

# Journalism Studies and Journalism Education in France and in Germany

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## Abstract

Journalism research and journalism education are highly interlinked, but in each country or in each cultural context there is a certain way of teaching and researching journalism. France and Germany, despite their proximity, have two different histories and developments regarding these topics that have an impact on today's journalism studies in both countries. While journalism is one of the main research topics in German communication studies (*Kommunikationswissenschaft*), this is not the case in France within French communication studies (*Sciences de l'information et de la communication, SIC*). A look at today's research topics and perspectives underlines the differences between these two countries: Whereas German journalism studies are more theory oriented with some dominant theoretical perspectives and approaches, French journalism studies are less structured around major theories.

## Introduction

Studying journalism in France is not the same as studying the same topic in Germany. It is not only a matter of language; the differences go well beyond that, extending to different research traditions, different turning points, the influence of certain research personalities on the academic landscape, and certain ways of conceptualizing the research topic and research methods that vary between the two countries on either side of the Rhine. Although it seems that France and Germany have similar media and journalism systems,<sup>1</sup> a closer look reveals numerous differences. We find, of course, reasons for these differences in history, politics, and culture. More precisely, an analysis of different dynamics in the development of journalism research and the interplay with academic journalism education allows the differences that exist today between two research communities to be better understood. These two research communities rarely cooperate in the field of communication research in general and journalism research in particular.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, there are many examples of French-German cooperation in the field of journalism—among them ARTE, binational university degree programs, programs for young journalists, French-German associations, etc. However, in the scientific community, few researchers are working at this intersection.<sup>3</sup> The lack of a French-German dialogue in the field of journalism studies might seem astonishing from an outside perspective. A look at the history of German and French journalism studies and journalism education provides a better understanding of the different pathways that the disciplines have taken in each country and their impact (or not) on academic journalism education.

Any research into the epistemology of a research field, the development of its institutionalization, the evolution of methodological approaches, and the different scientific discourses requires that the researcher take a step back and distance themselves from their own academic field and their own academic routines.<sup>4</sup> Especially given the risks of personal bias, it is impossible for the current study to do justice to more than a century of journalism research in Germany and in France. This contribution can only be an attempt to shed light on the parallels and differences between two research landscapes that are not as homogenous as they might seem.

The different developments and institutionalizations make it difficult to name the academic disciplines. The German *Kommunikationswissenschaft* can be translated as communication science, especially as both (the German and the Anglo-Saxon strand of communication science) are epistemologically and methodologically relatively close.

<sup>1</sup> Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz, Fabien Bonnet, Sarah Cordonnier, and Carsten Wilhelm, "Communication Studies in France: Looking for a 'Terre du milieu'?" *Publizistik* 64 (2019).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the Franco-German University's workshop series for young scholars, "Exploration transnationale des milieux de communication franco-allemands: science, design, culture numérique, journalism," Program description, the Franco-German University (website), last modified July 12, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolas Hubé, "À la recherche d'une universalité du journalisme: la *Journalistik* allemande," *Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication* 19 (2020).

And the German field of journalism research, called *Journalismusforschung* or *Journalistik* is relatively close to international journalism studies. A closer look at the editorial boards of international journals or the representatives of international associations in the field of journalism studies shows that German scholars are internationally active and present, which underlines the similarities between the academic disciplines. It is more difficult to translate the names of the disciplines on the French side: The translation of the French *sciences de l'information et de la communication* is "sciences of information and communication," and there is no equivalent to journalism studies in French, as will be explained later. When naming the German and French academic disciplines in English, one has to keep in mind the complexity behind the denominations. Even though journalism research preceded the institutionalized communication studies in both countries, it makes sense to consider the linkage between the research field of journalism studies and the contemporary institutionalization of the field within communication studies in France and in Germany.

This article is a possible response to the main question as to why there is no German-French dialogue in the field of journalism studies and how the development of journalism studies and university journalism training in France and Germany might have an impact on journalism studies. As a first step, it is important to comprehend the different developments of journalism research in France and in Germany and to understand the institutionalization of journalism research as well as the role of journalism research within communication science. Then, in a second step, an analysis of the development of journalism research and academic journalism education reveals a particular relationship between the two: Their dynamics are different in each country. Finally, in the third chapter, a closer look at aspects of past and current French and German journalism research accentuates the differences between them, while also revealing the possible complementarity as well.

### *The History of Journalism Studies in France and Germany*

Today, journalism studies is an international field of studies, being one of the biggest divisions within international scientific associations such as the ICA or ECREA, and there are research communities in many countries. But the origins and the development of journalism studies differ between countries, in this case France and Germany. A look at the history of the academic disciplines and the place of journalism studies within the national communication associations enables us to better understand why there are such different perspectives on journalism, which even today are hardly perceived in the other country.

