JOURNALISTS AS POLITICAL ACTORS
THE CASE OF THE RESIGNATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

It is commonplace within the field of media and communication to criticise the role of the media in democracy, and to lament the good old days, when the public sphere was not ‘refeudalised’, when political communication was more substantial than a few soundbites and so on. Recent academic publications speak of political communication as being in crisis, about the decay in politics, about the omnipresence of the media, and how they seem to control not only politicians but also the public. Assorted perspectives of the so-called ‘media-malaise’ posit that the media are responsible for everything that’s bad about politics: the sex scandals, the apathy, the lack of public debate on issues of substance and so on. In many ways such views parallel the conclusions of early studies into the effects of mass media, such as for instance the commonly held view that media violence leads to real violence, either directly, or through ‘desensitisation’ towards it. However, while research in the field of media effects has shown that things are a bit more complicated, most of the studies conducted in the field of political communication tend to construct an image of ‘crisis’, and of ‘decline’, without so much as acknowledging any redeeming features. Thus, whereas there is an abundance of ‘evidence’ on the decline of political communication, there seems to be very little evidence pointing, if not to the opposite, then at least to some little ray of hope. In writing the above, I do not want to assume the opposite thesis, that the media do in fact contribute greatly to democratic politics and so on. Rather, I want to assume a more bottom-up type of perspective. Most studies conducted on political communication seem to focus on the structural constraints imposed on the media, and the (detrimental) consequences of these. However, if democratic politics is seen as a process, then we have to view it as something dynamic rather than pre-determined on the basis of existing structures.

1 Examples of such research include: Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1995; Entman, 1989; Kerbel, 1998.
Thus, my main argument here is that while there are structural constraints in the work of the media, there’s also agency, the agency of the media workers, and their input in the process; in this sense, an attempt to identify such constraints is certainly commendable, but it should not overstate its case. The focus, therefore, of the present paper is on the ways in which journalists negotiate the various pressures put on them and how they construct different positions for themselves and for other ‘players’ in the ‘field’ of journalism. It should be evident from the terminology used above that this perspective is theoretically informed by Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology, and in particular by his recent (1998) work ‘On Television and Journalism’. However, I will attempt to highlight what I consider to be potentially problematic areas in Bourdieu’s work, and which thereby limit the explanatory potential of his work.

The empirical part of the paper deals with the community of journalists in Brussels, and in particular with the way in which they considered the issue of the resignation of the European Commission in March 1999. I spoke to about 20 journalists from 13 different countries, and, as at the time this was a very topical issue, we discussed the issue of the resignation of the European Commission, and what they thought about it. I then considered the resultant text as a narrative, a story told by these journalists, or rather, as the case was, three stories, all of which featuring the same main players, but related to each other in different ways. I want to interpret these findings under the light of Bourdieu’s claims about the field of journalism, and to expose what I consider to be the limitations of Bourdieu’s view on that. Specifically, in a rather more empirical vein, I hope to demonstrate that casting the media, the politicians and the public in the same roles all the time appears to be problematic for both the fields of journalism as well as for the field of politics.

The dual task that I have set for this paper is, therefore, first, to attempt to provide some sort of a theoretical framework within which to theorise not only the structural constraints imposed on the media, but also, the more ‘bottom-up’ negotiation, stretching, or even outright resistance of such boundaries; second, to empirically illustrate these theoretical points by employing my findings on the community of journalists in Brussels, and their role(s) in the resignation of the European Commission.
THEORETICAL APPROACH

1. General Theoretical Issues – The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu:

I will not attempt here to provide a comprehensive overview of the critical sociology advanced by Pierre Bourdieu, but rather I will try to highlight some of the theoretical concepts he has employed in discussing the media and journalism. The main concepts of relevance here include the notions of field and habitus.

In his sociology, Bourdieu has attempted to provide a ‘theory of practice’- the oxymoron highlights what seems to be an attempt to overcome the rigid dualism of theory and practice, as well as, of course, to theorise everyday practice. Moreover, in his work, Bourdieu has offered the possibility of a bridge between structure and agency, exactly through the use of the concepts of field and habitus. It is for these two reasons, i.e. his focus on both theory and practice, and his account of a bounded agency, that his perspective was found appropriate in studying the case of journalism, along, of course with his treatise on the media and journalism (Bourdieu, 1998a).

For Bourdieu, the field is a concept that makes explicit the relational character of the world. He defines as “a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu, 1992: 97). The character of the field is one of constant struggle, and this, in turn, characterises the relations between positions, which can be relations of domination, subordination, or homology. This struggle, in turn, is determined by the distribution of ‘capital’, which is not only economic, but also cultural, symbolic, and social; the position of an agent (be it an individual, an organisation or an institution) is derived ‘objectively’ by possession of such capital, but also in relation to other positions within the field. In other words, each field has a given amount of capital, and this constitutes the stake or interest of the field. Differently situated people, institutions etc., struggle for control of this capital, and it is the accumulation of capital that characterises their position vis-à-vis other positions in the field.

In these terms, in Bourdieu’s cosmology, or perhaps topology, since his main metaphor seems to be a spatial one, the social world, or space, is constituted by a number of fields, characterised as fields of forces and fields of struggle, and in which
different positions compete over what is considered to be at stake. Further, these fields are also related to one another, related in a way that is at any given point in time determined by a sort of a ‘meta-field’ (Bourdieu, 1992: 17), the field of power. In other words, there exists constant conflict and competition not only within each field, but also among all the different fields. 

Thus, in studying a field, there are three interconnected steps: first, one must analyse a field in terms of its relation to the field of power; second, to analyse the relations between the positions of the various agents that compete for capital within a given field; and finally, “one must analyse the habitus of the agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired” (Bourdieu, 1992: 105). In other words, in examining a field, one has to first see its ‘external’ position vis-à-vis the other fields, and where it stands in relation to them, and then to move on to an examination of the internal structuring of the field, before finally examining the practices of the actors themselves, the dispositions that are both the result of their positioning in the field, but which also determine their practices within the field.

In theorising the habitus, Bourdieu has spoken of it as “a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks” (Bourdieu, 1977: 95). In other words, the habitus is the internalisation of the external structure of the field, and in this way it safely guides the agent towards reacting to the requirements of the field in an appropriate way. While this can easily attract the criticism of determinism, Bourdieu is quick to point out that the habitus is a generative structure, i.e. it generates potentially infinite ways of action or behaving, but within “the limits of its structures, which are the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it” (Bourdieu, 1992: 19).

