Article

How journalists use social media in France and the United States: Analyzing technology use across journalistic fields

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Abstract

This article examines journalists' use of social media in France and the United States. Through in-depth interviews, we show that shared practical sensibilities lead journalists in both countries to use social media to accomplish routine tasks (e.g. gather information, monitor sources, and develop story ideas). At the same time, we argue that the incorporation of social media into daily practice also creates opportunities for journalists to garner peer recognition and that these opportunities vary according to the distinctive national fields in which journalists are embedded. Where American journalism incentivizes individual journalists to orient social media use toward audiences, French journalism motivates news organizations to use social media for these purposes, while leaving individual journalists to focus primarily on engaging with their peers. We position these findings in relation to debates on the uses of technologies across national settings.

Keywords

Bourdieu, comparative media research, Facebook, interviews, journalism, social media, Twitter

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Research shows that journalists across Western Europe and North America regularly utilize social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter (Barnard, 2016; Jouët and Rieffel, 2015; Revers, 2016). But how and in what ways does use of these technologies vary as a result of the distinctive national settings in which they are used? Extant scholarship offers opposing views on this issue. Some envision digital technologies will be used in roughly similar ways as a result of their unique technical affordances, which interact with shared cross-national transformations in contemporary journalistic work (Boczkowski, 2011; Hutchby, 2001). On this view, social media provide a way for time- and cash-strapped journalists to monitor information, interact with audiences, and boost their personal and organizational profiles. Others expect technology use to vary as a result of distinctive and enduring national contexts in which they are deployed (Engesser and Humprecht, 2015; Hanusch, 2018; Revers, 2016). While the precise cross-national patterns remain underspecified, scholarship in this vein suggests professional, cultural, political, and economic factors shape journalists' social media use.

   This article explores this question by comparing social media use among journalists in France and the United States, two countries where social media use is high but whose "media systems" are routinely viewed by scholars as opposing ideal types (Benson, 2013; Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Through interviews, we present evidence of convergence and divergence in social media use. In both countries, social media are used to accomplish routine tasks: French and US journalists alike report using such tools to collect information, monitor sources, and develop story ideas. However, cross-national differences also emerge: One core dissimilarity is that while US journalists frequently describe using social media to engage with audiences, French journalists mostly report using the same tools to interact with peers.

   To make sense of this mixture of convergence and divergence in technology use, we turn to Bourdieu's social theory—and in particular to his concepts of practical sensibilities (*sens pratique*) and field (Bourdieu, 1990, 1993). We argue that similarities in social media use stem from shared practical sensibilities, which lead journalists in both countries to use such tools to accomplish routine tasks such as gather information, monitor sources, and develop story ideas. At the same time, we suggest that the incorporation of social media into daily practice creates opportunities for journalists to use such tools to garner peer recognition, and these opportunities vary according to the distinctive national fields in which they are embedded. US journalism's heavy reliance on commercial funding, as well as its limited labor protections, incentivizes *individual* journalists to orient social media use toward audiences as a way to advance their careers or demonstrate efforts to address economic problems faced by their organizations. By contrast, French journalism's less direct exposure to market pressure, as well as its comparatively stronger labor protections, incentivizes news *organizations* to use social media to attract audiences, while leaving individual journalists to use them to demonstrate their worth to peers.

   Our approach aims to contribute to comparative journalism research as well as debates about how national contexts shape technology use. Scholars note that comparative research is "heavily dominated by quantitative methods" (Hallin and Mancini, 2017: 165); our qualitative study provides insights into how journalists think about and use social media, and these can help scholars refine their measures and interpretations, thus

boosting the overall validity of comparative research. More broadly, scholars have long argued that cross-national research can prevent overgeneralization and test the validity of interpretations from single cases (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012). We do this for scholarship on journalists' use of social media, which tends to focus overwhelmingly on a single (often US) case. Finally, our use of Bourdieu seeks to complement scholarly debates about how to analyze technology use.

Convergence or divergence? Two views on social media use across national settings

Social media refer to Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Common examples include but are not limited to Facebook and Twitter. Extant scholarship provides opposing views on how and in what ways journalists use social media across national settings.