*The Beginnings in Germany and France in the First Half of the Twentieth Century: Journalism as a New Field of Study*

The theories of Max Weber are considered by some journalism scholars to be a part of German journalism research as Weber's research concerned journalism and media among other things.<sup>5</sup> In 1910, Weber conceptualized and presented a research plan to study the press from a sociological point of view.<sup>6</sup> Even though the study was never completed, it can be interpreted as the first demand for journalism to be studied using empirical research methods. His wish was first fulfilled approximately sixty years later.<sup>7</sup> At first, academic research into journalism and newspapers, the so-called *Zeitungswissenschaft* ("science of newspapers"), had a historical and normative approach and journalism was considered to be the result of the talent and the capabilities of a few individuals.<sup>8</sup>

Thoughts on journalism go well beyond the foundation of the academic institutions. Even though different authors throughout the centuries wrote about communication, newspapers, or journalism, the first systematic approach to journalism in Germany (which did not yet exist as a nation-state at this time) might be the text "Über Zeitungen" (About Newspapers) written by Joachim von Schwarzkopf in 1795.<sup>9</sup> Several authors, such as Karl Knies and Robert Prutz, during the nineteenth century analyzed the new profession that emerged at this time and provided academic texts on topics like press legislation, the formation of public opinion, the history of German journalism, and symbolic communication.<sup>10</sup> In France, journalism was also the topic of several publications throughout the centuries about the role of journalists or press history, demonstrating that there was already interest in studying journalism, both academically and scientifically, in both countries before the foundation of the first academic departments.

The first German journalism departments were founded at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1916, Karl Bücher founded the first German department in the large field of communication studies. The Institut für Zeitungskunde in Leipzig offered an academic program for future journalists as well as a place to study journalism and newspapers.<sup>11</sup> The second department was founded three years later in Münster (1919), the so-called Lektorat für Zeitungskunde under the direction of the journalist Friedrich Castelle and with Karl D'Ester as an academic teacher.<sup>12</sup> Both are today two of the biggest departments for communication studies in Germany. In both cases, the scientific interest in journalism resulted in the creation of departments that would soon work not only on journalism research but on communication as well.

<sup>5</sup> Siegfried Weischenberg, *Max Weber und die Entzauberung der Medienwelt: Theorien und Querelen—eine andere Fachgeschichte* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2012), 14; Gilles Bastin, "La presse au miroir du capitalisme moderne: Un projet d'enquête de Max Weber sur les journaux et le journalisme," *Réseaux* 109, no. 5 (2001).

<sup>6</sup> Weischenberg, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Löffelholz, "Theorien des Journalismus: Eine historische, metatheoretische und synoptische Einführung," in *Theorien des Journalismus: Ein diskursives Handbuch*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004), 21.

<sup>8</sup> Löffelholz, 39.

<sup>9</sup> Heinz Pürer, "Zur Fachgeschichte der Kommunikationswissenschaft in Deutschland," *Biographisches Lexikon der Kommunikationswissenschaft* (October 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Hanno Hardt, *Social Theories of the Press: Constituents of Communication Research, 1840s to 1920s* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Jürgen Wilke, "Von der Zeitungskunde zur Integrationswissenschaft: Wurzeln und Dimensionen im Rückblick auf hundert Jahre Fachgeschichte der Publizistik-, Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft in Deutschland," *M&K* 64, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>11</sup> Erik Koenen, ed., *Die Entdeckung der Kommunikationswissenschaft: 100 Jahre kommunikationswissenschaftliche Fachtradition in Leipzig: Von der Zeitungskunde zur Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft* (Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Bettina Maoro, *Die Zeitungswissenschaft in Westfalen 1914–45: Das Institut für Zeitungswissenschaften in Münster und die Zeitungswissenschaft in Dortmund* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1987).

The lack of empirical studies on journalism and journalists in the early phase of the German newspaper science called *Zeitungswissenschaft* was a topic that caused Ferdinand Tönnies in 1930 to publicly criticize the lack of a sociological approach in the *Zeitungswissenschaft* and to describe it as a part of sociology. Emil Dovifat, however, was of the opinion that *Zeitungswissenschaft* should be an independent academic discipline and couldn't imagine it being studied as a mere aspect of different disciplines such as sociology, literature, economics, and psychology.<sup>13</sup> The dispute showed the first steps towards the institutionalization of journalism studies as an academic discipline and the emergence of a scientific community. From that beginning until 1960, the German *Zeitungswissenschaft* passed through four stages: Between 1890 and 1925, scholars began to identify the newspaper as their common research object. During the second stage (1925–1933), researchers intensified research on newspapers and started to create a scientific network around this object of study. The third phase (1933–1945) was overshadowed by World War II and Nazi ideology, and so the fourth stage was about the reconstruction of journalism research after 1945.<sup>14</sup>

In the first half of the twentieth century, communication studies or journalism studies did not exist as an institutionalized research field in France, but different projects and initiatives nonetheless emerged as a result of academic interest in journalism. In 1937, the then Université de Paris founded the Institute of Press Science (Institut de Science de la Presse, ISP), which disappeared during World War II and was again founded in 1945, becoming in 1951 the French Press Institute (Institut Français de Presse, IFP), one of the leading French research centers for journalism and media studies today. Its founding father and first director, Fernand Terrou, sought international exchanges and participated in a conference in Strasbourg where he was part of an "Interim Committee" that convened the founding conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) at UNESCO in December 1957.<sup>15</sup> Terrou then became the first president of the IAMCR. In 1946, Terrou also founded the French academic journal for journalism research, *Études de presse*, which he later co-edited with other IFP members.

