicated, their reflection in a politicised press had a similar ambiguity.

The history of the relationship between French journalism and politics cannot be reduced to a permanent commitment of all journalists. The rise of the popular *petite presse* – which is also the only moment of mass readership – gave real space for a press claiming its objectivity¹⁹. But the strains and violence of the political struggles in the thirties, the impact of the Nazi occupation and Resistance, ended after the war in the reshaping of a national press deeply polarised by political commitments. The history of this post-war politicised press is, in large part, the history of a vanishing readership disillusioned by the institutional functioning of the Fourth Republic and the colonial wars, but probably as much by the lack of editorial renewal and invention, and a trend towards a more and more expensive press that had begun in the thirties. One of the most visible effects of the political commitment of many titles is the dominant situation of an advocacy journalism. This style of journalism can be combined with a real professionalism, symbolised by the nearly incestuous intimacy and native knowledge of the parliamentary struggles and lobby plots by political journalists. Its result is also to produce, until the sixties, a dominant definition of the political journalist as a journalist expressing his/her political opinions (Darras, 1995).

2.1.3 The delayed professionalisation of French journalism

To consider the situation of the French press is also to require a great attention to the peculiarities of French Journalism. To put it in a nutshell, one could argue

that, until the very end of the 19th century, French newspapers were produced without journalists. One can find an in depth analysis of this paradox in the studies of Chalaby (1996), Ferenczi (1993) and Ruellan (1993; Ruellan & Daniel 1998)²⁰, but also in the novels of Balzac or Maupassant²¹. Two points need to be highlighted. On the one hand journalism is considered by most of its practitioners not as a serious job or a profession, but as a kind of social 'no man's land', allowing waiting and training for serious careers, such as a politician or writer. On the other hand this vision of journalistic practice produces a job definition, which does not really consider the journalist as being a news gatherer with specific skills. The greatest achievements of the French journalist have long been to express political or aesthetic opinions on events or cultural goods and to seduce the readership by its literary skills. Journalism is then defined as something like fencing with a pen. Typically indeed the kind of small journalistic zoo depicted by Balzac in his *monographie* does not suggest a single illustration of the use of any kind of know-how different from those of the writer or the politician²².

The picture of journalism offered by nineteenth century novelists must, of course, be reconsidered today. The take-off of a popular press, the modernisation of the magazines and specialised press by entrepreneurs such as Prouvost in the thirties, have narrowed the gap between the French and Anglo-American visions and practices of journalism. The importance of newsgathering and investigative reporting has been re-evaluated by French journalists.

In 1918, the first French journalist trade union (SNJ or *Syndicat National des Journalistes*) was created. A law of 1935 institutionalised the *Statut du journaliste*²³. A professional card, given by a *commission*²⁴, a gathering of representatives of the press companies and journalists trade unions created by a decree of 17th January 1936, labels the true journalists. But the attribution of this card means nothing more than the fact that its holder earns most of his/her income in the press and media, as the article L. 761.1 of the *Code du travail* defines it. The article, number 93 of the law of 29th July 1982 about audiovisual communication, stated that the journalists practising their job in one or several audiovisual companies have the same stature of journalist as the fellow members of the press. French regulations do not require any specific training or diploma, nor they institutionalise any kind of regulatory

authority with a power of sanction for those trespassing professional duties. In fact, there is no legal definition of the members of the profession. The French case law simply mentioned intellectual work with a creative dimension and linked with the questions of the moment (or current events) (Derieux, 1999). Tautological definition (journalist are those who practise the job) and lack of closure²⁵ contribute to make the professional identity vague. Such an institutional framework is far from the usual sociological definition of the organised professions.

As one can see, the real trends toward more institutionalisation and professionalisation in French journalism between 1890 and 1940 are ambiguous. If the very word 'Americanisation' applied to journalism is no longer a scarecrow, the weight of the 'dead generations' (Marx) on the collective representations of French journalists remains heavy. It is highly visible in the peer admiration triggered by the *belle plume*, the writer's skills. It also remains in the status of commentary, in a critical positioning from 'above' which allows even today so many prominent journalists to behave more as judges or art critics of the social and political events than as news gatherers or investigators.

2.2: The changes of the Mitterrand years.

2.2.1: Another dimension of the 'hollowing out' of the state?

French state control of the media weakened slowly after the election of Mitterrand as President. Private radio stations were allowed in 1981; the subscription channel *Canal Plus*, owned by a close friend of the president, was created in 1984; private TV networks were allowed in 1985 (basically because the Socialist Party anticipated its defeat in the general elections of 1986 and thus wished to prevent the survival of a complete state monopoly). The privatisation of the main public channel TF1 in 1986 by the right-wing Chirac government was the finishing touch to these changes, also fuelled by the slow and chaotic institutionalisation of independent regulation authorities (HACA, then CNCL in 1986, then CSA in 1988). The situation in 2001 suggests a sharp contrast with the one of 1981. After the privatisation of the Sofirad holding, public media has shrunk to be limited to the Radio France group, which still has good ratings except among the young. The Public television is made up of the twin

channels France 2 and 3 and by the fifth channel, by daytime associating with a kind of Open University channel and in the evening with the Franco-German cultural channel *Arte*. On nearly all broadcasting slots the private channel TF1 gains 40% market share, while the private networks market share is close to 60/70%, if one adds M6 and the subscription and private satellite channels.

In fact two movements must be considered. The shrinking of the 'perimeter' of public media has been amplified by an enormous development of private radio and television, while TF1 dominated more and more clearly in the ratings, a public service living an identity crisis. These changes have been completed by the almost complete loss of the grip of the state authorities on the public media though the choice of the executives and the annual vote of the budget by Parliament remain as opportunities of pressure and bargaining. Because the buffer role imparted to the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel*, and with the growing determination for independence from public media, journalists have strongly curtailed government influence²⁶.