2. **Bourdieu ‘On Television and Journalism’**

Rather than attempting to criticise Bourdieu’s work at the theoretical level, I will examine how he has applied his concepts of field, habitus etc., onto the field of

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2 “The state of the structure of the field of power determines the structure of oppositions of the subfield and thus all the possible alliances that can be formed in the subfield, and also between the members of the subfield and those of their environment” (Vandenberghhe, 1999: 53 n.46).
journalism, and attempt to make clear what I find to be the shortcomings of his theory as applied to the field of political journalism in particular. In doing this, I will loosely follow Bourdieu’s proposed steps in studying a field: first, an examination of the relation of the specific field to the field to power; second, an analysis of the given position within the field; and finally, a study of the habitus of journalists.

To start with the issue of the relation of the field of journalism to the meta-field of power, it is Bourdieu’s thesis that in the context of capitalism as it stands today, economic capital constitutes the dominant capital, and cultural capital is the dominated one; in these terms, the structure of the field of journalism will be determined on the basis of the above principle, i.e. dominance is given to the economic capital, which dominates the cultural one. Indeed, in his book ‘On Television and Journalism’, Bourdieu dedicates a chapter on the effects of the market on journalism, and the subsequent effects of journalism onto other fields. He doesn’t allocate a lot of space to the habitus of specific journalists, although he does refer to some French journalists as a means of illustrating his points.

Thus, the field of journalism, while actually occupying a dominated position vis-à-vis the other fields of cultural production has, nevertheless the unique position of having “a de facto monopoly on the large-scale informational instruments of production and diffusion of information” (Bourdieu, 1998a: 46), and it is for this reason that it can exercise some sort of power or domination on other fields, such as the field of politics and the field of artistic expression. In other words, to the extent that journalism controls “the means of public expression”, fields, or rather, positions within fields, that necessitate such a public expression, will be dominated upon by journalism. Since then, journalism is itself dominated by the market, it will have detrimental effects on the fields of politics, the arts, and even the academia. For Bourdieu, moreover, the effects of journalism on the other fields are linked to its own internal structure.

Having thus positioned journalism vis-à-vis other fields, Bourdieu moves on to discuss the internal structure of the field – a move that constitutes step number two in the analysis. In discussing this structure, Bourdieu posits that the journalistic field is

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3 The reason for this as implied by Bourdieu is that while it is high on economic capital, the journalistic field is low on symbolic capital, and this gives it its position as dominated within the greater field of cultural production.
“a site of opposition between two models, each with its own principle of legitimation” (Bourdieu, 1998a: 70), namely the principle of peer recognition, and that of ‘public recognition’, as expressed by sales. In other words, the field is organised on the basis of two criteria, an internal one, journalistic ‘seriousness’, or ‘quality’, and an external one, sales; thus, according to Bourdieu, the whole field is organised on the basis of this opposition between a ‘cultural’ (autonomous) pole and a ‘market’ (heteronomous) pole, and of course this includes all the subfields, such as print media, or television and so on.

More and more, however, it is the external criterion that characterises the field: it is “permanently subject to trial by market” (Bourdieu, 1998a: 71), either through competing for advertisers, or through competing for audience ratings. This competition has two effects: first, competition for the ‘newest news’, the ‘scoops’, the ‘exclusives’; this is a well known aspect of journalism, although a paradoxical one in that in fact, only other journalists realise what is an exclusive or a ‘scoop’, since they are the ones who read all their competitors. Yet, this aspect of journalism is important for Bourdieu, who argues that it leads to an overemphasis on the ‘here and now’, to an insistence on a high turnover of events, in short, it leads to a kind of “permanent amnesia” (ibid.: 72), and to the employment of the almost empty criterion of before and after – as opposed to more substantive criteria.

The second effect of this market-led competition is the relationship between journalists in the field: here Bourdieu refers to the constant preoccupation of journalists with their colleagues. Journalists, in other words, have placed their ‘competitor-colleagues’ (Tunstall, 1970) under constant surveillance, with the objective of either avoiding their mistakes, or emulating their successes. This results in uniformity, in a tendency towards conservatism, in a propensity towards reproduction, towards preservation of what is already established.

Having thus discussed some of the characteristics of the journalistic field, Bourdieu reiterates his main argument, i.e., that “it is the structure of the journalistic field that determines the intensity and orientation of its mechanisms, as well as their effects on other fields” (Bourdieu, 1998a: 73, italics in the original). The crux of the argument, thus, is that the journalistic field is structured along the two poles of heteronomy and
autonomy, but is more drawn towards the former than the latter, then its effects on other fields will inevitably include the pull of those other fields towards heteronomy. Bourdieu actually discusses mostly the two fields of politics and the academia in their relation to the journalistic field, but some of his colleagues have also dealt with the field of medicine (Champagne and Marchetti, 1994), and the judiciary (Lenoir, 1994: both works cited in Benson, 1999). The conclusions reached regarding all these fields are the same: the effects of journalism are detrimental to the autonomy of other fields, as journalism, itself leaning more towards the heteronomous pole of the market, is dragging these other fields towards their heteronomous poles and away from a ‘pure’ autonomous existence – this is done through the imposition of the ‘new principle of legitimacy’, which is based on the combination of ‘ratings and visibility’ (Bourdieu, 1998a: 73).

Specifically for politics, which is of more relevance here, Bourdieu points to several structural similarities between the two fields, mostly relating to the highly competitive relations between their members, and also to the need for politicians to be both highly visible, and also to ensure the maximum number of followers. Bourdieu argues that the journalistic field acts for politics in a way similar to the opinion polls – more so since is constantly makes the claim of having the only legitimate means to the expression of the ‘public opinion’. It is because of these close links that the journalistic field – itself dominated by the market – has an ever increasing power over the field of politics, which was already “haunted by the temptation of demagogy” (Bourdieu, 1998a: 77). It is in this way that the journalistic field undermines the autonomy of the field of politics.

Since the picture painted of the media and the journalistic field is so bleak, the remedy proposed can only be radical: for Bourdieu the solution is for all the other fields to reciprocate: i.e. to undermine the very existence of the journalistic field, by challenging its monopoly over the means of diffusion of information. In other words, he suggests that representatives of each field should take it upon themselves to make public their achievements – achievements owed to the preservation of their autonomy. He therefore distinguishes between the conditions of production of cultural goods (and political debate, one is led to assume), which, he is adamant should be kept untouched by external demands, and the conditions of consumption, or reception, which should take place under the principle of democratic redistribution, and thus, be
widely accessible to all. In terms of the political field, this translates into ensuring that the political debate is the “democratic expression of enlightened collective opinion, or public rationality” (Bourdieu, 1998a: 67) as opposed to the consumer choices imposed by the logic of the market. Such moves, in turn, will eventually lead journalism to a retreat towards more autonomous practices.