It is notable that the early French journalism research was internationally oriented, with Terrou being involved in international associations and with UNESCO's Department of Mass Communication, for example.

<sup>13</sup> Emil Dovifat, *Zeitungswissenschaft, Band 1: Allgemeine Zeitungslehre* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1931).

<sup>14</sup> Stefanie Auerbeck and Arnulf Kutsch, "Thesen zur Geschichte der Zeitungs- und Publizistikwissenschaft 1900–1960," *Medien & Zeit* 17, no. 2–3 (2002); Stefanie Auerbeck and Arnulf Kutsch, *Zeitung, Werbung, Öffentlichkeit: Biographisch-systematische Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Kommunikationsforschung* (Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2005), 12.

<sup>15</sup> Cees Hamelink and Kaarle Nordenstreng, "Overview of IAMCR History: Looking at History through the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)," IAMCR (website).

*New Developments in the 1960s: A Turning Point in Germany,  
a New Institutionalized Field of Study in France*

Although German journalism studies has always been a field of research that integrates different fields of expertise and academics, in 1960 Werner Schöllgen introduced the notion of “integrating science” (*Integrationswissenschaft*)<sup>16</sup>—meaning an academic discipline that would include research approaches and perspectives from different fields of research such as sociology, history, or political science. The 1960s also marked a turning point in German journalism studies, which transitioned from a normative human science (*Geisteswissenschaft*) to an academic field that incorporated sociological and psychological perspectives as well as the—at that time in particular, quantitative—methods of empirical social research.<sup>17</sup> The inspiration came from observation of US communication research, which led German journalism studies to reposition itself as a social science.<sup>18</sup> Different researchers described this transition as a liberating and new and necessary recommencement after World War II, while others are still criticizing the neglect of certain perspectives and research methods.<sup>19</sup>

In France, the first center for communication studies (Centre d’Études des Communications de Masse, CECMAS) was founded in 1960 with the aim of conducting research into “massive phenomena of our contemporary society such as press, radio, television, cinema, advertising” with all their different dimensions: “economic, sociological, ideological, even anthropological.”<sup>20</sup> Methodologically, the research center concentrated on content analysis, but Roland Barthes indicated that this would not be sufficient as the so-called mass media had a language that needed to be analyzed along with the content.<sup>21</sup> Despite collaborative work on popular culture, researchers did not want to found an academic discipline that would concentrate on communication phenomena.<sup>22</sup> But the CECMAS paved the way for the later establishment of the new academic discipline. Roland Barthes, for example, would be one of the founding members of the French *sciences de l’information et de la communication* as an academic field that was officially created in 1975, and CECMAS’s academic journal, *Communications*, is to this day one of the major French journals in communication science.

*The Science of Communication and Journalism Studies since  
the 1970s*

As media forms expanded, so too did the field of communication studies, and journalism was no longer the only center point in Germany. With the renaming of the national association from “Deutsche

<sup>16</sup> Wilke, 76.

<sup>17</sup> Löffelholz, 46.

<sup>18</sup> Maria Löblich, *Die empirisch-sozialwissenschaftliche Wende in der Publizistik- und Zeitungswissenschaft* (Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Löblich, 13–14.

<sup>20</sup> Roland Barthes, “Le centre d’études des communications de masse: Le C.E.C.MAS,” *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 16, no. 5 (1961): 991.

<sup>21</sup> Barthes, 992.

<sup>22</sup> Stefanie Auerbeck, “Über die Spezifika ‘nationaler Theoriediskurse’: Kommunikationswissenschaft in Frankreich,” in *Theorien der Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft: Grundlegende Diskussionen, Forschungsfelder und Theorieentwicklungen*, ed. Carsten Winter, Andreas Hepp, and Friedrich Krotz (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008).

Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Zeitungswissenschaft" (created in 1963)—with an emphasis on journalism—to "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft" (1972), communication science in Germany formally became a field of study that covered a huge variety of topics.

The historical development in Germany from journalism to the wider field of communication was not mirrored in France. The French *sciences de l'information et de la communication* (SIC) were founded by Roland Barthes, Robert Escarpit, and Jean Meyriat and have a strong literature tradition.<sup>23</sup> During the first conference, Escarpit explained the new way of thinking and analyzing information and communication: information as data and communication as a permanent process.<sup>24</sup> The pluralistic-disciplinary approach to communication changed into a discipline that distinguished itself from others while still maintaining a pluralistic-theoretical interdisciplinary approach. It was not the research topic—communication—that was (and is) specific to the new field of study, but how researchers think and work in their discipline. Yves Jeanneret and Bruno Ollivier summarize this by focusing on two main aspects: the idea that information and communication are one ensemble and an emphasis on interdisciplinary research.<sup>25</sup> Specific to French communication research is the pragmatic-cultural-semiotic approach to analyzing simultaneous interaction on different levels, such as public, interpersonal, or mediated communication.<sup>26</sup>

Löffelholz describes Manfred Rühl's "Die Zeitungsredaktion als organisiertes soziales System" (The Newsroom as an Organized Social System) (1969) as the turning point in German journalism theory. Instead of an individualistic approach—that is to say, journalists in the center of research—Rühl describes journalism as a system.<sup>27</sup> According to Rühl, newsrooms are based on the structures of roles within the newsroom and decision-making processes during the work.<sup>28</sup> This meant no longer seeing journalism as a purely talent-based profession and seeing newspapers within their societal structures. Journalism research in Germany thus converted from an ideology regarding the profession to "modern empirical-analytical journalism research."<sup>29</sup>

