

Definitions of Comprehensive Examinations:

Depth Exam

The Changing Nature of Journalism, with Special Attention to Audience Participation: Practical Challenges and Theoretical Approaches

Approved

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Supervisory Committee for Comprehensive Exam:

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Reasons for choosing this topic for my depth exam:

Not only have I worked as a journalist myself for several years but journalism was also my main area of concentration during my Master's program in Communication. In terms of future career planning, knowledge of the impact of the online environment on traditional journalism is a standard requirement in job advertisements that target journalism scholars.

Also, Journalism Studies is one major area of interest for me as a researcher right now and will continue to be so in the future. An understanding of the current state of journalism is essential for my thesis research which explores how journalism is challenged by various forms of audience participation in the digital media environment ("media rebellions" or "media incidents" such as the Osthoff case being one example).

Summary and organization of Comp definition:

This comprehensive exam traces the question how the nature of journalism is changing in the current global and digital media environment, especially through the various new ways in which audiences/citizens interact with and participate in journalistic work and the creation of journalistic products. I have chosen two different strategies to explore this overarching question. First, I look into the *practical* challenges that journalism is facing, dividing them into technological, labour-related, professional and economic ones. Second, I outline how *theories* of journalism are able to account for the changes that are reshaping journalism today. Thus, the main concerns of this exam are the current transformation of journalism, the role of audience participation in this transformation as well as conceptualizing this transformation through practical challenges and theoretical approaches.

My goal in this exam is to examine journalism as comprehensively as possible. In order to understand the changes that it is experiencing currently, we need to look at a diverse set of relationships and routines that all condition journalism. Thus, I am considering journalism's own economic and institutional foundations (as outlined in field theory + hierarchy of influences model) as well as its relationship to other institutional and social power structures (the state, the market, civil society, advertisers, technology – as outlined in public sphere theory + hierarchy of influences model). The question is how useful each of these theories are in conceptualizing journalism itself and the relationships with its various environments/influences from outside. Describing the impacts of the

practical challenges to journalism mentioned above offers another way to explore journalism's own economic and institutional foundations (technological and labour-related changes) as well as its relationship to other institutional and social power structures (economic and professional challenges).

The relationship that journalism has with its audiences is a particularly important question for me and I thus discuss it separately from the other relationships. I believe that the audience constitutes the point where the different developments that together transform journalism (technological, economic, professional, and labour-related ones) intersect. Moreover, the three theories of journalism all say something about the audience/the public/the "receivers", "co-creators" and "appropriators" of journalistic products.

Lastly, through all of this, I am also concerned with journalism's performance in relation to normative criteria of democratic communication. In the Breadth Comp on political communication, I talked about the role that journalism plays in different models of democracy. In order to bridge the Breadth and Depth exams, I now turn around and ask what role democracy/democratic performance plays in journalism. Criteria for good/bad democratic discourse are summarized in Table 1 below. The table outlines what democratic communication is, according to the main schools of thought/models of democracy. This equips me to discuss the democratic quality of a changing journalism. In order to pay tribute to the special focus on audience participation, a fifth column or criterion will be added to this table which is role that citizens/audiences play.

Table 1 (adapted from Marx Ferree et al.): Normative criteria in democratic theory - most important criterion of each theory is in *italics*

CRITERIA FOR GOOD DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC DISCOURSE				
THEORY TYPES	<i>Who participates</i>	<i>In what sort of process</i>	<i>How ideas should be presented</i>	<i>Outcome of (relation btw.) Discourse (& decision-making)</i>
Representative-liberal	<i>Elite dominance Expertise Proportionality</i>	Free marketplace of ideas Transparency	Detachment Civility	Closure
Participatory-liberal	Popular inclusion	<i>Empowerment</i>	Range of styles	Avoidance of imposed closure
Discursive/deliberative	Popular inclusion	Deliberative	<i>Dialogue Mutual respect Civility</i>	Avoidance of premature, non-consensus-based closure
Social Constructionist	Popular inclusion	Empowerment Recognition	Narrative creativity	<i>Avoidance of exclusionary closure Expansion of the political community</i>

1. Practical challenges to journalism in the 21st century

Technological challenges:

The introduction of cable and satellite television and even more the advent of digital technologies for producing and consuming journalistic content have deeply influenced both mainstream and alternative journalism. The new technologies enabled mainstream journalism to create additional outlets to offer information and tap into a new source of revenue through advertising. As for the digital production of content, news can now be relayed by journalists from almost any location in the world. Reporting has become faster, more frequent and consequently more superficial. As for alternative voices, any citizen with access to the internet can challenge public claims made by, for example, Rupert Murdoch's media empire. A vibrant citizen journalism that comes in myriad forms has developed online (Nel & Ward, 2007). Contrary to what many thought in the early years of internet journalism, weblogs seem not so much to replace but to

complement 'traditional' journalism. While the former offers mostly unregulated opportunities for discussion and an unprecedented spectrum of opinions on any conceivable topic, the latter is still the major provider of news content (which bloggers then use as a starting point for discussions) (Reese et. al., 2007). Some researchers celebrate the 'participatory culture' that digital technologies have introduced in Western advanced democracies, introducing important concepts such as "produsage", "convergence" and "crowdsourcing". They are convinced that the emancipatory potential of those technologies will finally transpire from the realm of (online) culture (broadly conceived) to the realm of (offline) politics, with citizens demanding more participation there as well (Benkler, 2006, Bruhns, 2008 & Jenkins, 2006a and 2006b, Brabham, 2008). However, from this literature, a deeply rooted understanding of journalism and its unique role in society is missing. Citizen journalism is analyzed as one aspect of 'participatory culture' that is not different in quality from others, such as participatory online games, fan fiction or the creating of online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia.

Labour-related challenges:

In contrast to the other challenges mentioned here, the employment situation and work conditions of journalists have not generated much research interest so far. I consider this to be a blind spot in journalism research that leads those unfamiliar with work conditions of journalists to overemphasize other influences on journalistic work and media content (such as advertisers, ownership or professional values). Mark Deuze (2007) is one of the few researchers who have empirically examined how media workers perceive their situation in the knowledge economy. After massive lay-offs of full-time journalists in media organizations in many Western countries, the majority of journalists are self-employed today and do thus not receive the legal protection, regular pay or pension benefits that were the rule for journalists ten or fifteen years earlier. The work situation of many journalists these days is chronically precarious and insecure; it includes project work, working for multiple employers, high levels of expected flexibility, stress, underpay, and the need for life-long learning due to rapid technological changes. Journalists walk a tightrope between commerce and creativity, individualism and team work, security and independence (Deuze, 2007). Most Western societies have not yet implemented social or labour policies that would offset the multiple risks that journalists need to constantly manage in their professional lives (Gollmitzer & Murray, 2008) – risks that may prevent them from engaging in activities with uncertain financial and legal outcomes (investigative reporting, exposing wrongdoings of major political or economic players, upsetting their own employers).

Professional challenges:

Journalism faces what we could call challenges to its professional culture on several levels. First, although this is not the case to the same extent everywhere and there are some counter-examples, there is an increased demand for journalistic products to entertain – with respect to either style or content – as opposed to inform audiences. Independent of what has caused this development (actual audience preferences or the media offering cheap content to maximize profits), the tabloidization of many areas of reporting, especially when it comes to public affairs, is a reality today. Journalists increasingly package politics in lifestyle drama, social conflicts are discussed in soap operas and news reporting is presented in a superficial manner (Bennett & Entman, 2001, p.21). A major shift in news values has taken place which makes journalists produce short, personalized and easy to digest pieces of news at the expense of complex and contextualized reports (Hackett & Carroll, 2006).

One characteristic of the new style of news presentation is an “increasing predominance of the visual image over analysis and rational description” (Bird, 2003). Moreover, to accommodate the fickleness and shorter attention spans of audiences, the duration of political programs has been cut down in many channels along with the length of sound bites that journalists ask of sources. Another characteristic is the personalization of political reporting. Increasingly, politicians and their private lives are at the center of journalistic interest – instead of the political issues these people represent. Studies suggest that what contemporary audiences remember best after media consumption are dramatic stories and personal ones (Bird, 2003). Some researchers have taken a positive stance towards tabloidization and infotainment (Allan, 2004; Sparks, 1992). According to them, this trend in reporting results in *more* citizens being politically informed and it cultivates a *more critical* view on political and economic elites. By reporting political failures in a dramatic and adversarial manner, popular journalism not only facilitates the consumption of news by the less educated but also creates the “disbelieving citizen” whose attitude towards political leaders often illustrates an anti-establishment twist. Other researchers view the increasing boulevardization of media content negatively, suggesting a “dumbing down” of the audience and a decline in the quality of public discourse that is dangerous for democracy (Anderson, 2007). In an important essay, Daniel Hallin describes how the blurred line between news and entertainment is a result of rising commercialism (profit-orientation) and a questioning of the idea of professionalism (based on an objectivity ethos and a commitment to educating the audience). The commercialization of American news media is closely related to deregulation (especially after the Telecommunications Act of 1996), increased competition in