It is evident therefore that for Bourdieu if the journalistic field remains as it is, its effects will lead to negative consequences for all. His call for resistance is realised by himself in his public interventions in French politics. Whilst his goal, insofar as this is seen as resistance to the domination of the market, seems worthwhile, his analysis seems to me to be somewhat problematic: in what follows I will attempt a critique of his work on the field of journalism, which I hope to support with some empirical findings.

At the theoretical level, my critique is based on the following points: first, I think that Bourdieu overstates the case for autonomy of the fields, and consequently his discussion of it as the necessary condition for the production of cultural goods (and political debate) seems to be also problematic; second, while in some of his other works (e.g. Bourdieu, 1996a), he seems to recognise the subversive effects of movements in-between and across fields, in the case of journalism and politics he either totally denies the potential subversive effects of journalism, or he considers that journalism may in fact subvert (rational) politics by supporting the market; in this sense he seems to leave no space for resistance, or at the very least for negotiation of the market and other pressures on behalf of the actors within the journalistic field.

The issue of field autonomy is in fact a consistent theme in Bourdieu’s work, although it does not seem to be conceptually very clear. First, a field is to a certain degree defined by its autonomy, in that its logic, its stakes and interests cannot be reduced to those of other fields (Bourdieu, 1993); in this sense autonomy seems to be a condition for the existence of a field. It is, though, further, an ideal, or a mode of existence to which a field should aspire: the more its autonomy, the less likely it is for a field to be

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4 One is reminded here of Habermas’s ‘ideal speech situation’, in which participants enter with no considerations other than those of being citizens; similarly for Bourdieu, the autonomous production of public debate, seems to imply exactly this: the participation into the political field only as citizens, and the discussion of issues only on the basis of their political value is what can constitute the perfect autonomy of the political field.
dominated. In this sense, autonomy is itself an interest, or a stake\textsuperscript{5}. Of course, Bourdieu speaks of the ‘relative autonomy’ of fields, thereby pointing to the impossibility of isolation within the social space, but also to the domination of fields by the field of power.

In discussing the issues of autonomy and interconnectivity of fields, the metaphor invoked is that of Russian dolls: so we have a field, within a field, within a field and so on. Nevertheless, it seems that Bourdieu fails to recognise, or at least to attribute some importance to the horizontal connections between fields: what this means is that while conceptually one can speak of fields in a vertical (Russian dolls) way, it seems that fields are also connected by virtue of actors moving from one to the next, and therefore importing interests from other fields, or combining different interests and stakes, and generally interacting in a much more horizontal way. While this is recognised by Bourdieu, he argues that it is highly undesirable because it undermines the autonomy of the field; however, the mere possibility of such movement implies that the autonomy of a field is already (or at least potentially) undermined. In fact, it seems very difficult to account for change within a field without importing something from outside the field; indeed, a recurrent criticism of Bourdieu’s work is that it is more skewed towards accounting for reproduction that it cannot account for change (e.g. Garnham and Williams, 1980; Alexander, 1995). Yet, Bourdieu, particularly in his later works (e.g. 1996a) seems to leave some space for resistance and change, in that he recognises the possibility for ‘subversive misappropriation’ stemming from conflict and movement between fields (McNay, 1999a). On the basis of this critique, two things follow: first, to speak of (total) field autonomy is not only unrealistic, but also potentially problematic. Second, it appears that ‘pure’ production, or production on the necessary condition of autonomy, is unrealistic since fields are always in communication with each other\textsuperscript{6}. While, of course, Bourdieu has qualified autonomy with the adjective ‘relative’, the question is how relative is relative, or how much autonomy is necessary, and what amount of surplus is harmful. In a similar vein, if the only possibility for change arises from such ‘misappropriation’ of elements from one

\textsuperscript{5}In his Rules of Art, Bourdieu (1996b) refers to the ‘conquest of autonomy’, implying, of course, that it is something that can be achieved, but also lost.

\textsuperscript{6}Another potential criticism here comes again from Bourdieu himself: in The Rules of Art he discusses how in the field of art, the invocation of ‘art for art’s sake’ was in fact a strategic move on behalf of certain artists in France of the previous century, notable Baudelaire and Flaubert, in order to establish more clearly their position in the field, and more generally the position of their field vis-à-vis other fields: in this sense, it’s not the case that ‘pure production’ is the result of the autonomy of the field, but rather, that the ‘necessity’ of such a thing is evoked in the course of struggles between fields.
field by another, then such a possibility is foreclosed if we insist on the field autonomy.

The second, and related, potentially problematic point in Bourdieu’s view of journalism concerns the status of journalists themselves: having proposed that fields are not autonomous, what is then the position of the actors or players within a field? Bourdieu accuses journalists not only of complicity with the market dictates, but of outright collaboration. The inevitable question then seems to be: where is the space for resistance? To be fair Bourdieu’s argument is that there are journalists who do in fact resist, but these are found at the ‘grass roots’ levels of journalism: among those “‘rank and file’ journalists, the pieceworkers of journalism, the freelancers, all those who earn a precarious living by doing what is most authentically journalistic in journalism” (Bourdieu, 1998b: 72). It is among the ‘meek’, thus, that Bourdieu finds some resistance, while the “dominant professionals, the nomenklatura of star journalists bound together by common interests and complicities of all kinds” (ibid.: 72) display only a kind of false reflexivity, or ‘split consciousness’, by which they practice the kind of journalism that Bourdieu is critical of, while at the same time they publicly denounce it, they “mask it, and even mask it from themselves” (ibid.: 70).

The space for resistance therefore is found among those journalists who occupy the dominated positions of the field, but even such journalists cannot resist on their own: they need a helping hand from the academia, and in particular from sociologists, who can help “journalists by providing them with instruments of knowledge and understanding, perhaps sometimes of action, that would enable them to work with some effectiveness towards withstanding the economic and social forces that bear on them” (ibid.: 73). This is basically a call for reflexivity – albeit aided and abetted by sociology – that should be exploited further, and that should also shed its structuralist connotations: if reflexivity is possible, then it’s possible for all journalists not just the ‘dominated’ ones.

Moreover, if resistance is seen as emerging from movement across fields, then this should be incorporated in the concept of habitus: while Bourdieu vaguely refers to habitus as a ‘generative’ concept, he underestimates the results that movements across

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7 I will not discuss here the relevance of sociological input for journalism, but it seems that Bourdieu is perfectly happy if it is sociology that meddles in the affairs of journalism, but is most critical of the
fields have on the habitus. In other words, following Moore (1994), and McNay (1999a), I want to suggest the enrichment of the notion of habitus with the concept of multiple subjectivity. The possibility for an actor to place themselves actually or imaginatively in a different position within the same field or in a different field altogether has potentially radical effects and can account for change not only in a structural top-down way as implied by Bourdieu’s power configurations, but also in a bottom-up way, in terms of the potential lack of fit between a field and a habitus and the results that this may have on both the field and the habitus. In terms of journalism, this implies that the different roles or positions that journalists take may have an important effect on their own habitus as much as on the journalistic field.