It would be wrong to argue that the French state has lost all possibility of influence over the public media and even the private press and media. The legal framework concerning for instance the amount and frequency of advertising spots on public and private channels offers a real instrument of pressure and bargaining to public authorities. The highly French tradition of changing, every three or four years, the powers of the independent authorities and/or the legal status and organisation of the executive of the public channels²⁷, offers other weapons to politicians. The state has less power over fewer actors of the press and media world. Where it remains, its influence is less direct, less clear, less immediately visible, excepted for periods of international crisis when the press is potentially and explicitly subjected to some restrictions:

1914-1918	censorship stated by an agreement between the French government and Press.
1939-1945	Carrying of Orders in Council and creation of a <i>Secrétariat Général de l'Information</i>
7 th January 1959	Ordinance allowing the government to take specific measures in order to safeguard the security of military operations.

7th January 1991 Protocol signed between the Minister of Defence and the 'Press organisations' likely to be present in the Middle East.

If the French State exerts most of its influence in an informal and indirect manner, what about the legal rules relating to the Press Freedom and pluralism? In France, individual freedoms were previously conceived as a resistance to power. But a new tenet has been conceived according to which the State represents the ultimate guarantor of freedoms. The combination of ideas and facts justified that a set of specific rules has progressively managed press freedom. Francis Balle evokes (2001) an 'assisted freedom'. This is led by two concerns: to preserve competition (rules, anti-trust rules, transparency, pluralism, rules in favour of competition) and to promote an equality of duties, (*égalité des charges ou servitudes particulières*). In other respects, the French State promoted some assistance to the press inspired by a kind of egalitarianism. According to Francis Balle (2001), this latter could have perverse effects by giving an advantage to the most important media groups. The independence of some private economic interests in the domestic sphere also exists. They enable the French Press to be autonomous *in theory*. It has been declared illegal for individual and legal entities to own or control more than 30% of the daily Information Press. The law of August 1 1986 aimed to promote the independence of the French Press from foreign investors. Foreign shares in a French company editing periodical publications cannot exceed 20% of the capital, or of the franchise.

2. 2. 2: The marginalisation of the partisan press.

As already mentioned, the crisis of the *presse d'opinion* was not an event that appeared suddenly in the late 80's. The Liberation of 1945 created a media landscape in which most of the newspapers, and most of the national titles (and even some regional linked to the Communist Party), could be linked to political parties or at least to political 'families'. It would take too long to list what looks like a graveyard with the disappearance of the first *Liberation* (radical left), of the socialist daily *Le Populaire*, of *Combat*, or more recently of the pro socialist *Matin de Paris* or the right wing *Le Quotidien*. The current situation of what is called in France *presse d'opinion* is highly simple. If one consid-

ers that the originally leftist *Liberation* no longer has a strong political positioning and coherence, then the 'advocacy press' is from now on completely marginalised. The old communist daily *L'Humanité*, trapped between the need for an *aggiornamento* and Party control, is slowly losing its readership, losing money and downsizing its staff²⁸. *La Croix* (catholic) can only survive thanks to the support of the more profitable titles of its press group. Of course the problems of the party press also reflect a general trend towards the weakening of party membership, party identification and the processes of fragmentation, both in the number and the discipline of the parties²⁹

The collapse of the advocacy press does not work in France as a zero-sum game. All studies show that most of the readership does not shift to another title but stops reading a daily altogether. Much academic research, using the surveys conducted by the Ministry of Culture³⁰, suggests that one of the most striking changes of the eighties has been the global growth of the daily time used by French people to watch television. As the average time dedicated to the reading of newspapers shrinks at the same time, it is hard not to interpret this correlation as a causal relationship.

2. 2. 3: End or change of the state and politicians 'influence on journalism' ?

The loss of influence by both State and parties on the media in France since the mid 80s is striking and clear. It would perhaps be wise to wonder if it is a not a bit too clear, and if focusing on the disappearance of the old forms of direct control and influence does not hide new repertoires of influence. The attention to the renewal of the ways of influence can be summarised in three basic remarks, which does not make sense only in France.

The first one would be to strongly recall that parties and rulers have developed soft and indirect techniques of influence³¹. Philip Schlesinger (1990) has accurately coined the notion of the 'professionalisation of sources'. Such a skill and art has been remarkably developed by the 'spin doctors' and consultants of French and European politicians. As early as the beginning of the 80s, Christine Ockrent, the anchorwoman of a public network, could write: 'The real threat today is no longer the phone call from the minister, it's spin doctoring' (Ockrent, 1989, p. 46). Beyond the question

of the real impact of 'spin doctoring', the stake here is to understand the processes of agenda-building. Daniel Gaxie considers that the autonomy of the journalistic field 'finds its limits in its structural subordination to the political field. The hierarchies, issues, priorities and decisions of the second one usually dominate the first' (Gaxie, 2000, p.72). A serious discussion of this thesis would require much more than a few lines. Let's however suggest that Gaxie's point of view can mobilise strong empirical arguments concerning the 'indexation' power of official sources, the effects of parallelism between the organisation of political institutions and the division of tasks among the newsrooms or the shared socialisation of leading politicians and journalists, which produce a kind of shared taken-for-granted vision of the 'politically thinkable'. Yet this 'structural domination' cannot be described – and Gaxie admits it – as a one way relationship. French journalism has become more adversarial.