Journalism studies in France, in contrast, is a quite recent field of studies, established for the most part in the 1990s.<sup>30</sup> At that time, different researchers in France studied the development, institutionalization, and societal challenges of journalism and the journalistic profession during the first half of the twentieth century. Denis Ruellan underlines that the first studies in the 1990s concentrated on different aspects of journalism while highlighting that journalists functioned as a "group"<sup>31</sup> with its own structures and a voluntarily composed

<sup>23</sup> Jean-François Tétu, "Sur les origines littéraires des sciences de l'information et de la communication," in *Les origines des sciences de l'information et de la communication: Regards croisés*, ed. Robert Boure (Lille: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Robert Escarpit, "Pour une nouvelle épistémologie de la communication" (introductory presentation, Premier congrès français des sciences de l'information et de la communication [first convention of the French information and communication sciences conference], Compiègne, April 21, 1978).

<sup>25</sup> Yves Jeanneret and Bruno Ollivier, "Introduction: Les Sic en perspective," *Hermès* 38 (2004): 88.

<sup>26</sup> Averbeck, 212.

<sup>27</sup> Löffelholz, 53.

<sup>28</sup> Manfred Rühl, *Die Zeitungsredaktion als organisiertes soziales System* (Berlin: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1969).

<sup>29</sup> Löffelholz, 46.

<sup>30</sup> Nicolas Pélissier and François Demers, "Recherches sur le journalisme: Un savoir dispersé en voie de structuration," *Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication* 5 (2014).

<sup>31</sup> Denis Ruellan, *Les "Pro" du journalisme: De l'état au statut, la construction d'un espace professionnel* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1997).

collective dynamic. While journalism was the starting point of the history of communication science in Germany, it was the opposite in France: A specific interest in journalism emerged approximately three decades after the creation of the CECMAS. Journalism studies as such still do not exist in France, which results in the lack of visibility of journalism research in France.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Pélissier and Demers, para. 5.

Nicolas Pélissier and François Demers identify three time periods in the development of French journalism research. During the first phase (1937–1976), researchers developed a common understanding of press and journalism, even though they marginalized journalism research at the same time. The French Institute for Press (Institut Français de Presse, IFP) played a crucial role during the first period, as it was one of the few places dedicated to journalism and press with the first doctoral dissertations on journalism in France in the 1970s. The second stage (1976–1996) was characterized by the affirmation of academic knowledge on journalism. Researchers began to work on different topics within journalism research and they started to interact and align with researchers abroad. Topics of research included other media as well, especially television. Even though different academic disciplines (political science, sociology, economics, linguistics, etc.) began working on journalism and contributed to a dispersed field of research, the second phase of journalism research at the beginning of the 1990s is marked by its initial structuring. The authors see the beginning of the third phase in journalism studies as being kickstarted by Pierre Bourdieu, who presented and published his famous *Sur la télévision* in 1996. (See Benjamin Krämer's **contribution** in this Special Section.) Different research methods and perspectives were applied to journalism research (content analysis, discourse analysis, qualitative research methods, narratology, anthropological and experimental approaches, constructivism). In contrast to Germany, French journalism research generally uses qualitative methods to understand the “mechanisms of journalistic productions as a collective action.”<sup>33</sup> Since 1996, different coalitions and cooperation have enabled new dynamics within the field of journalism studies, which will be explained in the next chapter.

<sup>33</sup> Hubé, para. 21.

### *Journalism Research and the Structure of Academia in Germany and France*

German communication studies in general and journalism studies in particular are much more internationally oriented than in France. Many in Germany (and German-speaking colleagues) are on the editorial boards of the international journals and are representatives of different associations and divisions on an international level. Without



diving deeper into the different ways in which international careers and publication activities are recognized by the scientific community in France and in Germany, it is obvious that international activities are very visible within the German community of communication science, whereas international activities in France have traditionally been limited to Francophone communities.<sup>34</sup>

The German association of communication studies (DGPuK) holds an annual conference, and each of its divisions, such as the division of journalism studies, holds an annual conference as well. As many German scholars attend international conferences (ICA, ECREA) as well as local ones, and journalism studies divisions exist both internationally and locally, it is quite easy to identify the scholars that are working in the same field. The annual meetings enable researchers to create bonds beyond the presentations. The German journalism division (Fachgruppe Journalistik/Journalismusforschung) was founded in 1991 and is one of the biggest divisions within the DGPuK. A statement describing the group's aims lists a wide range of interests that researchers are working on, such as: "journalistic practices and contents, the structures that shape journalism, the general framework of journalism and its role in society as well as the relationship between journalism and its public."<sup>35</sup> In other words, this division is for researchers who are working on theory and on empirical questions regarding journalism, on the academic and practical education of journalists, as well as on the application of scientific knowledge in journalistic practice. All in all, *Journalistik*—German journalism studies—combines "different theoretical perspectives with a variety of empirical and normative approaches."<sup>36</sup> The authors of the statement underlined the importance of international research and debates; however, in reality, researchers tend to prioritize exchange between countries in which the research approach is similar and where the main research language is English. This is certainly one of the main reasons why there is little French-German exchange within journalism studies.