A first perspective contends that journalists in different countries use social media in roughly similar ways. This view is based partly on the concept of "affordances," which states features of a technology "invite" actors to use them in particular ways (Hutchby, 2001). Scholars suggest that technological features associated with social media tools make it easier for journalists to monitor sources and collect information (Broersma and Graham, 2013; Lasorsa et al., 2013; Mercier, 2013), promote their work or their news organization's (Jouët and Rieffel, 2015; Molyneux et al., 2018; Molyneux and Holton, 2015), and engage with audiences (Lawrence et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2014).[1]

Scholars of this perspective further note that while affordances can in principle be used differently across national contexts, in practice similar transformations impacting news organizations increase the likelihood of similarities in technology use (Boczkowski, 2011). Across Western Europe and North America, news organizations struggle to distribute their content to audiences whose consumption habits decreasingly entail checking a news organization's website (Nielsen and Ganter, 2018). Social media on this view provide a potential avenue for journalists and news organizations to reach audiences (Lewis et al., 2014). Moreover, ongoing reductions in newsroom staff are said to make monitoring news online—partly via social media feeds—a potentially cost-effective proposition that favors "sit-down journalism" at the expense of costly shoe-leather efforts (Baisnée and Marchetti, 2006). These shared transformations are thus assumed to interact with technological affordances to produce similar cross-national technology uses.

A second perspective suggests that journalists' use of social media will vary across national settings. According to this view, technologies are used in countries with different histories, and these are likely to influence distinctive patterns of technology use. Researchers have indeed documented divergent patterns of cross-national social media use (Engesser and Humprecht, 2015; Hanusch, 2018; Revers, 2016), though these findings do not always accord with expected differences. Engesser and Humprecht (2015), for example, expect French media outlets to interact with audiences less frequently on social media than their US counterparts (due to lower levels of journalistic professionalism in France, which they hypothesize as disincentivizing audience engagement). However, their content analysis of social media feeds finds the two countries exhibit roughly similar levels of interaction (as indicated by use of hashtags and the "at sign" to

interact with other social media accounts). They attribute this discrepancy to a "special form of journalistic culture" (Engesser and Humprecht, 2015: 526) that emphasizes interaction among journalists and elites.[2] This suggests the need to carefully examine social media use in order to develop more coherent explanations for observed cross-national differences.

Because our findings support aspects of both views, we seek to explain patterns of convergence *and* divergence in social media use. To do this, we turn to Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, which we suggest provides conceptual tools that can help accomplish it. In doing so, we build on efforts by scholars to bring Bourdieu's thought to the study of journalism (Benson, 2013; Christin, 2017; Neveu, 2009), while also extending its application to a dimension of social practice not often discussed by those using Bourdieu in communication scholarship: How actors use technology.

A Bourdieusian approach to cross-national technology use

Bourdieu wrote little about technology directly. Rather than theorize technology per se, his work examined the social practices in which different technologies—personal cameras (Bourdieu et al., 1990) and television news (Bourdieu, 1996)—embedded and used.[3] Here, we suggest that two concepts—practical sensibilities (*sens pratique*) and field—from his larger theoretical toolkit can help explain convergence and divergence in journalists' use of social media. Specifically, we suggest that these concepts help explain which aspects of social media use are likely to converge and diverge cross-nationally, as well as why they are likely to do so.

Bourdieu's (1990) concept of "practical sensibilities" is centered on an assumption about how individuals are conditioned to react to social situations. In his view, reactions occur less by following an explicit set of rules and more by developing sensibilities that allow one to repeat and adapt actions across a range of contexts. These sensibilities are the product of lengthy learning processes—as well as everyday social interactions—that shape what actors perceive as being possible and appropriate responses to a given situation. Responses not seen as possible or appropriate are screened out, and individuals thus "refuse what is anyway denied [to them] and … will the inevitable" (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).[4] In this way, practical sensibilities orient the range and types of actions an individual takes when confronted with a novel situation.

The concept of practical sensibilities suggests that social media will be used primarily to accomplish routine, preexisting tasks.[5] While social media undoubtedly invite multiple uses, the ones most likely to be widely adopted are those that are routine: that is, practices done on a daily basis and do not change dramatically from one day to the next. By extension, tasks shared among journalists cross-nationally are most likely to be similar across national contexts.[6] Extant survey data suggest that journalists worldwide see providing information and monitoring government activities as essential functions (Hanitzsch et al., 2011). This suggests that the use of social media to gather information, monitor sources, and develop story ideas should be similar cross-nationally. Broad transformations in journalistic work (round-the-clock publishing, the growth of desk reporting) should further incentivize cross-national convergence.