the media sector (resulting in few big companies owning the media with the biggest audience shares) and the rise of local television and reality-based programming. What is interpreted by many as the increasing preference of audiences for celebrity news and light entertainment, is identified by others as a consequence of such commercialization. Audiences do make their choices among different types of programming. However, these are choices from among media products that have all emerged within largely unimpeded markets and which are style-wise as well as content-wise geared towards producing profits and not towards providing public service. The choices that audiences may make outside an exclusively market-driven environment are not considered. Additionally, within the logic of commercialized media environments, audience preferences are considered to be expressed through “people’s willingness and ability to pay” (Baker, 2002, p. 63). This means that poor audience segments are automatically perceived as less important since the expression of preferences is linked to the availability of money (Baker, 2002). Thus, the media may not give people what they actually want but what they want when given a very limited choice.

However, the convergence of news and entertainment is, to some extent, also a consequence of political and cultural changes in the second half of the 20th century, including the questioning of all forms of authority in the 1960s, the rise of subjectivity as a central value in politics and education, and the decreasing separation of the public and the private (Hallin, 1996). Hallin cautions us not to think of the blurring of news and entertainment in an exclusively negative way (it has contributed to discussions about values and identity, using popular formats), invites us to consider a revised professionalism (journalist not as educator but as facilitator of discussion) while also calling on media regulators to reverse hyper-commercialization.

Economic challenges:

During the past twenty years, journalists have experienced economic challenges that have in many cases threatened their very professional existence. The consolidation of media empires around the world and especially in North America and Europe has led to a reduction of full-time, regularly employed news personnel and to a reduced diversity in reporting – in spite of a deceptive multiplication of channels. The exploration of questions of ownership is thus more relevant than ever when the quality of journalistic content is at issue (McChesney, 2008). The centralization of media power (in the form of ownership) in very few hands internationally has been supported by a neo-liberal desire for deregulation. More and more Western democracies assume that the regulation of the production and consumption of journalistic content should be left to market forces alone. As a result, journalists have less

support and protection from the state as well as from media institutions which have become much more commercialized than in the past.

Since the main product (or: the most profitable product) that media institutions sell is audiences that are then used by advertisers (Smythe, 1981), the financial situation of many new media enterprises is dire. First, in a multi-channel, digital environment that knows no limits to the number of media services the competition for advertisers is especially fierce. The audience today is much more fragmented than in times when there existed only broadcasting and print media. To attract large audience segments for a certain period of time is increasingly difficult. Secondly, audience behaviour online cannot be tracked and evaluated as easily as audience behaviour towards television or print media. Traditional methods of audience measurement are still in the process of being revised successfully for the online environment (Bermejo, 2009). A widely used and successful business model for sustaining new media services, many of which are offered online, has not emerged yet (although there are some hints that a shift of journalistic work to the audience could be part of such a model, as outlined in the following section).

Overall, in today's media environment, journalists are more than ever invited to address citizens as consumers and media see themselves as revenue-generating enterprises which refrain from challenging advertisers as well as audiences. Following this logic, in-depth political reporting has been cut down in many media institutions as audiences mostly prefer light entertainment over reporting on complex public affairs. Also, political and investigative reporting is often more expensive to produce than celebrity shows or infotainment. The ever-growing economic constraints put seriously at stake journalism's existence as a public good that is vital to the functioning of a democracy (Hackett & Carroll, 2006).

The biggest challenge: Audience participation – Opportunities and limitations

Opportunities for citizen empowerment created by new forms of audience participation include alternative journalism, citizen journalism, participatory media enabling activists to produce their own content (easy and cheap technology), social platforms to foster community, possibilities to air counter-hegemonic views, and empowerment of minorities.