Even though the SFSIC (Société Française des Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication) is the singular national communication association in France and plays an important role in planning and organizing academic careers in the field of communication science, researchers do not necessarily connect via events organized by the SFSIC. There are some formal interest groups, called GER (Groupes d'Etudes et de Recherche), but they have to be renewed every two years after examination. There are not as many formal and institutionalized divisions as in Germany, and there is no French interest group dedicated to journalism research (yet), nor are there annual conferences, dissertation prizes, junior groups, and the like

<sup>34</sup> However, the SFSIC has institutionalized links outside these historic communities in the past ten years, connecting with other national associations, such as DGPuK and SGKM, as well as with international associations such as ICA and ECREA.

<sup>35</sup> DGPuK, "Selbstverständnis der DGPuK-Fachgruppe Journalistik/Journalismusforschung" (mission statement, Hamburg, September 24, 2020).

<sup>36</sup> DGPuK, "Selbstverständnis."

comparable to those that exist within the ICA and the ECREA. Academic research in France is organized in research units (*laboratoires de recherche*) that organize smaller conferences, research seminars, or working groups. In the field of journalism studies—which does not exist as such in France—there are two working groups or consortiums that should be mentioned to give an idea of research dynamics on journalism in France: REJ and the GIS Journalisme.

The REJ (Réseau d'études sur le journalisme) is an international research network of journalism scholars spanning France, Quebec, Brazil, and Mexico that was created in 1999 with the aim of developing a theoretical framework in order to unite different methodological approaches. Hence, all kinds of (new) journalism and (new) journalism practices were taken into consideration, without establishing a specific definition of journalism.<sup>37</sup> The GIS Journalisme (Groupement d'Intérêt Scientifique Journalisme) was created in 2010 as French journalism scholars wished to give more visibility and vitality to journalism research in France, which at that point in time was done by individuals scattered around France without any clear common structure. Its founding members came from four French universities: CARISM (Paris-Panthéon-Assas University), CRAPE (University of Rennes 1), ELICO (Lumière University Lyon 2), and GRIPIC (Sorbonne University). The members of these four distinct research units together organized five conferences between 2011 and 2017, allowing scholars to exchange their knowledge of this relatively new field of study. There are, of course, other research collectives, such as the Brazil-France-Francophone Belgium Journalism Research Conference, or the French-Brazilian collaboration called MEJOR, or the conferences for young scholars in journalism (*Jeunes chercheur-es en journalisme*). In addition, the French-Québécois journal *Les Cahiers du Journalisme*, as well as the international and multilingual (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) journal *Sur le journalisme, About journalism, Sobre jornalismo* provide other ways of increasing the visibility of French journalism studies.

Whereas in Germany journalism studies is a major field of study in communication science with one formal division within the national association of communication studies, French journalism research and the visibility of a French journalism academic community relies more on individual initiative and efforts. The frequently deplored lack of international visibility of French journalism scholars can be explained by the structure of the French academic system and by how academic recruitment works in France. As young scholars in France do not necessarily need international experience or international publications to get a tenured academic position (though this might be an asset and it becomes more and more important as labs

<sup>37</sup> Fabio Henrique Pereira, Tredan Olivier, and Langonné Joël, "Penser les mondes du journalisme," *Hermès* 82, no. 3 (2018): 101–2. See also Rose-lyne Ringoot and Jean-Michel Utard, "Introduction," in *Le journalisme en invention: Nouvelles pratiques, nouveaux acteurs* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006).

need international competence to have good evaluations), there is no specific need to spend time abroad or to publish internationally.

Of course, each country has its own way of creating and structuring scientific communities, and France and Germany are only two examples that illustrate how scholars and exchange are organized within the field of journalism studies. The structure of the main scientific association, the way recruitment works in different countries, and the role and importance of certain individuals regarding the structure of the scientific community all have an impact on research topics and research habits as well. In the case of France and Germany, it is striking to see how journalism studies and communication studies have had such different dynamics in their development; and these were caused by differences in the history of the academic disciplines in each country, the point of view and influence of certain individuals, the timing of certain decisions, and traditions within the scientific communities.

### *Journalism Education in France and Germany*

Both in France and in Germany, there are many ways to become a journalist and there is no (formal) need to have a certain degree or to have studied at a journalism school. There are more or less common ways to enter the profession of journalism, but in both countries, there are numerous examples of journalists who have not followed a journalistic degree program or any other kind of formal professional training. However, the connection between university journalism education and journalism studies in France and in Germany differs slightly and this difference is indicative of variations within journalism studies in each country. In France, journalism studies is strongly linked to journalism education and related activities. Before taking a closer look at journalism studies and its link to journalism education, it is important to understand the main ways of becoming a journalist in France and in Germany, since academic journalism education doesn't have the same significance in both countries.