The concept of practical sensibilities also helps explain aspects of technology use not integrated by individuals. Social media affordances that do not aid in accomplishing routine tasks—and thus seen as impractical—are less likely to be utilized. Below, we use this point to explain why management directives that journalists post a specific number of social media items per day are regularly ignored in both France and the United States: Such mandates are seen as distracting from the practical tasks journalists need to accomplish their work. This seemingly intuitive point differs from much of the literature on journalists' use of social media, which puzzles over journalists' failure to use technological affordances to their fullest potential (see the overview in Hermida, 2013). Such puzzles make more sense when one notes that journalists use social media to complete, rather than reinvent, routine tasks. Finally, the concept also provides a limitation on the extent of cross-national convergence, as journalists should use social media in similar ways only to the extent that they share specific routines and practices. Where practical sensibilities diverge, social media use should as well.

In contemporary societies, Bourdieu argues that practical sensibilities are partly developed within semiautonomous social fields, each of which is structured around differences of perception and practice (Bourdieu, 1993). Within fields, individuals compete for recognition and prestige according to the rules of the game, which are enacted consciously or unconsciously by those in the field. How this competition for recognition occurs depends in part on the practical sensibilities of actors (i.e. what an individual sees, based on his or her prior experiences, as appropriate action) and partly on the position of a given field vis-à-vis cognate social fields, such as the market and state. Comparative journalism scholars often highlight this latter point by noting that the position of the journalistic field varies cross-nationally (Benson, 2013; Neveu, 2009). Important for our purposes is that cross-national variation in both practical sensibilities and field position create different ways for individuals to pursue recognition.

The concept of field suggests that journalists will use social media not only to accomplish routine tasks but also to garner recognition within their respective fields. Like the divergence literature, the concept highlights the importance of national settings in shaping how journalists seek such recognition. At the same time, the concept differs from divergence scholarship in its attempt to explain how this search for recognition transpires. Rather than attribute recognition to professional or national culture per se, we identify it as the outcome of interaction between field dynamics and practical sensibilities.[7]

In drawing on Bourdieu, we aim to build a more satisfactory explanation for patterns of convergence and divergence in journalists' social media use. Specifically, we suggest that shared practical sensibilities found in routine tasks help explain aspects of technology use likely to be similarly across nation-states. Relatedly, we posit that divergent modes of peer recognition, themselves shaped by the dynamics of social fields, shape cross-national differences in social media use. By carefully showing how this occurs in two countries, we aim to demonstrate the utility of the concepts, which can inform scholars examining technology use in other national contexts or empirical settings.

While we believe Bourdieu is useful for analyzing technology use, we do not claim that these two concepts can or even should be used to explain all aspects of social media use. Other concepts from Bourdieu—such as capital—are required to more fully explain

individual-level variation within national fields. Moreover, other theoretical traditions might be better suited to exploring the meanings journalists ascribe to their social media activity or to theorizing how technologies resonate with distinct professional and national cultures. Our aim is simply to add Bourdieu to these important conversations, not replace them wholesale.

Data and methods

This article is based on 60 in-depth interviews with journalists in France and the United States. Interviews are commonly used to gather accounts and explanations of individual behavior (Beaud, 1996) and thus constitute a reasonable technique for learning how journalists use social media. This is especially true regarding social media, whose use is typically private in nature and difficult—though not impossible (see Usher, 2014)—to observe directly. Moreover, given our interest in exploring cross-national similarities and differences, interviews allow for systematic attention to research design that is necessary in order to make comparisons (Lamont and Swidler, 2014). As we describe below, by sampling similar types of journalists in the two countries, we are able to identify similarities and differences in social media use across cases.

Our interview data are drawn from a larger research project that explores changes in US and French journalism (Powers, Vera-Zambrano and Baisnée, 2015; Powers and Vera-Zambrano, 2016). These countries are routinely viewed as opposing ideal types, with the highly commercialized, information-oriented US case contrasted with the less commercialized, opinion-driven French one (Benson, 2013). By comparing two countries whose journalistic fields diverge in terms of the economic, political, and professional orientations, we are able to examine the potential influence of national fields on technology use.

We use data from two cities: Toulouse, France, and Seattle, United States, comparably sized cities with similar industrial bases[8] and higher than average levels of education and technology use. While no two cities are equivalent, we hold constant economic and demographic features to increase the likelihood that any observed differences will come from the journalistic fields we analyze, rather than other confounding variables. Moreover, by analyzing journalism beyond the frequently studied media capitals of New York and Paris, we extend the lens of comparative media scholarship and help provide a more complete picture of each country's journalistic field.

In each city, we interviewed a cross-section of journalists in print, audiovisual, and online media. Given claims that social media use varies by demographic characteristics (gender, professional experience, and editorial position), we sought to include journalists with a wide range of such characteristics in our sample.[9] Saturation served as an indicator of the adequacy of our sample; we stopped interviewing after hearing similar themes repeated multiple times. In Seattle, whose total journalistic workforce is larger than Toulouse (Powers, Vera-Zambrano and Baisnée, 2015), we conducted 36 interviews; in Toulouse, 24. Interviewees agreed to be identified by the medium for which they currently work (e.g. print, radio, and online) and the interview date.

Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol that asked respondents about professional trajectories, daily work routines, journalistic ideals, and perceptions of change

over time. Several questions probed social media use (whether they used social media, which applications they used, when and why they first began using such tools, and how they use them on a daily basis). Beyond these specific questions, respondents sometimes discussed social media while answering other questions. Together, these data form the basis of our account below. Given our interest in explaining cross-national similarities and differences, we focus primarily on similarities and differences at the national level (rather than internal variation).

All interviews were conducted and transcribed in their respective languages. The French data were subsequently transcribed into English to facilitate comparison. Both authors read each interview transcript multiple times, taking notes about how journalists used social media. In keeping with a "logic of discovery" (Luker, 2008), we tacked continuously between our data and scholarly explanations for social media use, as well as expected patterns of cross-national convergence and divergence. As our data revealed similarities and differences in social media use, we turned to Bourdieu to help explain these findings.

We also present basic data on the field dynamics that influence journalism in the two cities. This includes the extent to which news organizations rely on advertising revenues (an indicator of market exposure), the amount and types of subsidies provided by national governments to news organizations, and labor policies that govern the hiring and firing of journalists. We collected these data because prior scholarship identifies it as differentiating French and US journalism (Benson, 2013); we found it by examining stories in the trade press in the two cities. In Seattle, this included a news column by Bill Richards. In Toulouse, this included the online column of Fabrice Valéry, a journalist working at France 3, as well as statements by the local journalists' union. To ensure accuracy, we checked these data with informants in both cities. Their responses confirmed the picture we paint below.

The shared practical sensibilities that shape similarities in social media use

In both countries, journalists use social media to gather information, monitor sources, and identify potential story ideas. This is true for all journalists interviewed and suggests that shared practical sensibilities—themselves embedded in daily interactions with peers—shape similar uses. While journalists are aware of uses that extend beyond routine tasks, such uses are often seen as impractical or distracting; journalists thus ignore or delegate such uses to newsroom personnel tasked with that labor. Taken together, this suggests that social media use converges when tied to shared practical sensibilities rooted in journalists' everyday routines.

Nearly every journalist described using social media, and in particular Twitter and Facebook, to more easily follow sources. In France, a radio journalist described government agency Facebook pages as the best place to look for official information. "It's easier to get their press releases through their Facebook pages than anywhere else" (Toulouse radio journalist, 12 October 2015). In the United States, a long-time print reporter self-described as "uninterested" in social media acknowledged following the Twitter feeds of law enforcement agencies (Seattle newspaper journalist, 15 September

2015). A colleague with a similar practice said, "It is kind of like an extra backup [to ensure] that you are not gonna miss something" (Seattle newspaper journalist, 5 October 2015). Still another said that social media "make it really easy for police agencies to communicate information very quickly and very broadly" (Seattle newspaper journalist, 2 December 2015). In all these cases, journalists use social media to more easily accomplish a task they have performed for decades.

In addition to following established sources, journalists in both France and the United States described using social media to aid reporting. A French editor discussed researching the statements politicians put out on Twitter and Facebook. Doing so, she explained, helped her ask smarter questions in press conferences and interviews (Toulouse newspaper journalist, 11 November 2015). More generally, she suggested that social media are easier ways to contact local officials (as opposed to placing telephone calls). "I'm even telling freelancers, '[If] you don't have his [a politician's] private number, look into his Facebook account and send him a message … It's quite effective'." Journalists in the United States made similar claims. As a reporter on the crime beat put it, "Facebook can be very useful … in starting down the trail of identifying victims, figuring out who they are; identifying … suspects, and figuring out who they are, what they're doing" (Seattle newspaper journalist, 2 December 2015). Here too, social media help journalists accomplish routine reporting-related tasks.

Journalists in both countries also described using social media to develop story ideas. In France, one journalist said that while he posted something on Twitter "30 times maximum" in the past 5 years, he saw the technology as a "revolution in [terms of] access to information" (Toulouse print magazine journalist, 6 November 2015). Rather than just scan wire service reports for story ideas, he now searches social media for trending topics. He called Twitter "an inexhaustible source of topics I could propose to my superior." Journalists in the United States echoed this theme. A business reporter described cultivating a list of local business leaders, which she scanned for potential story ideas. A few days prior to our conversation, she observed a heated exchange between Jeff Bezos, founder of Seattle-based Amazon, and then-presidential candidate, Donald Trump. "From that list, I was able to see his [Bezo's] tweet and wrote a story about that" (Seattle newspaper journalist, 10 December 2015).