In contrast, citizen empowerment through audience participation in (online) journalism is limited by the market, by organizations and industries and by powerful elites. For instance, software companies have taken over social networking sites or blogs such as Youtube or Facebook, relocating these originally grassroots services firmly in a

corporate, profit-driven environment. As far as online journalism includes components of social networking, there is a danger that the intellectual input provided for free by citizens is used for capital accumulation, as evidenced by policies and surveillance strategies used by Facebook (Cohen, 2008). The terms and conditions of many websites that host user-generated content ensure that the owners of the website have the copy-right over their contributions; this means that the users themselves lose this right (Myspace is an example). The business model of many Web 2.0 applications is thus based on the financial surplus that is reached through exploiting content that is produced for free by users (Cammaerts, 2008, p. 362). Moreover, through rankings produced by search engines, sites of corporate and commercial media still attract more attention than smaller online media that do not have the resources to “buy” themselves a spot high up in the hierarchy of search results. Also, most users still use the websites of big media conglomerates as a starting point for their journey through the news online (Stanyer, 2008). Megaportals such as Yahoo! use their established branding, consumer loyalty and enormous marketing budgets to attract and retain attention, offering not only news stories but consumer products and social networking sites, eager to keep users in its sphere of influence as long as possible (Dahlberg, 2005, p. 163).

Where traditional mainstream media allow user contributions online, these contributions still go through various filters before they are published; comments deemed inappropriate are often removed. Generally, the news production in online mainstream media is still a fairly closed process, with professional journalists selecting news items and structuring the content. Users come into the process mostly at the very end, in the form of comments and interpretations (Domingo et al, 2008). Furthermore, the interactivity promised by mainstream media is also limited by a widespread unwillingness of journalists to respond to e-mails from readers or contributors (Stanyer, 2008, p.18).

When compared to traditional media, audience behavior is more difficult to measure and evaluate in an online environment, due to individualized media consumption (the time and duration of engagement is completely up to the individual user). The audience is still a commodity that is sold to advertisers. However, being exposed to advertising “cannot be considered as the only work of the online audience that is appropriated by the media; activities such as clicking and typing also should be considered as labor. In this sense, we can say that we are witnessing a process of appropriation – commercialization or commodification – of interactivity” (Bermejo, 2009, p. 149). For example, when journalistic information is searched online, users can be exposed to keyword advertising which “takes the

language used in searches as a proxy for people's interests, needs or cravings" (Bermejo, 2009, p. 149). Keyword advertising is based on a market of words: they can be bought by advertisers in auctions. If subsequently one of "their" keywords is typed into the search engine (Google, for example), their advertisement pops up beside the search list.

→ *Practical challenges to journalism and audience participation*

The audience is a particularly important factor that is part of and conditions all other challenges to journalism listed above. 'Audience' seems to be the central concept or paradigm around which all strategies to analyze and understand contemporary journalism cluster. The audience is part of the technological challenge to journalism because the internet enables citizens to produce content for a potentially huge audience at very low cost for themselves – independent of professional journalists (Jenkins, 2006a and 2006b). Secondly, the fact that consumers now are also producers of journalistic products is a threat to professional journalists because they experience competition from casual workers, volunteers and unpaid amateurs. Many thus also speak of a "deprofessionalization" in the realm of journalism (Deuze, 2007). As for challenges to professional culture, journalists need to strike a balance between the increased preference of audiences for entertainment values and the traditional public service remit many still consider the heart of their profession. Journalists also need to take into account that, due to globalization, the national may not be an appropriate frame for reporting anymore and that at least some audiences desire more international content and media (Weaver & Loeffelholz, 2008). With regard to economic factors influencing journalism, audience preferences have been at the center of attention for media institutions for the last decade or so. This has often resulted in politically and socially unambitious programming that appeals to as many people as possible, at best. However, the audience has "invaded" mainstream media not only in the form of abstract numbers in audience ratings but also as participators in news reporting and other media content. Public affairs reporting in Western countries is increasingly interactive (Gunn, 2008) – with television viewers being invited to text or phone in their opinions on current issues, with online users being invited to discuss amongst each other or with prominent journalists or guests of a certain show, and with audience members confronting high-profile politicians at eye level in political talk shows (Karlsson, 2008a and 2008b). It is important to keep in mind the ambivalence of these forms of audience participation. The increased space available to citizens to participate in mainstream media is both a form of citizen empowerment and at the same time a strategy of media organizations to increase their revenues - since

interactive journalistic content is often both popular and cheap to produce. Thus, there exists a “highly conflictual dialectic between the capitalist paradigm and the communitarian free-access paradigm” in today’s journalism (Cammaerts, 2008, p. 363).