#### *Becoming a Journalist in Germany: Choosing between Traineeship, Journalism Schools, and Academic Journalism Education*

In Germany, there are three main ways to become a journalist: A traineeship (*Volontariat*) at a media organization, which usually takes about eighteen to twenty-four months, enables prospective journalists to learn and work in a newsroom and to contribute directly to the daily journalistic tasks. Further training complements the professional experience, even though the standards and benefits can vary.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Matthias Kurp, "Volontariat: Reformstau auf dem Königsweg: Diskussion mit Michael Geffken, Annette Hillebrand, Christian Lindner, Ulrich Pätzold, Maximiliane Rüggeberg," in *Dokumentation: IQ-Herbstforum; Qualität und Qualifikation: Impulse zur Journalistenausbildung* (Berlin, 2013), 24.

The second path to a career as a journalist in Germany is through journalism school. Many of these were founded in the 1980s when different media organizations decided to take care of the education of their future colleagues. In addition, there are journalism schools that belong to an association or an institution.<sup>39</sup> Studying at one of these journalism schools sometimes does not require a degree, but realistically, the candidates need a university degree in order to enter the most prestigious schools, such as the German Journalism School in Munich (Deutsche Journalisten Schule). The third main way to get journalism training is by studying at one of the universities that offer academic journalism training (*Journalistik*). In the 1970s a greater exchange regarding journalism education took place with the aim to reform journalism training and to install university degrees that would meet the new demands required of journalists. The universities of Dortmund and Munich were the first to really combine theory and practice. These are the three most common pathways to a career in journalism, but there are many other possibilities and smaller programs for professional journalism education, too.

<sup>39</sup> Walther von La Roche, Gabriele Hooffacker, and Klaus Meier, "Journalistenschulen," in *Einführung in den praktischen Journalismus: Journalistische Praxis* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2013).

### *Becoming a Journalist in France: Fourteen Elite Schools for Journalism Education*

In France, the main pathway into journalism is by studying journalism at a university. Even though there are over a hundred journalism degree-granting programs in France, many journalists hope to break into the industry by studying at one of the fourteen journalism schools that are "recognized" by the profession ("*reconnues par la profession*")—even though only about 20 percent of new journalists come from one of these schools.<sup>40</sup> The "recognition" by the profession means that the degrees at those fourteen schools are more valued by media organizations than other degree programs, which means that graduates have better prospects in journalism. As most of these schools offer a master's degree, students in France start their journalism training right after a three-year bachelor's degree.

<sup>40</sup> Ivan Chupin, *Les écoles du journalisme: Les enjeux de la scolarisation d'une profession (1889–2018)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2018), 9.

### *History of Journalism Education and Journalism Studies*

It is, of course, impossible to take into consideration all of the journalism degree programs in these two countries. In the following sections, I will return to just a few aspects of journalism education that are directly linked to journalism studies—which is to say, university journalism programs in Germany and the journalism schools in France.

### *The History and Development of Academic Journalism Education in Germany*

Both in France and in Germany, the first attempts to establish journalism education go back to the nineteenth century. Authors and journalists wrote about their experiences in journalism and gave advice to future journalists. J. H. Wehle, for example, gave insights into journalism and newspapers as well as the work of journalists in order to teach a new generation of journalists that would be able to meet new demands in the journalistic field.<sup>41</sup> And in 1899, Richard Wrede founded a private journalism school in Berlin and published a handbook shortly afterwards in 1902.<sup>42</sup> Despite these early attempts and the journalism focus of the first academic institutions that today are among the biggest departments for communication studies, Günter Kieslich's working paper from 1970 on problems of journalistic education ("Probleme der journalistischen Aus- und Fortbildung") marks the beginning of academic journalism education in Germany.<sup>43</sup> This text led to the "Memorandum of Journalism Education" ("Memorandum der Journalistenausbildung") that the German Press Council published one year later, describing journalism education in Germany and asking for specialized university degrees and academic professional training. A second memorandum two years later (1973) insisted even more on the necessity of (applied) academic journalism education and marked a turning point regarding the perception of the profession of journalists, which was now no longer considered purely talent based.<sup>44</sup>

These texts were the beginning of a larger discourse on academic journalism education. The German association for communication studies (DGPuK) organized a first conference on this topic in 1976, at which the curricula from three universities (Munich, Dortmund, Hohenheim) that combined theory and practice were presented.<sup>45</sup> Different German universities developed different ways of incorporating applied journalism education into their curricula. It is impossible to explain every characteristic of all these degree programs as they are quite different, but two German universities have each implemented their own interesting program in an effort to combine theory and practice: the University of Dortmund and the University of Munich. The so-called Dortmund Model (Dortmunder Modell) favored the "integration of theory and practice"<sup>46</sup> by integrating a practical traineeship (*Volontariat*) into the academic curriculum that allows the department to build extended partnerships with media organizations in order to regularly adapt the study program.<sup>47</sup> In Munich, the department for communication research cooperates with the German journalism school (Deutsche Journalistenschule).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>41</sup> J. H. Wehle, *Die Zeitung: Ihre Organisation und Technik* (Vienna: A. Hartleben's Verlag, 1883).