Across all these tasks, journalists described using social media partly because their peers did. This shapes the basic decision to have social media accounts, as journalists— even those who use them sparingly—assume "everyone [i.e., all journalists] use social media" (Toulouse television journalist, 4 November 2015). But it also shapes the ways journalists use the technologies. Several journalists explained that they learned how to develop lists and search for story ideas informally from colleagues. Thus, journalists' practical sensibilities are shaped by both long-term social learning (e.g. how to report a story, which influences how they understand social media's potential) and regular interactions with colleagues, which incentivizes and shapes technology use.

In both countries, journalists recognize that social media can be used for purposes beyond information gathering, source monitoring, and story idea generation. Yet such uses are unevenly adopted. An experienced US reporter said that she was aware of the potential to use her Facebook page "in more personal ways in terms of things I'm thinking about, posting … different kind of stories [that are] not only mine but others' [that]

people might be interested in" (Seattle newspaper journalist, 30 October 2015). Yet she acknowledged that she did not avail herself of this opportunity. Similarly, a French journalist told us about a colleague "who loves everything about bicycles" and uses his feed to interact with others who share his passion. "He is very, very active. And he has many followers" (Toulouse television journalist, 30 October 2015). His own social media use, though, refrained from such interactions. In these cases, journalists recognize the potential uses of social media; however, they do not make use of them.

Social media uses that do not help accomplish routine tasks are often described as impractical. At several US television stations, journalists recounted management initiatives to have reporters post self-edited web videos to social media. Yet such initiatives are regularly ignored, given other more pressing tasks that need to be accomplished, and weak enforcement by management. As one reporter explained, "The only real deadlines where if you do not make them you are going to hear from someone are TV show deadlines" (Seattle television journalist, 21 October 2015). Journalists in both countries face similar initiatives. One French journalist acknowledged the potential of social media but differentiated it from his everyday work. "Twitter is the new AFP [Agence France-Press] but it is really time taking. It is a gold mine. I use it, but I need to do my job first" (Toulouse radio journalist, 26 November 2015).

When asked about social media use beyond those identified above, many journalists suggested that such tasks were the jobs of others. In France, a journalist who uses social media to follow government sources said that he almost never posted any information to social media. "It's a community manager who deals with it … because we don't know what to do with it. It's not really something in my job" (Toulouse radio journalist, 12 October 2015). In the United States, a journalist said that while he uses social media to attract audiences, he interacts with audiences infrequently. "We have a social media manager. Her job is to go through comments and social media. If there is question, and she feels like I should respond, she points it to me" (Seattle online journalist, 25 November 2015). This, too, highlights the importance of integration into shared work routines as a source of convergence in technology use.

In sum, journalists' shared practical sensibilities—themselves embedded in journalistic routines—shape cross-national similarities in social media use. For the most part, convergence can be found in the use of such tools to complement reporting, follow sources, and develop story ideas. In these cases, technology is seen as a useful tool for accomplishing tasks; journalists use it for precisely these reasons. By contrast, features that extend beyond routine tasks are unevenly utilized, neglected, or passed onto other members of the newsroom tasked with dealing with them. In such cases, the features of a technology are seen as impractical and thus not integrated by most journalists into everyday routines.

How fields incentivize differences in social media use

While US and French journalists converge in using social media to perform similar practical tasks, their incorporation into daily practice creates opportunities for journalists to use such tools to garner peer recognition. How they pursue these opportunities varies   according   to   the   distinctive   national   fields   in   which   they

are embedded: US journalism's heavy reliance on commercial funding, as well as its limited labor protections for journalists, incentivizes *individual* journalists to orient social media use toward audiences as ways to advance their careers or demonstrate efforts to address economic problems faced by their organizations. By contrast, French journalism's less direct exposure to market pressure, as well as its comparatively stronger labor protections, incentivizes news *organizations* to use social media to attract audiences, while leaving individual journalists to use social media as a forum for demonstrating their worth to journalists. In both countries, use varies according to professional experience and editorial position. Those with less professional experience and lower status editorial positions (reporters, rather than editors or managers) are more likely to use social media to garner peer recognition, while more established journalists use social media primarily to maintain their positions.