A second remark would concern the effects of situations of networking and bridging between politics, high administration and business. It would be difficult to understand and decipher the history – with and without a capital 'h' – of the processes of privatisation or media conglomerate-building in France without paying attention to the personal relationships, professional trajectories and political commitments of many of the actors of these processes. The very first private (subscription) channel of French television; *Canal Plus*; was owned by André Rousset, a close friend of President Mitterrand. The social ubiquity of the high civil servants trained at the *Ecole Normale d'Administration* who colonise most of the spheres of social power in France requires special attention: the boss of a holding or the manager of a TV network may have been to school with a minister; he could have been member of a *cabinet* (staff of a French minister); or simply been a high civil servant who, ten years before was in charge of the policies concerning the company where he/she now works. None of these elements can be considered *per se* as the proof of the existence of hidden or mysterious networks of influence; they create however the social conditions for networking, bargaining and bridging between politics and business, as any case study based on inquiry and fieldwork shows (Chamard & Kieffer, 1992).

Let us finally suggest that, despite neo liberal mythologies, the autonomisation of a private sector of press and media, structured by powerful multinational

companies, does not work as a magic shield against all state and political pressures. The dominant channel TF1 belongs to the Bouygues company, which is one of the biggest groups in the world for building and civil engineering – a kind of market strongly dependant on the action of national diplomacy abroad and on the domestic public markets. And most of analysts in 1994-5 were particularly struck by TF1's over-friendly coverage of the presidential campaign of Prime minister Balladur, who, before his collapse at the last minute, was enthusiastically depicted by the polls as the future President.

2. 2. 4: The restructuring of the French journalistic field and practices

The French landscape of journalism, press and media has been dramatically restructured during the Eighties and Nineties.

One must first highlight the importance of some morphological changes. The number of French journalists has doubled in twenty years; opening the doors of the newsrooms to a younger generation, more educated and with a higher ratio of female journalists³². Dramatic changes are also highly visible in the mapping of journalists' jobs. A strong French peculiarity is the central weight of the magazine press, whose titles employ more than 40% of journalists³³. This part of the press industry is also in the vanguard of major changes in professional practices and situations: the growth of insecure jobs and the rise of a rationalised management of journalists' tasks (paper formats, targeting of audiences, active search for maximum readership). The current situation is also characterised, beyond the world of the partisan press, by the difficulties of the national/Parisian press³⁴. Many titles have serious financial problems (*France Soir*, *Liberation*). And if *Le Monde* or *Le parisien* have been able to win new readers, these success have needed major changes in the very conception of the newspaper: more open to practical and consumer information, more attentive to a reader-friendly style of papers, welcoming topics that would have been considered yesterday as more worthy of the popular magazines or tabloids³⁵.

Beyond these morphological changes, which are just suggested here, it is the whole power balance and hierarchy between visions of journalism that has slowly shifted. A snapshot of the situation between the end

of the war and the seventies suggests that there are two main divides in mapping the journalistic field. The first one, highly visible in the professionals' discourse, compared the 'real' journalists from the Press to the mere talking heads of the media, condemned to behave as poor dispatch readers and voices of their state masters. The second divide classically opposed the *journaux de qualité* (Broadsheets), not to a popular press like the British one or the German *Bild*, but more to the second division of local newspapers and popular Parisian titles (*France Soir*; *Le Parisien libéré*). In this objective and subjective construction of the professional space, *Le Monde*, or in different styles *L'Express* or *Le Figaro*, were at the top, developing an intellectual and analytic coverage of the events, resistant to any major concession to a proactive search for readership³⁶.

Since the 1990s an alternative style of professional achievement is appearing, linked more to TV journalism. This time skills such as the ability to cover and comment on events in real time, to identify topics and framings that will maximise ratings become the seal of the *grand professionnel* to use a buzzword. Television is clearly in the vanguard of the new style. And this change has practical effects on the coverage of politics between electoral campaigns: whether to confine 'serious' politics to late night slots, or whether to invite politicians onto talk shows or programmes where they may be asked not to speak too much about politics³⁷. The French journalistic field is today the site of a struggle between the old and the new vision of the best journalism. But the dominant trend seems rather clear, as even *Le Monde* appears to be dyed by the TF1 style: institutionalisation of the unique headline as at the beginning of a TV bulletin, the rise of the practical and lifestyle sections – even in the middle of the first page, shortening of paper formats, decline of foreign coverage, and use of media intellectuals famous for being famous.

Even boosted by the economic problems of the Parisian press, this commercial trend cannot however make sense of all the changes in press and journalism. Two other changes have had direct impact on the relationship between journalists and politicians. The first one has its roots in the sixties. The intensive use of polls has changed dramatically, especially since the 80's, the power balance between journalists and politicians. Before, the only opportunity for journalists to disagree with politicians was to behave as a partisan challenging an opponent. But the strong deferential

culture of many journalists, specially in the media, often limited their job to behaving as *porte micro* (microphone carrier). The polls' revolution modified the rules. This symbolic turn was highly visible in the leading political programme of the 80s: *L'heure de vérité*; where the discussion, often based on polls figures, was interrupted by the reactions of a panel giving instant polls and measuring the ability of the guest to convince (Neveu, 1989b). Another deep change came – mainly in the Press – from the combination of a search for audience and *reprises*³⁸ of the new attitudes of more educated and anti-institutional journalists. In a country lacking a powerful tradition of investigative reporting and muckraking, the changes in the field also opened a window of opportunity for a more aggressive journalism. Investigative reporting remains practised by a minority of journalists of some Parisian dailies and newsmagazines. But in this strategic space, which controls chain reactions, it has become the absolute weapon³⁹. The discovery and narrative construction of a good '*affaire*' is the promise of sales, fame and greater access to the editorial space fought for by other news sections. And the trend towards what Tunstall (2002) cleverly calls the '*telenovélisation*' of affairs' gives them more importance. Needless to say, these changes have practical impacts for politicians facing a more adversarial style of reporting.