2. Theories of Journalism (and their usefulness as analytical and/or normative tools)

This section of the Comps is dedicated to three different theories of journalism. The theories were chosen with the goal of conceptualizing the phenomenon “journalism” as comprehensively as possible, with each theory providing a unique aspect of or perspective on journalism. Public sphere theory provides a *normative* dimension to the study of journalism by establishing an ideal of what democratic communication should look like. Also, Habermas’ approach offers a distinctively *communicative* perspective on journalism (in contrast, for example, to an institutional one), detailing the content and style of mediated/public discussion. Secondly, field theory enables the journalism researcher to conceptualize the *media field itself* as a unique societal field with its own routines and rituals as well as the *relationship of the media field to other fields* (such as the state or the economic field). It allows for a conversation about the different *forms of power* (symbolic and economic capital) that are exchanged between the media field and other fields in society. Lastly, Reese’s and Shoemaker’s hierarchy of influences model, in a more descriptive than normative manner, outlines the various factors that condition news content. Thus, taken together, those three theories allow us to conceptualize the emergence of news content (micro-level), the media field itself (meso-level) and its relationship with other societal fields (macro-level) as well as journalism’s performance in relation to normative criteria of democratic communication.

Public sphere theory (Habermas):

In his well-known book “The structural transformation of the public sphere” (1989), Habermas outlines a scenario where informed citizens deliberate amongst each other about current issues and discuss how they would like to live as a political community. According to Habermas, the public sphere of deliberating citizens is ideally accessible for everyone, independent of social status and possession. What counts in the discussion is the “power of the better argument” alone. The will to achieve selfish or other preconceived strategic goals disqualifies citizens from the discussion. In addition, the public sphere is distinct from the sphere of the market as well as the state so that an internally free discussion is also not constrained by pressures from the

outside (political or economic ones). Although the historical spaces for such gatherings of citizens were European coffee houses and salons around the year 1800, the supposed facilitators of citizen deliberation today are journalists. Since face-to-face communication about public affairs has largely been replaced by mediated communication, journalists are evaluated with respect to their ability to create a functioning if “mediated version” of the historical public sphere. From this perspective, contemporary journalism suffers from too much market as well as political interference. It can only provide for a deficient public sphere since the information on public affairs that citizens receive and use for discussion is corrupted by economic considerations as well as political influence (Calhoun, 1996).

Habermas’ theory of the public sphere is a normative one: it does not describe how things have actually been or *will* be – but how they *ought* to be, using an idealized historical version of it as point of reference. It is a macro theory that says more about the relationship of the (mediated) public sphere with *other* spheres (the market and the state) than about its *internal* organization (the actual work routines of journalists, investigative practices or types of media content and how they are produced, etc.).

Field theory (Bourdieu):

The basic assumption of field theory is that the media field is fairly autonomous, being characterised by specific internal logics and processes of production while at the same time being interrelated with other fields across society (Benson & Neveu, 2005). Bourdieu concedes that there are heteronomous influences of particular other fields (the political or the economic field) on the media field. However, his main emphasis is on the media field as an autonomous entity that wields symbolic power over all other fields. The organizational and professional logics unique to the *internal* functioning of the media field – such as the inclusion of sources, the application of news values or the competition among journalists for scoops – enable it to unobtrusively “issue” categories in which the social world is generally perceived (Bourdieu, 2006). Bourdieu emphasizes that homologies between journalists’ and non-media people’s sense-making activities can be seen as manifestation of the media’s authority in providing frameworks for understanding social reality (Couldry, 2004).

Bourdieu’s field theory is more explanatory than normative. It is a perspective that moves away from approaches that see the media mainly as governed by external influences and relaying information from various societal agents to audiences without changing the

message in the process. Bourdieu's theory is mostly a meta theory since it theorizes the media itself more than its surroundings.

Hierarchy of influences model (Shoemaker & Reese):

Shoemaker and Reese have offered a model that incorporates many influences on media content, ranging from micro to macro influences. Lowest in hierarchy are individual journalists, followed by work routines, organizational constraints, extra-media influences (such as advertisers, the audience, technology, media regulation by the state), and, lastly, the ideological level which captures how meaning is produced in the service of power in a particular society (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

The hierarchy of influences model is more of an explanatory than a normative model. It is, to my knowledge, the most comprehensive model of influences on media content and the journalistic work to date, encompassing both micro and macro levels of influence. However, we could conclude that there is a level missing in the Shoemaker/Reese model, namely the media meta level. Apart from *extra-media* influences as well as influences from *inside* one particular media institution, there is no explicit space conceded to the autonomy of the media field as an interorganizational field where symbolic power is created (and becomes manifest in media content). Bourdieu's field theory would offer a way to conceptualize and integrate this missing level into the Shoemaker/Reese model. This would broaden the model's explanatory value by not only focusing on different types of *power through* the media but including the (symbolic) *power of* the media itself.