US news organizations rely almost exclusively on commercial sources—mainly, advertising—for revenue. In Seattle, the city's main newspaper, which employs the majority of the city's journalists, has reported deriving 90% of revenues from advertising (Richards, 2009). While specific figures are not available, audiovisual and online news organizations in the city are also advertising dependent (Powers and Vera-Zambrano, 2016). The flight of advertiser dollars from legacy media to online markets leaves news organizations with fewer financial resources, and many have responded with layoffs. In the past decade, paid employment at Seattle newspapers has been cut by more than half: from 540 full-time journalists in 2005 to 230 in 2017 (Powers and Vera-Zambrano, 2016).

In this context, US journalists describe using social media to engage audiences. In some cases, the link between audience engagement and commercial pressures is overt, as is the recognition that journalists seek to garner from it. One journalist acknowledged that her company has a goal of increasing the number of Facebook "likes" per story, "so I gauge my success based on growth in those areas" (Seattle online news journalist, 7 December 2015). Another explained that she regularly tags people on social media that her stories impact. "Those people end up being the ones who reach a lot of other people … [Placing these tags] is part of the process of connecting stories with their … audiences" (Seattle online journalist, 5 October 2015). Other times, the link between interaction and commercial pressure is less overt, with journalists using social media to identify potentially popular story ideas. A radio journalist explained that she checks Facebook and Twitter so she can "gather some loose metric of what resonates with people" (Seattle radio journalist, 16 October 2015). Similarly, a newspaper reporter described using Facebook and Twitter "just to see what people are talking about" (Seattle newspaper journalist, 7 December 2015). Whether overt or not, all journalists acknowledged that the need to grow audiences was a key reason for using social media.

This audience orientation creates opportunities for journalists to boost their career prospects by developing savvy social media uses. In our sample, journalists with limited professional experience and lower positions in the editorial hierarchy are more likely to develop such uses (orientations did not differ systematically by gender). A female reporter, hired 4 years prior, described getting her own podcast based in part on her use of social media to solicit audience input on story ideas. This gives her a sense of what audiences want to hear: "It is opening up really new and even more exciting potential,

rare opportunities in that as people start talking about podcasting, I am selected to host [a podcast]" (Seattle radio journalist, 16 October 2015). A male television reporter, also hired 4 years prior, described interacting with audiences on social media as a way to differentiate himself from colleagues. He recalled a Facebook request for veterans' pictures. Rather than "just create a photo gallery," he suggested doing an evening news segment based on these pictures. Doing this kind of work, he says, "is something we just overlook in the newsroom … [but] people thought it was a great story" (Seattle television journalist, 21 October 2015). In such cases, a general orientation toward audiences—made possible in part by commercial pressures and potential for further job cuts—creates an opportunity for some to use social media to boost their recognition vis-a-vis more established journalists.

Established journalists also use social media, though their uses are less about advancing their careers and more demonstrating an effort to address their organization's economic woes. A long-time journalist reported having very little interest in using social media to "network or find friends … I don't do anything else expect post my stories and little things about them in a link" (Seattle newspaper journalist, 26 October 2015). When asked why he used social media at all, he linked his social media use directly to the dire economic conditions of the news industry:

> Well it's just become increasingly clear that obviously, the print subscriptions are falling all the time and the ones who still have the print subscriptions are unfortunately old people. And young people are not getting news that way … They are getting their news through feeds and through social media … So because of this new way of people getting news, obviously, the paper wants us to use Twitter and use Facebook as much as possible. (Seattle newspaper journalist, 26 October 2015)

In France, field dynamics play out differently. Compared to the US, French news organizations are less exposed to market pressures. In Toulouse, advertising comprises just 36.5% of total revenues at the main newspaper (Cousteau, 2011). French media policies also provide news organizations with tax breaks and direct aid, both of which buffer news organizations during adverse economic times (La Cour de Comptes, 2013). While audiences are shrinking for most print and audiovisual media, these declines are not directly linked to layoffs. In the past 10 years, employment at the main newspaper in Toulouse has declined at a far more gradual rate than in Seattle—from 230 journalists to 180, with most departures due to retirements or buyouts (Haudebourg, 2013). This is because French labor laws make it difficult, and costly, for news organizations to lay off employees (Powers and Vera-Zambrano, 2016). These laws also require employers to identify potential alternatives to layoffs, either by providing a similar position elsewhere in the company or offering early retirement. As a result, French journalists are far less likely to link their employment to the financial health of their news organizations.