2. 2. 5: The 'newsmagazines': a special case

The preceding explanations underlined all the difficulties met by the Parisian press. This established fact cannot be transposed to the newsmagazine's sector, whose economic vitality seems extraordinary compared with the newspapers'. This kind of Press was born in England in the 18th century and became, in the 19th century, both an encyclopaedic compilation with a diversified content and an illustrated periodical publication. Magazines, in a modern sense, really arose at the very end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. It can be defined as a periodical publication, directed at the general public, illustrated and printed on quality paper and sold in newspaper kiosks or by subscription.

One of the most prominent French characteristics lies with this importance of the newsmagazines, which can be studied at several levels. First, we can notice the quantitative weight of this sector insofar as France is one of countries which publishes the great-

est number of newsmagazines in the world, even though there are no precise statistics: the figures vary from 1300 to 4000 titles. French people are the greatest readers in Europe of newsmagazines: 1354 copies for 1000 inhabitants. Next, we can mention the economic importance of the newsmagazines in the context of strategies of concentration and internationalisation. In 2001, six companies (Hachette, Prisma Presse, Emap, Havas-Vivendi Universal, *Les publications de la Vie Catholique et Bayard Presse*) shared about 75% of the newsmagazine's market in France. Finally, in a more informal way, it is possible to consider newsmagazines as a powerful vehicle for entertainment and culture (Charron, Rieffel, 2001).

3: Information/news management with regard to the European public sphere.

Until recently, French scholars have dedicated very few researches to the coverage of the EU in the French press. Yet, in the last three years several works appeared that turned the EU press corps into a research object or, less specifically, that studied the place of Europe in the French media.

Two doctoral theses (Baisnée, 2003; Bastin, 2003), several collective books (see below) and by-products from European-funded research projects (Le Torrec et al., 2001, 2003; Baisnée/ Guiraudon & Grojean, 2002) started to show the growing interest of French Academia in this topic.

3. 1: French Academia and the 'European public sphere'.

Many books and contributions have tried to tackle the topic of the 'European public sphere' (Abélès, 1994; Dacheux, 2003; Mercier, 2003). Despite the theoretical and empirical weakness of the notion (when applied to the EU) (Baisnée, 2004), most researchers have begun to explore this dimension from very different perspectives. Most acknowledge there isn't really anything like a 'European public sphere'⁴⁰. Most also seem to think it is in the making (Pérez-Díaz, 1998; Badie, 2000) or, at least, that it will be the necessary achievement of the political construction of Europe.

On the whole, the theoretical perspective of the EU's public sphere appears particularly weak (for general

overviews on the subject: Weisbein, 2002; Nanz, 2003). It has become an academic routine to use Habermas' concept and to forget that it was designed to describe a very specific period of time and an even more specific form of political organisation. Most scholars seem to act 'as if' the EU reproduced the mechanisms that gave birth to the modern Nation-State, while there is scarce evidence of this kind of historical movement (Schmitter, 1995). From a methodological point of view, this lack of firm theorisation of the European Public sphere has implied that, while this is a decisive point, French researchers have spent very little time thinking about who were the insiders (i.e. those able to take part in the debate over European matters) and who were the outsiders of EU's 'public sphere'. Most use an implicit geographical definition of the Public sphere (i.e. the EU member states) and take for granted that anyone living within the EU borders is a potential participant in the European Public Sphere. From this theoretical departure, the public sphere enlarges as the EU does. It also gains millions of participants as the EU expands. Yet geography is a very poor sociological tool. For example, it prevents consideration of the unequal distribution of the resources needed to be involved in EU political life, the processes of selection (gatekeeping), and the effective interest in taking part in the debate over EU matters.

On this point Habermas the philosopher seems more sociologist than most sociologists, as his work is more concerned with the social groups that were effectively involved in the public debate than in geographic borders. The EU might have its *bourgeoisie*, a social group involved in its political and public life, and it should be the main concern for studies of the European public sphere. Yet, most of the time when talking about the 'public sphere', most researchers mean 'media coverage', which is rather far from Habermas' conceptual work. For this reason, in the following lines, we prefer to talk about the coverage of the EU rather than of its 'public sphere'.

As far as the media is concerned, the basic assumption has long been that media 'should' be interested in the EU. If they are not (which appear to be the case for the most popular of them) they fail to fulfil their 'democratic' role and are held responsible for the low turnout in elections to the European parliament, low interest (and knowledge) of citizens of the working of the EU, etc. While *disinterest* is as interesting as *interest* for a sociologist, almost all the academic attention

has been dedicated to the groups that are the most involved in the working of the EU, giving the impression they are the only ones who deserve interest.

Based on case studies of those who are in charge of giving Europe a public profile, several books have been recently published. Significantly, two out of three⁴¹ of the books published recently are either entitled in an interrogative way (*Vers un espace public européen ?* [Towards a European public sphere ?] (Mercier, 2003) or put the European dimension into question (*En quête d'Europe* [In search of Europe] (Marchetti, 2004). The latter gathers research on both journalists and media covering Europe, while Mercier's collective book is more concerned with actors (individual and collective) for whom Europe is the relevant playing field. From this (tricky) starting point, very little attention has been paid to French media and journalists and the actual way they deal with EU matters.

Other researchers have dealt with the communication dimension of the EU in a more concrete way. They have been more interested in the actors and mechanisms that govern the coverage of the EU. While, Mercier's book deliberately uses the European public sphere as a starting point, intending, from there, to study actors supposedly evolving at this level, Marchetti's collective work intends to 'understand how media productions, or those who intend to influence them, enable understanding of transnational unification processes in cultural, political, economical, etc. fields and the forms of resistance they produce' (Marchetti, 2004, p. 14). The decision to consider 'Europe' as one dimension of wider processes (i.e. globalisation, transnationalisation, internationalisation) prevents the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' bias that threatens any work on the subject: the European public sphere exists – we studied it...