→ Theories of journalism and audience participation

In Reese's and Shoemaker's model, the audience is grouped under the category "extra-media influences", together with advertisers, technology, and media regulation. The question is if this "location" of the audience outside the media realm can be maintained in the future, considering that audience members are now more or less present in all other categories that are part of the hierarchy of influences model (media content, individual journalists, routines, organization). Audience members today act as journalists and are creators of content. However, many do not use traditional journalistic routines and practices (such as investigative reporting, using news values to decide what to publish, adhering to the objectivity norm) to do this.

Secondly, if we look at field theory, we may find that the symbolic power that the media field has over audiences (forming the basis for the autonomy that Bourdieu asserts for the media field) is increasingly shared with audiences themselves who participate in the creation of media content and the setting of news agendas. Also, new strategies for the creation of content – transparency vs. objectivity, cooperative team work vs. single authorship, interpretive instead of informative reporting – may influence and slowly redefine the internal logic of the media field (which is another assault on the field’s autonomy).

Thirdly, if we study new forms of audience participation and citizen journalism against the background of Habermas’s public sphere theory, we may find that citizen participation is the heart piece of this theory. Although this fits well with the growing significance of the audience contributions in contemporary journalism, public sphere theory imagines a behavior of audiences that seems to differ substantially from the forms of audience engagement that have established themselves in online environments today. For example, while Habermas emphasizes rational arguments, an orientation towards the community, and the quality of deliberation in citizen contributions, audience participation today frequently does not adhere to such rules. Citizen contributions are often outspokenly one-sided, focused on individual rather than collective needs and not supported by rational arguments.

Lastly, with respect to all three theories, we need to pay attention to the economic field and how it potentially thwarts the autonomy and power of the media field as well as of participating audiences/citizens. One important question would be if not only the boundaries between the media realm and the market are blurring but also between audiences/citizens/civil society and the market (thinking of the commodification of audience contributions and user-generated ideas as outlined in the section on the limitations of audience participation above).

Suggestions for questions I could answer in the Depth Exam:

1. There is a broad agreement among scholars that journalism is undergoing a period of rapid change. There is disagreement, however, on how to evaluate these changes. Some researchers conclude that we are witnessing the **“end/death of journalism” today**, others see a **continuation of traditional journalism** in current developments. Discuss those two positions and decide which of them you find more convincing. Outline the positive (empowering citizens and strengthening democratic values and structures) and negative aspects

(disempowering citizens, threats to democracy) that are implied in each of them.

2. Consider some of the important developments through which journalism is in the process of being **redefined** today – for example, commercialization, infotainment/personalization, new/digital technologies, restructured labour processes. Describe the chances as well as the dangers you see in these developments. Outline a future scenario for a **reorganized journalism in the 21st century** that is both possible/realistic and that you think would benefit citizens as much as possible.

3. There is one factor that is pervasive across each of the four practical challenges that you mention in your definitions: the audience. Discuss how **the audience** – as, for example, users of journalistic (digital) technologies, as creators or co-creators of journalistic content, as amateur “professionals” or as commodity that is sold to advertisers – is redefining what the term journalism means. How could various types of audience participation be **conceptualized in one model** (and structured according to which criteria)? Does the ever-increasing space in the media for interactivity and audience participation entail some emancipatory potential for citizens or is it disempowering and only another strategy of media corporations to increase their revenues?

4. Compare and contrast three **major theories of journalism**. Public sphere theory (Habermas, amended by Nancy Fraser and others), field theory (Pierre Bourdieu, expanded by Nick Couldry and others) and the hierarchy of influences model (Shoemaker & Reese). How is journalism itself and how is its relationship with the rest of society (politics/the state, the economy, civil society, etc.) conceptualized in each theory. Would an integrated model that incorporates all three approaches be a (more) useful theorization of journalism? Why?

5. Build a **conceptual bridge between** the two main sections that make up this Comp (**practical challenges** to journalism and **theories of journalism**). How do these two rival taxonomies speak to one another? How well are the three journalism theories able to account for the four practical challenges to journalism – as well as for the increasingly important, multifaceted and diverse roles that citizens/audiences play in and for journalism today? Do you see any blind spots in the journalism theories and how should they be “updated” in order to enable them to account for a transforming journalism?

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