Where declining audiences are linked to job losses in the United States, in France, such declines are viewed as an organizational problem. Journalists at several news organizations described organizational efforts to boost social media visibility; however, those efforts were distinguished from individual social media use. For the most part, individual journalists placed almost no emphasis on cultivating audiences and discussed

the issue as "their problem" (i.e. the news organization's). One person said that he had few social media followers and that this fact did not bother him:

> Audiences' expectations are … not … simple. What is it that they really expect? … I don't know … I weigh the value of the information [I want to share on social media], and I send it … and they take it or not. (Toulouse newspaper journalist, 8 May 2015)

For their part, managers did not pressure journalists to use social media; instead, they assigned one or two individuals to maintain the organization's social media accounts. Thus, while the pressure to grow audiences exists in France, it primarily assumes the form of an organizational problem.

While labor laws ensure job stability, they also keep overall journalism employment low. French journalists thus require recognition from their peers to enter into and remain in the field, and they use social media primary to aid in this task. As in the United States, how they do this varies according to editorial position and professional experience (orientations do not differ systematically by gender in France either). A long-serving editor described using programs such as Tweetdeck to filter out "noise" generated by other social media users and focus on the work of journalists (Toulouse newspaper journalist, 22 October 2015). A reporter with a long-term work contract uses social media to follow reporting by other journalists to ensure she was not missing any news (Toulouse news agency journalist, 24 November 2015). Finally, freelance journalists—who require peer recognition to gain work contracts—described using social media to build up an "address book" of journalists. As one put it, social media is not used to build audiences; rather, it is used to make sure the information he has is "exclusive … [and] that I will be the only one to bring [that information] and that other journalists won't have [it]" (Toulouse print freelance journalist, 30 September 2015). In such cases, French journalists use social media to follow their peers and ensure that their work will be recognized by those peers.

Some French journalists do interact with audiences via social media; however, these actions typically fail to generate recognition among those in the journalistic field. Several journalists with relatively large social media followings reported that their social media presence did not register with colleagues. One person regularly interacts with audiences on social media, yet acknowledges that getting sources—including city hall officials—to talk with him was elusive (Toulouse online journalist, personal communication, 29 December 2013). Another described a colleague who interacts with audiences regularly and suggested that this activity was not part of his journalistic work. "It's a journalist on Twitter that does not express himself on the [part] of the enterprise *but on his own behalf*" (Toulouse television journalist, 30 October 2015; emphasis marked by journalist). These statements reflect the relative lack of importance granted to interacting with audiences (via social media) in the French journalistic field.

Conclusion

This article documents convergence and divergence in French and US journalists' social media use. Shared practical sensibilities lead journalists in both countries to use social media to accomplish routine tasks such as gather information, monitor sources, and

develop story ideas. At the same time, the incorporation of social media tools into daily practice creates opportunities for journalists to use such tools to garner peer recognition, and these vary according to the distinctive national fields in which they are embedded. US journalism's heavy reliance on commercial funding, as well as its limited labor protections for journalists, incentivizes *individual* journalists to orient social media use toward audiences as a way to advance their careers or demonstrate efforts to address economic problems faced by their organizations. By contrast, French journalism's less direct exposure to market pressure, as well as its comparatively stronger labor protections, incentivizes news *organizations* to use social media to attract audiences, while leaving individual journalists to use social media as a forum for demonstrating their worth to journalists.

Our findings contribute to extant scholarship in several ways. Convergence scholars stress the importance of technological affordances and changes in work in shaping similar types of technology use. Our findings show that only some affordances are adopted, and these tend to be linked to shared everyday tasks and interactions with peers. This suggests a hypothesis for future comparative scholarship: namely, that technology use should overlap to the extent that practical sensibilities do. Moreover, while we find that shared transformations in work impact social media use, we show that where this impact occurs depends partly on the dynamics of national fields (audience interaction occurs at the individual level in the United States and organizational level in France).[10]

While many everyday tasks are shared, how journalists pursue recognition varies cross-nationally. This confirms divergence views that journalistic practices continue to vary in the digital age. Where others attribute this divergence to professional or national cultures, we suggest that divergence can be understood as the outcome of field dynamics, which themselves shape and are shaped by practical sensibilities. This perspective does not dispute that journalists' tendencies to orient social media use to audiences may reflect "individualist" and "collectivist" strands found in US and French cultures, respectively (Hanusch, 2009). Nor does it dispute that French and US journalists also have distinctive professional norms (Engesser and Humprecht, 2015) or that journalists may derive meaning and pleasure from their social media activity. It does, however, suggest that social media use can *also* be seen as journalists "making virtue of necessity" (Bourdieu, 1990: 54) by adapting their use in ways that are conditioned by practical sensibilities and field dynamics. Given a tendency in communication scholarship to see social media primarily as sources of freedom and innovation, we suggest this is an important insight to keep in mind.