3. 2: French sociology of journalism and Europe

French sociology of journalism has recently produced the first insights into the logics of the coverage of the EU.

In this respect, transnational media such as *Euronews* (Baisnée & Marchetti, 2000, 2002) or *Eurosport*, or international producers of 'European' media products such as the *European Broadcasting Union* (Darras & Marchetti, 2004) have been studied. They give a very

different picture of these alleged 'European' media or institutions. At least, they do not take their 'European' dimension for granted and thus put it into question. For example, when studying *Euronews* it became clear that the attention scholars pay to its European dimension should not prevent taking into account other phenomena and constraints whose scope does not fit the European pattern.

The case of *Euronews* was indeed quite meaningful. The channel's identity and brand is based on its European dimension. Yet, when one observes the way it works, *Euronews* appears to evolve, alternatively, in a much broader or a much narrower context than the European one: Its owner is (mainly) British; its sources for images (as the channel relies heavily on audiovisual news agencies) are only Anglo-Saxon; its main competitors appear to be international news channels (*BBC World*, *CNN*); its viewers are located not only in Europe (in the EU sense), but also in the Balkans, in Africa, etc.

All these elements put the European dimension of *Euronews* at stake. At least, one should not take for granted that the main aim of *Euronews* is to be a European channel. To be precise, the empirical investigation of this newsroom led us to raise some questions: how has this multi-lingual, multinational newsroom found its way to produce what the channel call a 'European point of view on European news'? How does the staff of the media fulfil the editorial strategies and how does this newsroom work in practice to produce news that is supposed to be watched by a 'non-national' audience? How do the editorial team and the 'grassroots' journalists define the channel's identity and how do they try to make it concrete? What makes *Euronews* different, if ever it is, from other 24h news channels?

Coverage of the EU by French 'European' (Neveu, 2004), national (Hubé, 2003; Le Torrec & Garcia, 2003; Le Bart, 2004) or regional (Ringoot & Utard, 2004) media have also been studied. The results produced by Le Torrec and Garcia based on a sophisticated data collection in five countries, offer a very detailed picture of the coverage of the EU by TV. Analysing the frames that are applied to the EU, they suggest that the European public sphere that is promoted is fragmented; that the EU is depicted as an intergovernmental arena and not a supra-national and decisional entity. Their main conclusion, based on normative considerations, is that news framing of European affairs may contribute to the limitation of public understanding of

the European system of multi-level governance and hinder the legitimisation of the EU. Hubé's comparison of the editorial treatment of the EU in the German and French Press (by studying the front pages of major dailies) clearly shows that the EU comes to the forefront of journalists' priorities when issues are related to the national governmental agenda. Once more, it is an indication of the structural subordination of the journalistic field to the political one.

These quantitative studies, the failure of *L'Européen* and the difficulties encountered by regional and national newspapers to turn the EU into a journalistic subject or a newspaper section⁴², makes it all the more important to analyse how news about the EU is actually produced. This also implies the study of EU institutions communication policies both towards the general public (Forêt, 2001a, 2001b) and towards EU correspondents (Baisnée, 2004b). These works clearly show three major trends: the central role played by the European Commission in the daily working of EU correspondents, the necessity for the Commission to play down its political dimension when making public statements and, finally, the politicisation-domestication function of the Permanent Representatives' spokespersons (as they tend to give a very national interpretation of current affairs and as the Council stands for the only institution that is regarded as 'political' in Brussels).

3. 3: The study of the EU Press Corps

Obscure decisions taken by unknown politicians or technocrats in a political and institutional system nobody can understand might be a good way to summarise the impression that EU public affairs frequently give. Some writers criticise the EU's lack of a coordinated communications strategy for this state of affairs (Meyer 1999, 2000). A more common complaint focuses on the EU's so-called 'democratic deficit', with most writers insisting on the legal and procedural aspects of this legitimisation problem: the unelected commissioners, the weakness of Parliament and the complicated decision-making process. From this point of view, legitimacy would be solely a technical problem, adequately resolved by institutional reform. However, the question of legitimisation might be rather more complex. The issue of the 'democratic deficit' has probably been badly presented since very few studies have questioned the representations given of the orig-

inal political system: its processes, issues and actors. Indeed, most of the time, European decisions seem to come out of nowhere because the political process they have been through has a very low public profile.

Yet, there are about 800 people in Brussels whose job it is to scrutinise the EU, to interpret it and to make their findings public; 800 journalists who know perfectly well the political dimension of any decision (Bastin, 2002; Baisnée, 2004a). They are the filter through which institutions that have no natural audiences, except geographically, culturally and as politically divided publics, are given publicity. Yet even though it is one of the biggest press corps in the world and despite the increasingly crucial role it plays for EU citizens, it remains an anonymous body which has been studied very little (Morgan 1995; Schickel 1995; Meyer, 1999). This is somewhat surprising, since a study of EU correspondents is a unique opportunity to compare journalists from different countries in a context that is not comparable with the work of traditional foreign correspondents. In our opinion, the study of this journalistic community, and especially its ability to politicise EU news, is of crucial importance (Padioleau 1976; Tunstall 1970). Until the EU political system has been given social visibility, it will probably remain a 'cold monster' in the opinion of European citizens.