To summarise this critique, I suggest that Bourdieu’s insistence on the necessity of the autonomy of fields is overstated; it follows that actors within a field can therefore import (or attempt to import) other criteria, interest and stakes, which may have the potential to enrich the field. This implies that Bourdieu’s calls to close down the boundaries of fields such as the academia and politics are not only unrealistic but also have negative implications. In this way what is suggested here is antithetical to this position: rather than closing the boundaries between each field, an opening-up may be more beneficial. In elaborating a bit more this argument, a clarification may be necessary: in discussing autonomy, Bourdieu appears to refer to it as closure: thus, a field marks its territory, delimits its boundaries, and sets up barriers for entry. In designating autonomy as closure, Bourdieu’s autonomy is very close to Varela’s concept of autonomy, as discussed by Castoriadis (1997: 310): Varela (and Bourdieu) seem to argue that for an entity to be autonomous it has to be self-constituted, and this presupposes an informational, cognitive and organizational closure. It is this closure that I find here to have potentially problematic effects, and it is against this type of closure that I formulate my argument.

In ‘translating’ the above critique into more ‘concrete’ empirical problems, I will focus on two issues: first, on movements across fields, and second, on the possible opposite: while I would be reluctant to accuse Bourdieu of elitism, his privileging of sociology over journalism goes to show that the issue of field autonomy is indeed far more complex than it seems. I am quite aware that this is exactly the type of argument that Bourdieu would both ridicule and totally refute; to his eclecticism this is clearly a populist position. Yet in fact it seems to me a more realistic position: the boundaries between the fields are already open: it is exactly such boundaries that seem to form an integral part of what is at stake in the struggles between and within fields. In these terms to say ‘let’s keep the boundaries open’ is more an acceptance of the inevitable rather than a normative statement.
implications for the fields involved. In the current case, the event of the resignation of the European Commission is seen as a situation in which the above questions can be addressed. In the following part of this paper, I will therefore attempt to examine this event as described to me by journalists in the light of the above critique.

EMPIRICAL PART

1. General Remarks:

The empirical part of this paper stems from a series of in-depth interviews with journalists, which took place in March, May and October 1999 in Brussels. The journalists I spoke to are ‘Brussels correspondents’, i.e. they report mostly on the EU for an audience back home. I spoke to 20 journalists coming from some 13 different countries, all European with the exception of a journalist writing for an Asian (Hong-Kong) based publication. When I arrived in Brussels the so-called ‘crisis of the Commission’ was at its height: Jacques Santer had been under pressure to resign for a long time, and he finally did resign in March 1999, along with the rest of the Commission. It was in many ways an important event, and it inevitably come up in my discussions with journalists not only at the time of the resignation, but also in my subsequent visits to Brussels. The text on which this study is based consists of all the extracts of the interviews referring to the incident.

In looking at this material, I employed a narrative analysis: by the term ‘narrative’ I mean the “expression of a set of norms for carrying out a variety of practices of communication, ordering and making sense of experiences, becoming knowing, giving excuses and justifications” (Brockmeier and Harré, 1997: 274). In this way I follow Brockmeier and Harré (ibid.) in conceiving a narrative as both a way of constructing a version of events and of performing, i.e. accomplishing certain functions; narratives are considered both constitutive in that they construct their object as they describe it, and functional in that they position the self and the other actors involved in the story in a way which carries significant implications within the context in which it is told.

Opening a small parenthesis here, a narrative analysis while not at first sight totally consistent with Bourdieu’s own ‘narrative’ or theory, is in fact more compatible than it appears. Here I think it’s necessary to briefly refer to Bourdieu’s views on language
and power. Bourdieu (1991; Bourdieu, 1992) considers that language rather than being the abstract symbolic system studied in its own right by, for instance, semiologists, is always embedded in a system of symbolic power. Bourdieu (1991) criticises Austin, and his famous illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts⁹ (Austin, 1975) arguing that the linguistic actually follows the social, and that a performative speech act cannot perform without the backing up of the social position of the person who utters it. So, he argues, “linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power...Consequently, it is impossible to elucidate an act of communication with the compass of linguistic analysis alone” (Bourdieu, 1992: 142, italics in the original). However, as Butler (1999) argues, it is indeed very difficult, if not impossible in practice to safely separate the social from the linguistic; a further problem with Bourdieu’s view on language is that he, once again, misses the potential of resistance and subversion that is found in the misappropriation of linguistic elements and in the temporal gap, or deferral, between the utterance and its effect¹⁰ (Butler, 1997; 1999).

Furthermore, I would add, while it is indeed very hard to dispute the link between power and language, this can go both ways: in other words, speech can become an attempt to usurp power from a dominant group, or undermine its position, not only by misappropriating the dominant group’s language, but by questioning and disputing dominant versions of events and by constructing different ones. In this sense, speech acts performed by the dominated may become a means of resistance, at least as much as speech acts performed by the dominant groups attempt to justify their position in society¹¹.

The implications of this position here are that the narratives that were told by journalists as to what happened in the case of the resignation of the Commission are considered as constructing a version of events which features the same actors but in

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⁹ According to Austin (1975) illocutionary speech acts perform what they say the moment they say it, and perlocutionary speech acts lead to certain effects that are not the same as the speech act, but follow it.

¹⁰ By ‘temporal deferral Butler means the difference in time from the moment an utterance is spoken and its illocutionary effect; the example that she uses is the difference between injurious and offensive speech and physical violence: while the latter is immediate, the former requires not only the passage of some time, but also a series of processes on behalf of the receiver of the utterance, such as (mis)recognition, realisation etc.). It is, though, in this passage of time that there exists the possibility for ‘subversion’, for changing the meaning and/or use of the offensive utterance.

¹¹ Struggle over historical narratives seems a case in point: ‘what happened’ is not only answered in different ways by different groups but there exist actively competing versions of the same event. While
different roles: the resistant potential of such stories lies exactly in the way such actors are constructed and in the morale of the story: in other words in the type of ending it was given, and the reasons for such an end. While I do not want to argue that journalists actively construct their position vis-à-vis other groups merely by telling stories – that would be exactly the error of conflating speech acts with conduct, and thereby disregarding the role of power in actually effecting a speech act; nevertheless, that they do tell the stories they do has important implications for the ways in which they imagine themselves and other relevant groups, and for the possibilities opened by such a linguistic (re)citing of stories - possibilities, in turn, with implications that may transcend the boundaries of their own field and invade others. In these terms, such narratives can be considered elements of the habitus of the speakers, in that the habitus mediates between the world and the subject: thus, these narratives can be seen as referring to the ways in which journalists understand themselves and their world.\(^\text{12}\)

Turning now to more empirical matters, three narratives emerge from journalists’ discourse on the case of the Commission’s resignation: (i) the narrative of the heroic journalist; (ii) the narrative of the journalist as a chronicler; and (iii) the narrative of the journalist as a political analyst. All narratives feature the same set of actors, who are though cast in different roles. The ‘dramatis personae’ are: the Press/journalists; the Commission; and the European Parliament.\(^\text{13}\) In what follows, I will explain each narrative, examining the roles assigned to each actor, and recounting the end of the story and its morale, as well as the wider implications that this may have.