In both the United States and France, social media use varies according to editorial position and professional experience. Those with less professional experience and lower status editorial positions are more likely to use social media to garner peer recognition, while more established journalists use social media primarily to maintain their positions. This reminds us that variation within fields is important and that technology use might be one setting where dynamics between "incumbents" and "challengers" play out (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). Recent research suggests that journalists use social media to brand themselves, often with the explicit aim of advancing their careers (Molyneux and Holton, 2015) and that technology use varies according to editorial position (Christin, 2017). Our comparative perspective supports these findings, while also suggesting that how journalists search for recognition varies across countries.

While Bourdieu is useful, we do not claim that the concepts used here can or should be used to explain all aspects of social media use. We suspect other concepts in Bourdieu's toolkit (e.g. capital) are needed to fully explain variation within national cases. Moreover, other theoretical traditions might be better suited to theorizing the resonance of technologies with different journalistic cultures. Our use of Bourdieu seeks to add a perspective that emphasizes the social structuring of journalists' social media use, not replace other viewpoints.

By drawing on interviews with journalists, we portray how journalists in different countries use social media. This research design is useful for identifying patterns in social media use that can be explored by scholars examining other cases through different methods. We would be especially interested to know whether the differences in social media use identified here are specific to the cities we studied or apply more generally to the US and French cases and, more broadly, Western Europe and North America. In the meantime, our findings should be treated as potential variables to be incorporated into studies with a larger number of cases.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that our research captures the use of social media at a particular moment in time. Fields are dynamic spaces, and practical sensibilities are constantly evolving. Thus, it may be that the cross-national similarities and differences we identify may change over time. Moreover, social media use may also introduce new routines, and these routines may alter journalistic practice. While the Bourdieusian perspective presented here suggests that any changes are likely to take time, we conclude simply by affirming that continued research is needed to test the extent to which convergence and divergence in technology use occurs in everyday practice.

Authors' Note

Authors' names are listed alphabetically; both authors contributed equally to this manuscript.

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Notes

1. The literature on journalists' use of social media is large and growing: Hermida (2013) overviews Anglophone scholarship; Mercier (2013) surveys Francophone research. Rather than review this literature, we discuss scholarship directly addressing questions of cross-national convergence and divergence in social media use.
2. The attribution of cross-national variation to professional or national cultures is one important thread in comparative research and extends beyond technology use. Hanitzsch (2007) and Hanusch (2009) provide key statements on the concept of culture in journalism scholarship, and Christin (2017) offers an empirical analysis of how professions buffer technological change.
3. Sterne (2003) overviews Bourdieu's thinking on technology.
4. These sensibilities are structured by what Bourdieu terms the habitus: the socially constituted dispositions that guide individual actions. Because our aim here is to analyze cross-national convergence and divergence, we do not explicitly incorporate the concept into our analysis.

We recognize, though, the concept's utility for explaining variation within fields.

5. This perspective, which centers on how individuals are conditioned to respond to new technologies, thus differs from theories—affordances, medium theory—that emphasize the impact of technology on behavior. Whether these diverse traditions can be integrated is an interesting question but beyond the scope of this article.

6. While social media enable potentially new activities, our hypothesis is that use is most likely linked to preexisting routines. Of course, use may ultimately change routines (and introduce new routines). Assessing the extent to which such changes occur is an important question for further research.

7. As Lizardo (2011) explains, Bourdieu did not seek to operationalize a "substantive definition" or develop "a list of cultural characteristics" that could be applied "to some delimited range of empirical phenomena" (p. 10). Instead, Bourdieu sought to develop a theory of the "social structuring of perception, enculturation and cognition" (p. 19). By asking how social conditions shape journalists use of social media, we apply this perspective to debates about technology use.

8. Toulouse is home to Airbus, Seattle, to Boeing.

9. In Seattle, 55.6% of interviewees were female, and 27.8% occupied positions as editors or management. The remainder were reporters. In Toulouse, 37.5% were female, and 29.2% occupied management or editorial positions. We also included both experienced and inexperienced journalists. In both cities, the least experienced journalist had worked for a news organization for less than a year, while the most established had been working professionally since the 1970s. Mobility varies somewhat by medium, but in neither city do most journalists have experience at national outlets.

10. This helps explain a discrepancy that Engesser and Humprecht (2015) uncover in their analysis. Based on our findings, the fact that French news organizations' social media handles interacted with audiences is not surprising. Indeed, our interviewees suggest that this is the space where field dynamics incentivize such interaction. A content analysis of individual French journalists' social media feeds would likely reveal a rather different dynamic.

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