Politicisation of EU news is of particular interest since it heavily influences the way audiences will consider EU. What appears (even when one analyses different national contexts) is that it is almost impossible to have a clear view of the EU as a specific political system at work just by reading newspapers and even more by watching television. The intense political life going on in 'Brussels' is hardly covered and, except for those who belong to this European polity, what 'is really going on' among European political actors and institutions remains out of reach.

In general terms three main attitudes toward the politicisation of EU news can be observed among EU correspondents. These can also be regarded as three conflicting or competing definitions of the job of an EU correspondent. The first, which we call 'institutional journalism', produces coverage more concerned with 'policies' than 'politics': a technical and expert-like coverage of European current affairs. As the research shows, an older generation of French journalists exemplify this approach. In contrast, a newer genera-

tion of French journalists have developed a definition of their role that is closer to the most legitimate forms of journalism – investigative reporting and political journalism. Finally, and this approach is particularly relevant to the British correspondents, coverage of EU matters may be framed through the prism of national political debates. In this case the politicisation of events is related to the national issue agenda and the resultant coverage does not treat the EU as an independent political system.

The fact that, within this international press corps, several definitions of the same posting (i.e. of what a EU correspondent is supposed to be) exist and compete also means that national audiences don't receive the same image of the EU. As only very few Europeans are keen to directly experience EU, this raises the question of the kind of political judgements Eurobarometer's opinion polls register. Thus, what does it mean to use sentences such as 'Europeans think that...' when the EU that is depicted to these Europeans isn't the same ?

Analysing the logic internal to the group of journalists responsible for producing news about the EU is then of crucial importance when one wants to study concretely what lies behind the major assumptions of 'European public sphere' theories. What appears is a firmly divided (given the necessity for correspondents to 'domesticate' EU news, i.e. to cover the EU in a way that makes sense for their audiences), socially selective (as the most popular media aren't interested in covering the EU) social space.

3. 4: Covering Europe in France, a partial history

There is no systematic study of the history of the coverage of the EU in the French press⁴³. This is not surprising, since there is no book on the general history of France's relationship to the EU... Yet it is possible to give a short account of what has represented Europe (EC, EEC, EU) in French press.

Indeed, the history of the coverage of European Union (EU) affairs by the French press has many parallels with the history of the EU itself. Both were originally highly specialised; both have become progressively institutionalised. The story of how the French press has covered the EU, however, is also the account of a group of French journalists who covered European

affairs exclusively for more than 25 years, and whose work changed continuously to keep pace with the changing EU environment. These men started off (in the 60's) as specialised journalists working for specialist publications in Brussels. Over time they joined leading national titles, working for many different papers, and ended up becoming known as the Brussels correspondents; this by virtue of their amount of newsprint for which they were responsible, and because their *de facto* monopoly⁴⁴ on EU news meant that what they wrote became synonymous with information.

This partly explains the highly specialised tone of EU news in the French press. Indeed, until the 90's, EU appeared as a highly technical, non-political matter directed at specific and limited audiences (farmers mainly).

From an organisational point of view, for the vast majority of the French correspondents, their lot is to be attached by default to the foreign service of their paper. Journalists in both Paris and Brussels acknowledge that this institutional dependency creates more problems than it solves, and indeed it is an important variable allowing us to understand the specific difficulty that the EU poses for editors. First, Brussels correspondents are torn between the EU's own agenda, and that imposed on them by the hierarchy that rules their paper's international service. Second, for those correspondents working out of Paris, the 'exoticism' of Community news, actors and processes does not make their job any easier when it comes to 'selling' a given EU subject to their editor. The European 'goodwill' that exists within the editorial teams (making EU news a 'rite of passage', an indicator of 'modernity', 'openness' and 'peace' (Neveu, 2004) for any 'serious' title) finds itself in conflict with professional practice which, where international news is concerned, favours themes and stories that are worlds apart from Community information⁴⁵.

The attitude of the French press towards European affairs is changing, but slowly, and not necessarily in a linear direction. The fact that *le Monde* now has an almost daily page given over to European questions does not alter the fact that the major French media (especially on radio and TV) remain reticent, at best, regarding Brussels. The fact that only one French TV channel (France 3) has a permanent correspondent in Brussels speaks for itself. The way in which Brussels is covered has doubtless been altered since the 1998-1999

crisis of the Santer Commission⁴⁶, when French correspondents (from *Libération*, notably) were amongst those publishing ‘revelations’ (Baisnée, 2002). Nevertheless, the inertia of routine, which is reinforced by the way that the EU institutions themselves handle the press (Baisnée, 2001), is such that any change should not be over-estimated. EU remains, as some correspondents say, a foreign, dull and boring subject for their editorial hierarchy. Yet, a major change occurred in 2002 as the main national daily launched a section dedicated to EU news.

Le Monde’s ‘European Union’ page was created in January 2002. It was the chief component of the editorial reshuffle undertaken in this launch of a new-look *le Monde*. François Bonnet, foreign desk editor, explained at the time of the launch of the EU pages that ‘EU affairs need specific treatment and will get it in an editorial space that is to be found every day at the end of the ‘International’ pages, just before the ‘France’ section.’⁴⁷ The decision to insert the new page between foreign and domestic news was thus clearly presented as recognition of the ‘specific’ characteristics of EU news. Bonnet, moreover, himself head of the paper’s foreign policy desk, assigned to the EU pages (and to the Brussels bureau) goals which differed from those of the typical foreign correspondent: ‘By dissecting the functioning of these new sites of power, *le Monde* is proposing to guarantee that European political life is covered to the same extent as national politics.’

At best, EU coverage in the French press in comparison with the past has become less specialist, more diversified, but certainly not more popular.

4: Conclusion.

Three points can frame a very provisional conclusion.