(i) The Narrative of the Heroic Journalist:

Roles:
1. The Press/Journalists feature as the heroes;
2. The Commission is cast as the villain;

\(^{12}\)This, in fact, can be seen exactly as the generative capacity of the habitus – if it is seen as generative, then it can also generate justifications, and such justifications may take the form of narratives. Although Bourdieu considers the generative capacity of the habitus limited within a particular field, the argument I want to pursue here is that the habitus is in fact enriched by its trajectory through different fields and positions, and thus, it can feed back to the field, thereby affecting its limits or borders. But this is preceding the argument – this is hopefully the conclusion I will draw on the basis of the empirical findings of this paper.

\(^{13}\)This does not mean that there were no other players; rather there were quite a few references to both national governments and the spokesman’s service, which could have been included here. Their non-inclusion, however, should point to their status as ‘supporting cast’ rather than protagonists.
3. The European Parliament is cast as the enemy of the Commission, but not on the side of journalists – they are firmly on their own side.

**Genre**

This story can be seen as a detective story\(^\text{14}\), in which the hero/journalist tries to unravel events, fight with the villain and the villains agents and helpers; in a mode reminiscent of the film noir, the journalist/hero is on his own: (s)he cannot trust anyone, everyone else works for their own side, and they will use whatever means possible to promote their interests. The hero stands alone in facing the other characters/suspects. Here, it is important to note that in this genre, the character has already some characteristics (e.g. perseverance, honesty, commitment etc.) but also changes as a result of the actions central to the story.

**Plot: what ‘actually’ happened**

The plot of the story unfolds as follows: in the beginning the Commission, the bureaucrats (i.e. the Spokesman’s Service), the Press, and the European Parliament, were in this together: the objective was European integration and they were all out there to achieve this. In the process, however, the Commission (or part of it) became corrupt by power, the European Parliament unhappy with its lack of power, and the press became ‘complacent and lazy’. Things started to change when journalists started to become more critical of the other players. They started investigating embarrassing issues – the BSE crisis, the humanitarian aid etc.- and they openly criticised the Commission. The European Parliament was ready to jump on the bandwagon, and demanded that the Commission answer to them. In the meantime, the press had to deal with a very hostile Commission and spokesman’s service, who were not only openly aggressive towards journalists, but also did not hesitate to ‘slander’ their reputations, as well as attempt to apply political pressure onto them to keep off the ‘scandals’. However, the press insisted, and this led the European Parliament to demand a report by an independent commission of ‘wise men’; a report was made, finding the Commission politically responsible (or rather irresponsible as they phrased it) for the ‘scandals’, and the Commission resigned.

\(^{14}\) In many ways this is a narrative similar to the story of the Watergate scandal, the prototypical story/myth which has set the standards for journalism. The story of Watergate was told, or unfolded as
[...] for example, Mrs Cresson sent an official to the French paper Observateur, and she made clear that anyone who writes about corruption in the Commission is a neo-Nazi [...] I never could imagine that when it really comes to a point where you have to criticise a really powerful institution like the Commission how typical this is, I never realised that you are attacked, you are slandered, a lot of people say that you are not serious, they phone your editor, powerful politicians call your editors and say ‘how can you engage such an individual, he’s not serious’, this is all normal, it has been done, every editor has faced this. [...] I’ve never seen anything like this, I’ve spent six years in the Soviet Union, I was threatened by the KGB, they told me that they would kill me if I kept going on like this, that I would have a nice car accident, so I was under a lot of pressure, but I didn’t expect such a lot of pressure here in Brussels, I didn’t expect it, it was a very dirty, very dirty game [...] [HN]

[...] “in the past I think that the case was that people in Brussels, were they politicians or press, or bureaucrats in a way, believed in Europe, that was the whole point in coming here, to push the European integration project further along. So inevitably there was a feeling that, I think as Nietzsche said ‘if you’re not with us then you’re against us’ and the press almost had a duty to support whatever the Commission was doing, and that if they didn’t they were seen in a way as the Thatcher and...there was certainly this feeling, and as a result of that I would say the press became [...] complacent, lazy and not really able to perform the type of duties that the press should do, which is to eh to dig for any signs of wrongdoings, to report honestly what’s happening and not simply what they’re told, and to to , I suppose, to try and tell the public on their terms what’s really happening in Brussels. In a way the press were a mouthpiece for the EU institutions and especially of the Commission.” [GH]

I think another main issue is that [there] has been some emancipation process as far as journalists covering the European Union are concerned [...] while they used to have this rather cosy relationship they have become much more critical towards developments in the European Union, trying to scrutinise and also try to [...] face the commission with the issue of accountability, and all this added up to, I believe, what

a crime story, or a thriller – this was evident in the dramatization of the story in the film ‘All the
then became the big story in the last couple of months, and brought down the Commission eventually. [MS]

Morale
The events as described/constructed above led to changes in the ‘moral characters’ of everybody involved. The old Commission had to resign, thereby paying for its lack of political responsibility; the Spokesman’s service learned that they have to be more open and less secretive; the European Parliament flexed their muscles and learned the limits of their powers; the national governments (re)asserted their primacy and power over the European institutions; and finally, last but not least, the press changed from being lazy and complacent to actively reaffirming its role as the ‘Fourth Estate’, an independent power within a democracy, and it taught everyone involved that it is a power to be reckoned with. The lesson then was ‘political accountability’, and the press acted both as the ‘teacher’, and as the means of accomplishing it.