<sup>42</sup> Martin Löffelholz, "Kommunikatorforschung: Journalistik," in *Öffentliche Kommunikation: Studienbücher zur Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft*, ed. Günter Bentele, Hans-Bernd Brosius, and Otfried Jarren (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2003), 29.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Steinbrecher, "Alte Werte, neue Kompetenzen: was sich in der Journalistenausbildung ändern muss," in *Dokumentation: IQ-Herbstforum; Qualität und Qualifikation: Impulse zur Journalistenausbildung* (Berlin, 2013), 11; Walter Hömberg, "Expansion und Differenzierung: Journalismus und Journalistenausbildung in den vergangenen drei Jahrzehnten," in *Journalistenausbildung für eine veränderte Medienwelt: Diagnosen, Institutionen, Projekte*, ed. Klaus-Dieter Altmeyen and Walter Hömberg (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 18.

<sup>44</sup> Wolfgang Donsbach, "Hausaufgaben noch immer nicht gemacht: Versäumnisse und Konzepte der Journalismusforschung," in *Didaktik der Journalistik: Konzepte, Methoden und Beispiele aus der Journalistenausbildung*, ed. Beatrice Dernbach and Wiebke Loosen (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2012), 33.

<sup>45</sup> Hömberg, 18.

<sup>46</sup> Steinbrecher, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Ulrich Pätzold, "Die Anfänge in Dortmund: eine Erfolgsgeschichte mit viel Glück," in *Journalismus und Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Tobias Eberwein and Daniel Müller (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010).

In the 1990s, Siegfried Weischenberg, Klaus-Dieter Altmeppen, and Martin Löffelholz described the main skills that journalists would need in order to be professional journalists. They identified journalistic knowledge (*Fachkompetenz*) as important—a skill which included, for example, the ability to investigate, to select the right news item, and to write news, as well as knowledge about media economics, media politics, media law, media history, and media technique. The second competence these authors describe is intermediation (*Vermittlungskompetenz*), which they specify is the ability to articulate and to present news for a certain public or audience, as well as knowledge of genres and formats. The third competence refers to specific knowledge (*Sachkompetenz*) that journalists need in order to write news for society: knowledge about their specialty and knowledge of societal issues (sociology, politics, etc.), as well as knowledge of sources, scientific work, and research methods.<sup>49</sup> Later researchers extended this framework by adding further competences that became important as a result of changes in the media landscape. Some of these additions included technical and entrepreneurial competences<sup>50</sup> and an understanding of professional values. Explaining why prospective journalists would need specific instruction and how this knowledge would be necessary for working as a journalist was important to Wolfgang Donsbach, who called for interdisciplinary “team-teaching.”<sup>51</sup> All in all, there is a rich tradition of academic exchange about journalism education in Germany which attempts to combine theory and practice.

The question of how to integrate theory and practice is one of the main concerns of academic journalism education. Whereas journalism schools do not have to justify their curriculum, since their main goal (and their legitimation) is the professional education of future journalists,<sup>52</sup> it is more complicated for academic or university journalism training programs, which try to offer practical training through external teachers and exchanges or internships with media companies, for example. Even though the metaphor of a zipper<sup>53</sup> describes the ambition of combining theory and practice, practical elements are usually additional to the theoretical studies rather than being really integrated into the discussion about journalism.<sup>54</sup>

### *The History and the Development of Journalism Schools in France*

Even though Delphine Girardin wrote a theatrical piece about a journalism school in 1839, and she was not the only one during the nineteenth century to envision journalism education in France,<sup>55</sup> the first French journalism school was founded in 1899 by Jeanne Weill, better known as Dick May.<sup>56</sup> This happened at a time when journalism had

<sup>48</sup> Michael Meyen and Manuel Wendelin, eds., *Journalistenausbildung, Empirie und Auftragsforschung: Neue Bausteine zu einer Geschichte des Münchener Institution für Kommunikationswissenschaft; Mit einer Bibliographie der Dissertationen von 1925 bis 2007* (Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Siegfried Weischenberg, Klaus-Dieter Altmeppen, and Martin Löffelholz, *Die Zukunft des Journalismus: Technologische, ökonomische und redaktionelle Trends* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 48.

<sup>50</sup> Löffelholz, “Theorien des Journalismus,” 29.

<sup>51</sup> Donsbach, 42.

<sup>52</sup> Klaus-Dieter Altmeppen and Walter Hömberg, “Traditionelle Prämissen und neue Ausbildungsangebote: Kontinuitäten oder Fortschritte in der Journalistenausbildung?” in *Journalistenausbildung für eine veränderte Medienwelt: Diagnosen, Institutionen, Projekte*, ed. Klaus-Dieter Altmeppen and Walter Hömberg (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 9.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Haller, “Didaktischer Etikettenschwindel? Die Theorie-Praxis-Verzahnung in der Journalistik,” in *Didaktik der Journalistik: Konzepte, Methoden und Beispiele aus der Journalistenausbildung*, ed. Beatrice Dernbach and Wiebke Loosen (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2012), 48.