- The first one would be to emphasise the double delay of French research on both journalism and Europe. As we have shown, the sociology of journalism has given birth to a significant flow of research only since the mid eighties. And Europe was the Cinderella of French political science until the late nineties. This situation is changing (maybe because the weight of Anglophone research on European matters was perceived as a kind of national shame by the academics of a country who boasts of having been one of the fathers of the European in-

stitutions, and certainly because this vacuum was felt as a threat of backwardness). The advantage of these delays is probably that French researchers could use the rich legacy of foreign research and had no choice but finding original frames to contribute to this field of research.

- A major source of reflection offered by French research is certainly to make visible the difficulty of comparative research. Let’s firstly mention the fact that one too often compares the coverage of European stakes ‘as if’ Europe had a clear and unique significance and ‘as if’ the same events were not deciphered through national spectacles. Let’s also mention the fact that the ‘European’ nature of some media, or the existence of a European public sphere and audience is taken for granted when any empirical research shows (see the case of *Euronews*) that this European-ness is in fact made up of several neatly different national sub-programmes, media systems, and framings.
- Finally the French case also suggests the weight of a normative dimension. After being a major player in domestic political struggles (the European Defense community of the fifties is a strong illustration), Europe has become in the eighties a rather consensual player among the ‘government parties’. And most of the media and leading journalists are strongly pro-European (supporting the EU). The coverage of the debate on the Maastricht referenda was typical of this situation. Arguing against the treaty could only be proof of backward nationalism, lack of education, ‘*souverainisme*’, and ‘populist’ narrowness of mind. Covering Europe and its institutions is not only dealing with a polity and its policies but a kind of test of modernity. The question here is to understand if this is simply a French peculiarity. Our common research would probably have to pay great attention to this question: what is the mosaic of values, dreams and fears linked to the word ‘Europe’? What are the dominant and alternative frames, which structure the narratives of European building? And if our common project concerns ‘adequate information management’, the question will also be: adequate for what? To the promising image that the European Institutions wish to value? To an in-depth understanding of the Europeanisation process by rank and file ‘Europeans’? To the national stakes and debates triggered by the European construction? It is very doubtful that all these dimensions elegantly overlap.

- ¹ One should notice that Padioleau warmly expresses his thanks to Berkeley University for allowing him to become familiar with the American research during a stay in California!
- ² Even if this book is firstly inspired by a semiological and political approach of press writing, one must mention the publishing of Yves de la Haye's *Journalisme mode d'emploi* (1985). If its interpretative framework, deeply linked to Marxism and structuralism, appears today as rather outdated, this research offers, however, stimulating reflections on press writing and media-templates.
- ³ One should compare this situation with what Tom Wolfe says in 'The New Journalism' about the American 'feature writers' of the sixties, using their journalistic experience to succeed as novel writers.
- ⁴ Conversely, Ruellan's reflection also allows us to understand the ambiguities of this Frontier strategy when the balance of power shifts, when the 'native' and un-tamed tribes of PR of the 'smiling professions' enter into the civilised territory of journalism and threaten to transform it into a simple province of communication activities.
- ⁵ Such a statement is true for sociology. Concerning French political science, things are much more complicated. Political scientists have managed a kind of Oedipus complex in their relationship to the law faculties by nearly fifteen years of silence and blindness on law and institutions.
- ⁶ The result of a second study, based on data collected in 1999 is about to be published by the end of 2000.
- ⁷ French studies on electoral campaign exist (especially from the Parisian research team CEVIPOF or from Jacques Gerstlé). But these studies are usually centred on the analysis of the effects of campaigns, on studies of agenda-setting or priming without great attention to an in-depth sociology of journalism.
- ⁸ Such strategic identity management also plays with the variety of press titles and audience-slots. The same famous TV journalist (Anne Sinclair) can appear in a highbrow women's magazine as a living and feminist symbol of the superwoman, combining a bright career with her role of spouse and mother, being interviewed on her cultural tastes. Another magazine would present in a box an interview of her make-up assistant, speaking about the beauty of her skin and of her make-up habits.
- ⁹ A spokesperson from the Channel TF1 called an 'industrial accident' the fact that a new programme was cancelled after two weeks of broadcasting, just for lack of ratings. A fake interview of Fidel Castro by the anchorman of the same network also triggered a fierce debate.
- ¹⁰ Here again the question of translations and linguistic borders is highly visible. Gusfield is not translated into French, a review like 'Social Problems' not well known in France. It is thus an important sociological legacy, which does not cross the Atlantic.
- ¹¹ See *Histoire générale de la presse française* (Bellanger/ Godechot & Guiral, 1975) and especially Pierre Albert's contribution on the Third republic in volume four.
- ¹² Pierre Rosanvallon develops a striking analysis of Guizot as the Lenine of the bourgeoisie (1985, see pp 64-72).
- ¹³ An illustration of the political impact of these serials is offered by Eugene Sue and the extraordinary fascination produced by his *Mystères de Paris* depicting the daily life of the Parisian working class and the ideal society dreamed by a character of social reformer. The story had enough impact to trigger the irony of Marx in *The Holy Family*. (See Thiesse, 1980).
- ¹⁴ During the *Belle époque* (1880-1914) appears what has been coined as the *petite presse* (because of the tabloid size of the newspapers). Four titles sold then more than one million copies each day.
- ¹⁵ It would be more exact to write an executive power monopoly as a kind of spoil system allows the Prime minister, later the Gaullist rulers, to appoint the heads of the radio. A well-known joke in the fifties was to speak of the TSFIO (TSF – *Télégraphie Sans Fil* -Wireless transmission – was the popular name of radio and SFIO the acronym of the ruling socialist party of Guy Mollet).
- ¹⁶ See for instance Jerome Bourdon (1994) : *Haute fidélité. Pouvoir et télévision*. Paris : Le Seuil.
- ¹⁷ Alain Peyrefitte (1976) : *Le mal Français*. Paris : Plon.
- ¹⁸ The threat of contemporary Greek politicians quoted by Hallin 'give me a ministry or I will start a newspaper', fits perfectly with the style of politician's behaviour of the French Third republic
- ¹⁹ A most complicated and 'French' vision of objectivity in many ways. Xau; a press magnate champion of the 'American' model at the *Belle époque* recruited to produce an objective coverage of politics... four columnists; each known for his sharp (and different) political commitments. Or how to make 'objective' journalism with committed journalists...
- ²⁰ Also Neveu (Erik), '*Sociologie du journalisme; La découverte*; Paris; 2001, Chapter 1.
- ²¹ *Illusions perdues* (1995) or the *Monographie de la presse parisienne* (1965) for Balzac; *Bel Ami* for Maupassant; also see the novel *Le Bachelier* from Jules Vallés.
- ²² But for the parliamentary reporter, for whom Balzac mentions the use of shorthand.
- ²³ Act of 29 March 1935.
- ²⁴ It is so called *Commission de la Carte d'Identité Professionnelle des Journalistes*
- ²⁵ There are three ways to become journalist in France: to learn on the job; to follow a course at University and to undergo periods of training in the media; to study in one of the nine French Schools acknowledged by the profession.
- ²⁶ Even if some remnants of the French monarchic style of governing are still highly visible, as the surprising right of selecting his interviewees on public (and often private) TV used by both the president and Prime minister.
- ²⁷ The *ministère de la Culture et de la Communication* even started in