[…] the fact that the press played a role in triggering, if you want, the crisis made us realise [...] that in this process of trying to fill the democratic gap, the democratic deficit in Europe, journalists are a power, close to the other institutions, and they are seen as a power by the policy makers, much more than we realised till a few years ago [...] [FF]

 […] L’Europe est là et maintenant on traite l’Europe comme on traite l’actualité nationale. Et ca, ca change tout. Et les articles donc deviennent plus durs, les articles deviennent […] sont sans compassion, c’est-à-dire c’est d’une violence. Je pense, par exemple, que si Delors revenait aujourd’hui, il ne comprendrait pas les articles parce que à son époque ce n’était pas comme ça […] les articles qui étaient faits là, c’était: “c’est fantastique, l’Europe qui avance, le marché intérieur, la monnaie unique, c’est fantastique, l’avenir sera rose”. C’est une vision très marxiste-leniniste de l’Histoire. Et là, terminé. Donc, je pense qu’il aurait un choc –il aurait eu. [JQ]

Implications
The main question to be answered here concerns the more general implications for the actors to be cast in roles such as the above. By constructing their role as heroic,
journalists seem to want to distinguish themselves from the other players, to construct a unique position for themselves, a position not merely supportive or complementary to the other positions (the politicians more specifically), but the position of an actor in the sense of being or becoming an institution actively involved in the political process. In short they seem to both construct and justify an active role for themselves, a political role that is both justified and warranted by the way in which they construct the various politicians involved in the event of the crisis. It is the active character of journalism in this narrative that distinguishes it from the narrative that will be considered next. In short, it is a story of the ‘heroic’ journalist, who fights with the mighty Goliath of politics and, against all odds, wins.

(ii) The Narrative of the Journalist as a Chronicler:

Roles
1. The Press/Journalists cast as the narrator or chronicler of a story that unfolds;
2. The Commission is cast as the protagonist: embattled but dignified, having made mistakes, yes, but not deserving to be punished so severely;
3. The European Parliament as a power hungry institution, jumping on the bandwagon for their ‘personal’ gain.

Genre
If the previous narrative was a mystery or a thriller, and thus more openly a ‘story’, this narrative is more a chronicle, a depiction of events in their chronological order, embellished in a kind of objectivity, ritually attained through the mere reciting of events. The position of the journalist in this is that of the chronicler, the one whose only job is to write down events as they occur rather than participate in them in any active way. Nevertheless, the position of the chronicler is no more ‘objective’ than that of the narrator of a story: it presupposes a perspective, a point of view, and also a (pre)selection of note-worthy items. The role of the chronicler, thus, is not that of a mere observer, but it gives the appearance of being only that.

Plot
What ‘actually happened’ was that the two main players, the Commission, and the Parliament became locked in a power struggle, the Parliament wanting more power over the Commission, and the Commission wanting to preserve its power. The
Parliament was seen as the villain of the piece in the sense that they were trying to undermine the Commission and usurp its power. The spokesman’s service was unable to react in an appropriate manner, mainly because of its insistence on denying the whole thing, rather than admitting that the Commission made a mistake. In these terms, it was because of the Commission’s failure to appear repentant that the Parliament was able to finally lead it to resign. All this took place in front of the press, who then had to report on it in a detached, ‘objective’ fashion.

“[…] the Commissioners cannot check what all the officials are doing with this money, they can’t[...] the Parliament doesn’t have the capacity to take power over the Commission with, eh, by political or economical debate, because the parliament is very difficult to manoeuvre, and this parliament is not very good, the people are badly elected, especially in France, with the list of the political parties...and the parliament used these affairs, in, in, it chose it because it was a good opportunity[PL]

[…] they candidly admitted that the Commission wasn’t nearly as bad as they were made to, but this was an opportunity for them to claim power back from the Commission, to demand extra powers for the Parliament. So, I have to say that these are some of the things that I would have written about – I would have written about the, these scandals, about the individual thing, about Cresson, but I would also be writing about the struggle...[PS]

“[…] when the spokesman’s service fails, it’s not just the problem of the spokesman’s service, it’s a political problem. I mean this Commission for instance, Santer’s commission, I mean, I’m not fanatically backing him, but finally they completed the most important project in the 50 years of the European Community, the Euro and the monetary union [...] that wasn’t important? [...] So, that’s the matter: they didn’t fall because of the corruption, they fell because they didn’t know how to react politically to a normal number of problems etc., some of them related to nepotism and corruption etc., and in this, I mean I don’t think the press was a hero here, I mean there was not an investigation like the Watergate case, there wasn’t, there were just the [...] papers of the Court of Auditors, I mean our role was not great, just, just writing about it...”[XVF]
Morale

What then can be seen as the morale of the story/chronicle? The conclusion of the ‘chronicle’ is given: the Commission resigned, but what appears different when compared to the first narrative is the ‘lessons’ learned by each of the people involved. First, the Commission paid its political mistake of not, at least, appearing repentant; the Parliament, who appears as the ‘winner’ of the power struggle (l)earned its power over the Commission, which from now on is seen as subservient, or at least accountable to the Parliament. The Spokesman’s Service already positioned as a ‘helper’ of the Commission, paid for its own and the Commission’s mistake in insisting on denial rather than admitting their errors and repenting. Finally, the journalists’ ‘lesson’: the journalists in positioning themselves in the role of the observer/chronicler denied to themselves the possibility for learning a lesson. Their positioning of themselves as doing little more than ‘transcribing’ the acts of the main players implies a passive stance towards what is happening, and a ‘mute’ role, as it were, in the drama – it is in these terms that journalists in constructing the place of the chronicler appear to deny to themselves the possibility to learn and thereby to evolve.

Implications

In considering the wider implications of this narrative, the main thing emerging is the implicit denial of any active role for journalists in politics. The role that they seem to construct for themselves is a passive, ‘mute’ role, the role of the observer of the political process. In these terms, while the two political institutions are involved in a major power struggle, the press stands in a corner merely observing the fight, and writing about it to a public which shines by its absence, and which, in any case appears to be as uninvolved as the journalists themselves. This narrative then seems to cast politics as a spectator sport rather than a team sport, and its wider implications therefore can be taken to include ‘apathy’, non-involvement, cynicism and the like. Furthermore, this position of non-involvement, of ‘objective’ observation is untenable. There’s always a perspective involved, if only on the basis of the position of the journalist in the ‘arena’ of the fight. To cast themselves in such a role, thus, the journalists seem to occupy a particularly unreflexive position, and to blind themselves to their own involvement in the events they purport to merely describe. Out of the

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15 This issue of the absent public is a recurrent theme, perhaps the only common theme in all three narratives. Its lack in the journalistic discourse is indeed noteworthy, but its implications seem to be beyond the scope of this paper.
three narratives, then, this seems to be the most ‘dangerous’ one, the one closer to Bourdieu’s vision of the journalistic field. But before discussing the theoretical implications of these narratives for the study of journalism, I will discuss the third and last narrative of the ‘demise’ of the Commission.

(iii) The Narrative of the Journalist as Analyst

Roles
1. The Press/Journalist features as the analyst;
2. The Commission is cast in the role of being politically weak;
3. The Parliament features as being in the process of emancipation.

Genre
While the genre to which the above two narratives can be placed seemed to straightforward enough, this does not appear to be the case for the story of the journalist as analyst. Two things come to mind when one thinks about analysis, and it seems to me that both are relevant here: first, the analyst can be a teacher or a lecturer, and second the analyst can be a therapist, as in psychoanalysis. In these terms, the genre is in-between the lecture and therapy. However, the position of the teacher seems to be more active, to involve a more ‘active’ sort of participation than that of the therapist. The lecturer can make demands, hand over homework, punish or reward the pupils. The therapist on the other hand, has a relatively more passive, or rather a less involved position; to the teacher’s demands the therapist invites confessions. The therapist’s involvement is limited to the offering of interpretations rather than punishments, and while the lecturer/teacher is the focus of the attention, the therapist takes the back seat to the patient’s centre stage position. In the current narrative the position constructed for the journalist as analyst seems more fitting to the therapy genre than to the lecture. In this sense, the role of the analyst as therapist aims at a change in the behaviour of the patients through giving them an insight into their behaviour.
Plot

Be it a lecture or a therapy session, the plot of this narrative starts with a historical reference to the origins of the Commission, that are to a certain extent capable of explaining its present position as politically weak. The political weakness of the Commission leads it to make mistakes, mistakes which are also emulated by the spokesman’s service. At this point, enters the European Parliament, potentially powerful, but as yet with an unrealised, unfulfilled potential. The Parliament is then mobilised in its capacity as keeper of the (democratic) faith and demands that the Commission cleans up its act. The Commission’s constitutional weakness (constitutional here in the literal sense of the term) makes it unable to deal with the pressure, thereby leading to its resignation. The journalists’ position in all this is not one of participating in all the events, neither one of merely reporting on them as they occur, but rather a position of an informed, critical observer, of someone who may possess both an insight and a unique understanding of the situation, an understanding going beyond the apparent to an analysis of the ‘real’ reasons, the ‘real’ causes of the fall of the Commission [the ‘real’ reasons behind the problematic behaviour, as the therapist would put it]:

[…] I think the most important article I read then is the institutional crisis, and what’s […] what is the mistake in the institutional constitution of Europe, and how could you change something in it, but also the analysis of what was the heart of the problem, and in my view the heart of the problem was not the Commission, the heart of the problem were the government leaders who had wanted a weak Commission, and a weak President who would do what they wanted […] Kohl and Mitterand at that time wanted somebody who would obey them after the Delors period, and that this is the essential point, the essential point is that this Commission now, to see how far Prodi will be able to be, to have the institutionally independent role, because the Commission is the institution that makes proposals and how far Prodi is going to accept again the pressure from the member states and how far he will be […] all that it’s just starting, and my analysis is that Prodi can become more Santer-like than many people think, but it is this way that […] I mean the behaviour of Madame Cresson is one story, but the essential point was here, and this point […] has got a known, eh, there were several developments in the Parliament that wanted something, and the Commission that came down, it did not fall down in the Parliament, it did not have the courage to go to the Parliament, and enter a Parliamentary debate […] [BvV]
“Santer’s stepping down or resignation was a good thing not because of these accusations of moral impeachment pending on him, but because he had always a very, very low political profile. But the line we had, that I had, because I think I was responsible for this, was that Santer was paying not because of these mismanagements which were, let’s say, not so important, but he was paying for his lack of political stature […] If we applied the same moral standards then every government in Europe should step down tomorrow, the Germans, the Greeks, and so on. So there was a kind of hypocrisy in my opinion, applying very strict standards to the Commission, which are not usually applied to any government in Europe. Why? Because, for example, I think, because the governments were fed up with the Commission, they didn’t defend it, they needed a much stronger Commission, they wanted a very low-level one when they nominated Jacques Santer, but then they realised that was a mistake, but then they realised that was a mistake, they wanted a stronger one, the imminence of the European elections made the European Parliament very sensitive, very aggressive and there was definitely a need for rebalancing power between the institutions […] if you look behind the headlines, let’s say, my interpretation of what happened is that Santer paid his low profile policy, come on, Delors was much worse […] [AB]

[…] the European Parliament can only work as it does now because of this large coalition between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists – that wasn’t the case but things have evolved, so whenever the Parliament is to do something it needs the co-operation of all its big forces – the parliament has no authorisation and this is very important in terms of the democratic legitimacy […] one of the issues that have come up further is to try and have the coalition there in the European parliament to have the majority in operation, a majority which could help enforce things against the European Commission […] [MS]

Morale
To see this narrative as either a therapy session of a lecture, implies that it’s more open-ended than the ‘classic’ mystery genre. The end of the story is again given – the Commission resigned- but the question is what was learned by this event: so it can be argued that the Commission under Santer in fact learned that political weakness doesn’t pay, and that one has to be strong and independent; the Parliament learned
exactly the same lesson, with the difference that for the Parliament the lesson was a positive one, rather than a ‘punishment’ as it was for the Commission. As for the journalists, they didn’t have anything to learn: what does the therapist gain from the therapy? The therapist’s satisfaction comes from a real change in the ‘problematic’ behaviour, in having helped the patient to overcome their problem – in so far as this is accomplished, then this is the outcome of the journalists’ contribution.

**Implications:**

The positions allocated to each of the players in this narrative carry significant implications. First, the Commission is constructed as being engaged in a problematic behaviour that leads to a crisis; at the same time, the Parliament is also engaged in some sort of problematic behaviour in that it has not been acting as an emancipated, mature institution. The journalists’ construction of an analytic position for themselves implies a positioning as being simultaneously above or outside the political process, and part of it, in terms of attempting to bring about a change in it through their interpretations and insights. While, thus, their role is more passive than their positioning as heroes, it is not the ‘mute’ position of the chronicler, but an in-between position of an analyst/therapist who is empathetic to her patients, but not directly involved in, or responsible for their lives. The wider implications of this position for journalism seem to include a general orientation towards explanation, and insight, but also understanding and sympathetic towards politicians, rather than antagonistic and oppositional to them. Their positioning vis-à-vis the political process is thus not one of participation, but one of guardianship almost, a position of carefully chaperoning the proceedings, potentially ready to intervene just as the therapist would actively intervene to protect (or save) a patient- but otherwise relatively uninvolved in the process itself, having as a main contribution the accomplishment of a better understanding of the political process.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

In the immediately preceding section I discussed three types of narratives regarding the resignation of the European Commission, as emerging from my discussions with journalists last year. These narratives recite the same story, but in a somewhat different way: the emphasis is on different aspects, the attributions for blame, failure and so on, on different ‘actors. But mostly, what these narratives indicate is the
different positions of journalists as constructed by journalists themselves. The ‘hero’, the ‘chronicler’, and the ‘analyst’\textsuperscript{16} are three different roles for journalists. However, these narratives do not coincide with different journalists, but rather elements of all three are found in most journalists’ discourse. Moving on from the description of such narratives, two main questions emerge, one theoretical and the other substantive: first, what are the wider theoretical implications for the study of journalism. Second, what are the functions that such narratives are used to serve; what do they accomplish? In what follows I will attempt to address all these questions.