- 1999 to prepare a reform of the channel *Arte* before 'remembering' (thanks to the pressures from the professionals of culture and from German authorities) that it was a partnership with Germany needing probably the agreement of the partner before any substantial change...
- ²⁸ The French Communist Party publicly asked for financial participation of private companies into the capital of *L'Humanité*. The private channel TF1 and the media group Hachette have been the first private companies to become significant shareholders of the communist daily (*Le Monde*, May 17th, p 19). A comparison with the Italian *L'Unità*, which even disappeared for some months, would be interesting.
- ²⁹ Arrival of the *Verts* and *Front National*, split of the UDF, much lesser 'military' functioning of the Communist and Gaullist parties...
- ³⁰ Cf. Ministère de la Culture (1974, 1981, 1989, 1998): *Les Pratiques culturelles des Français*. Paris : La Documentation française.
- ³¹ The complete interpretation of these changes would require a substantial mobilisation of the research concerning the sociology of political elites. Among the questions that should be debated, one should mention the rising weight of the 'power schools' (ENA, *Sciences Po*, *Grandes écoles* and Business schools) in the training of politicians; the increasing closure of the political field on its esoteric stakes; the shrinking of its recruitment from the upper classes, and the growing professionalisation of political activities of communication and monitoring of public opinion. (See Gaxie (Daniel) *La démocratie représentative*, Montchrestien, Paris, 2000).
- ³² For an overview see Neveu (Op.Cit) chapter 2 and ²Charon (1993).
- ³³ This figure does not include the 5% employed by newsmagazines
- ³⁴ 70% of the newspaper copies sold each day in France are from regional titles such as "Ouest France", the first French newspaper with 800 000 copies a day.
- ³⁵ *Le Monde* gave a large and lasting coverage to the death of Princess Diana; it published in a special issue the complete Starr report on the Clinton Lewinsky affair, boosting this day its sales of 20% in Paris.
- ³⁶ The motto of Hubert Beuve-Mery, first Editor in chief of "Le Monde" was supposed to be "Faites chiant" (Be boring !).
- ³⁷ See For instance "Vivement dimanche" on the public Channel France 2. Most of the political guests seem to be quite happy with this style of program.
- ³⁸ In French this word means the flow of paper and comments triggered by an information which is the starting point of the chain reaction of coverage.
- ³⁹ In a recent book (*Un secret si bien violé*, Seuil, 2001) Jean Marie Charron and Claude Furet suggest the limits of this investigative reporting à la française. In many cases the 'investigation' means the publishing of information coming from judges (*juges d'instruction*), policemen, high civil servants or barristers more than it is the fruit of a true inquiry. This situation suggests new questions on the limits of the autonomy of journalists. More than a naïve celebration of the rise of a new generation of muckrakers, the analysis of the rise of *affaires* should thus pay attention to the role of claim-makers and moral entrepreneurs. For a good case study see Champagne and Marchetti (1994).
- ⁴⁰ But one could say, as did Michael Shcudson (1993) .
- ⁴¹ The third one being Le Torrec, Virginie & Garcia, Guillaume (2003).
- ⁴² On the birth of the « European Union » section in *Le Monde*, see Baisnée, Olivier (2004b).
- ⁴³ One can find some elements in Dassetto, Felice & Dumoulin, Michel (1993).
- ⁴⁴ A de facto monopoly since these French correspondents were in the past and are now very few in number (compared with other nationalities) and each work for more than one title.
- ⁴⁵ See Marchetti (2002) on the question of international reporting, and how it has changed.
- ⁴⁶ On 16 March 1999, the Commission presided by Jacques Santer resigned following a period when individual Commissioners, and above all Edith Cresson, had been exposed to accusations in the press of nepotism and cronyism.
- ⁴⁷ L'Europe au quotidien, *Le Monde*, Supplément 'Le Monde' 2002, 14t January 2002

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* As this report is designed to present a state of the art of the academic production, the bibliography presented here goes far beyond references presented in the paper. It has been designed to present both, the intellectual backgrounds of the authors and to give an (as complete as possible) overview of French academic production about journalism.