Tackling the theoretical part of the argument, in the discussion of Pierre Bourdieu’s contributions to the study of journalism, I criticised his work on the following grounds: first, I argued that his insistence on the necessity for a field’s autonomy in order for this field to produce unique and valuable ‘products’ is overstated. This is because the concept of autonomy and its status is not very clear theoretically – is it defining the existence of a field, or is it an achievement, one of the stakes of the field, as Bourdieu seems to imply? Although it may be feasible to consider both of these as integral parts of the concept of autonomy, the issue is that autonomy is much more complex than it initially appears\textsuperscript{17}, and it seems more an ideal scenario than an actual state of events. Second, Bourdieu’s argument that ‘pure’ production, which he seems to consider as the only valuable contribution to society, is only possible through field autonomy does not seem to hold: if we accept that people belong at the same time to more than one fields, then their habitus is determined by all those fields in which they participate, and this, in turn, has an effect that feeds back to those fields, thereby changing them, or at the very least, undermining their autonomy in the sense that new and diverse interests or stakes are introduced. The implications of this argument include that neither journalism nor politics can be thought as autonomous, nor should they be though as such, insofar as this autonomy is seen as closure, and thereby as excluding certain agents from participation.

\textsuperscript{16} Here in an attempt to be reflexive I have to say that ‘my’ three narratives appear to correspond to the names of some of the main British broad-sheets: the Independent (hero), The Daily Telegraph (or The Times also for the ‘chronicler’), and The Guardian (for the ‘analyst’) – this does not mean that I take these narratives as representing the type of journalism practised by these newspapers, in fact, my argument is that these roles assigned to journalists are almost always present at the same time. It is though interesting that newspapers themselves implicitly, or rather explicitly recognise such roles.

\textsuperscript{17} Further, these two aspects of autonomy may be seen as representing different stages of the field: autonomy as definition represents the genesis of the field, while autonomy as a stake represents the ongoing struggle for control and accumulation of capital, as Bourdieu has explained in the Rules of Art.
In these terms, the three narratives that I have discussed can be seen as introducing some diversity in the stakes and interests of the fields of journalism and politics. The journalists I have spoken to occupy more or less a similar position in the field in that they at least represent ‘elite’ newspapers, which are closer to the ‘intellectual’ rather than the ‘market’ pole of journalism. Yet, within this group of people, the positions they constructed for themselves were so diverse: the narrative of the ‘hero’ constructs a position of active participation in the political process, which in turn, can be seen as undermining the autonomy of both journalism and politics, if we follow Bourdieu’s argument; yet, this position is also contributing to the field of politics in that it makes politicians more accountable, or, in other words, accountable not only to their colleagues but also to the public through the media, or at the very least to the media themselves. In constructing this position, moreover, journalists introduce one more stake in the journalistic field: that of active participation in the field of politics, and this, in turn, implies that the field of politics has to struggle with the media or journalism in attempting to control/accumulate capital.

The second narrative, that of the journalist as the chronicler seems to construct the most autonomous position for journalism: journalists are not involved in any way in the political process, but they merely report or transcribe the goings-on in the political arena. This position, if we follow Bourdieu’s autonomy argument to its logical conclusion, ensures maximum autonomy for both journalism and politics, while at the same time, it appears to be the least desirable one: it is the position of the spectator rather than the participant, a position of essential non-involvement and non-interest in the political process. It is non-offensive and thus non-threatening to politics, but at the same time, it has nothing to contribute to either the field of journalism or the field of politics. It can, though, account for reproduction of dominant values and stakes for the field, in that it is governed by the so-called ‘objectivity’, but by no means does it contribute to change or to any sort of resistance to dominant modes. The contribution of this position to the either field, thus, seems to be nil, while in a paradoxical way it should be exactly what Bourdieu had in mind when referring to the autonomy of the field – since it leaves politicians to politics, and journalists to journalism.

The third position, that of the analyst, seems to occupy the middle ground. In constructing this position, journalists assume a space that it neither autonomous as in the case of the chronicler, nor totally involved as in the case of the ‘hero’, but rather
they can be seen as occupying a position of ‘detached involvement’. Spatially, we can locate this position at the borders between politics and journalism, and as such having the potential to change these borders. In other words, the journalist as analyst, by offering an insight into the political process can be seen as indirectly participating in it, and thus, in a way, entering the field of politics from the back door. In these terms, this insight, or the position of the analyst, constitutes another potential stake in the field of politics, insofar as it helps (political) actors to accumulate capital. In a similar vein, by constructing such a position, journalists introduce another stake in their own field, in that they, now, have to struggle over whose analysis carries more weight. In this way, rather than leaning towards reproduction, the position of the analyst can lead to an understanding of how changes may occur in both fields.

So far the existence of such positions does not seriously undermine Bourdieu’s argument, provided, though, that a revised version of autonomy is introduced. Bourdieu can very well argue that these positions, in fact, represent different structural positions within the journalistic field, and thereby they can be accounted for in terms of such structural diversity. Yet what I have found is that all three constructions co-exist within the journalists’ discourse. In other words, within a single account offered by one journalist, I came across aspects ‘belonging’ to all three positions. The construction of such positions, therefore doesn’t seem to be a function of a journalists’ structural position within the field, but rather, all journalists were aware of all these positions [and perhaps other positions as well, which I was not able to identify]. What this seems to imply is that journalists are perfectly capable of reflecting not only upon their own position, but also upon other possible positions in the field\textsuperscript{18}. This seems to point to the existence of multiple positions within a single habitus, a possibility that Bourdieu seems to either not consider, or else to ignore. These multiple subject positions for the journalistic habitus, in turn, seems to imply the possibility of change (or at least of resistance) due to a potential lack of fit between the journalistic field and the journalistic habitus -a bottom-up strategy that Bourdieu seems to deny to journalists, at least insofar as he sees them as dominated by the market.

\textsuperscript{18}This can be seen as Bourdieu’s concept of ‘participant objectivation’ as applied by journalists on themselves.
To conclude, or to make a long story short, what I have tried to do is to show what I consider the limitations of Bourdieu’s view on the journalistic field. While his position offers a unique way of conceptualising journalism in both structural and ‘agentic’ terms, in fact he seems to overemphasise the former over the latter, with the result of under-estimating the possibilities for bottom-up strategies of resistance employed by journalists. I attempted to illustrate this by looking at how journalists construct different positions for themselves, and the potential implications of each of these positions both for the field of journalism as well as for the field of politics. It seems that the existence of all of these positions in most, if not all the journalists’ discourse, undermines Bourdieu’s argument for a singular (autonomous) position for a field in the social space.

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