<sup>54</sup> Altmeppen and Hömberg, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Ferenczi, *L'invention du journalisme en France: Naissance de la presse moderne à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Payot, 1996), 251–52; Christophe Charle, *Le siècle de la presse (1830–1939)* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), 217–21.

a great impact on French society (e.g., the Dreyfus affair) and when journalism underwent many changes—for example, the shift from political and literature journalism towards reportage journalism and a more popular journalism for a broad readership. The peak of this development was during the so-called golden press era (“*âge d’or de la presse*”).<sup>57</sup> Strictly speaking, the first journalism school was one of four departments of the School of Social Science (École des hautes études sociales), but it was less popular than the other departments. Dick May was interested in journalism and the emerging field of sociology and combined both by teaching the newly founded social science within the journalism program.<sup>58</sup> Well known journalists such as Jules Cornély, Henry Fouquier, and Jules Claretie, as well as two historians, Alphonse Aulard and Charles Seignobos, were among the educational advisory board.<sup>59</sup> A journalistic article about Dick May and the new journalism school from December 1, 1899 even mentions Gabriel Tarde, who wrote about newspapers and public opinion,<sup>60</sup> as one of the teachers.<sup>61</sup> Contemporary journalists criticized the new journalism program as the profession was still viewed as talent based.<sup>62</sup> Before the rise of formal journalism education, journalistic writing was not yet perceived as a technique but rather as a writing style that could be learned from older journalists.<sup>63</sup> Hence, Robert de Jouvenel, a member of the labor union of French journalists (Syndicat national des journalistes, SNJ) writing in 1920, criticized the idea of journalism schools that would undermine the secrets of newspaper production.<sup>64</sup> When in 1929 the labor union was asked to help develop the curriculum of the Parisian journalism school, the labor union, in return, demanded that a greater emphasis be put on practical teaching as the conferences did not seem to prepare the students for later professional life as journalists.

At the same time, the labor union was also interested in a theoretical discussion about journalism, especially Georges Bourdon, who had returned from Germany, where he had heard about the newly founded Berlin institute for press research, the Deutsches Institut für Zeitungskunde (1927). In 1929, he founded the center for journalism studies (Centre d’études journalistiques)—which would later inspire the creation of the Institut de Science de la Presse, ISP—and envisioned a press science.<sup>65</sup> Denis Ruellan points out that the labor union’s interventions gave it control in journalism education as well as in scientific discourse on journalism, with still the same goal in mind: the recognition of journalism as a collective profession.<sup>66</sup> After World War II, the ISP was transformed into the French Institution for Press (Institut Français de Presse, IFP). Nicolas Pélissier and François Demers describe how academic interest decreased as journalists instead turned to the newly founded journalism school.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Vincent Goulet, “‘Transformer la société par l’enseignement social’: La trajectoire de Dick May entre littérature, sociologie et journalisme,” *Revue d’Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 19 (2008).

<sup>57</sup> Michael Palmer, “L’âge d’or de la presse,” *Le Temps des médias* 27, no. 2 (2016).

<sup>58</sup> Vincent Goulet, “Dick May et la première école de journalisme en France: Entre réforme sociale et professionnalisation,” *Questions de communication* 16 (2009).

<sup>59</sup> Ferenczi, 254.

<sup>60</sup> See Elihu Katz, “Influence et réception chez Gabriel Tarde: Un paradigme pour la recherche sur l’opinion et les communications,” in *La réception*, ed. Cécile Méadel (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2009).

<sup>61</sup> “L’école du journalisme,” *La Femme: journal bi-mensuel*, December 1, 1899, 182.

<sup>62</sup> Chupin, 54.

<sup>63</sup> Ruellan, para. 4.24.

<sup>64</sup> Ruellan, para. 4.25.

<sup>65</sup> Ruellan, para. 4.27.

<sup>66</sup> Ruellan, para. 4.28.

<sup>67</sup> Pélissier and Demers, para. 15.

The ESJ (École supérieure de journalisme) in Lille is the oldest journalism school in France, founded in 1924. This was followed in 1945 by the foundation of the Parisian journalism school CFJ (Centre de formation des journalistes). Both schools gained official recognition by the journalistic profession in 1956. Other journalism schools were founded after World War II.<sup>68</sup>

In France, journalism research and journalism education have strong links, which can be explained by looking at the structure of academic research as well as at the collaboration between researchers and journalists. However, journalism research was for a long time not done within journalism schools.<sup>69</sup> Today, in France, faculty members are responsible for certain degree programs or part of them. This means that during the recruitment process for a specific position, the candidate's experience and research agenda have to fit with the needs of the institution. Colleagues that are responsible for a journalism degree program are usually researchers with a proven expertise in journalism research that would be needed for teaching in journalism programs and for linking journalism research and journalism education,<sup>70</sup> although there are cases where journalists are recruited in order to supervise a degree program.

Today, the fourteen main journalism schools in France are grouped as the Conférence des écoles de journalisme (CEJ) and are all "recognized" by the national committee of employers and the trade unions (Commission paritaire nationale de l'emploi des journalistes, CPNEJ). For students, this status is a guarantee that they will have a quality education and an easier start in their professional career thanks to privileged pathways into the media organizations (stipends, awards, etc.). The collaboration between these fourteen journalism schools as members of the CEJ enables them to have a collective voice. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, their collective effort allowed journalism students to continue their practical journalism sessions even during the strict, nation-wide lockdown or to return to campus earlier than other students as the technical equipment available there was indispensable for their education. Once a year the CEJ schools take part in a national conference on journalistic professions (Conférence nationale des métiers du journalisme, CNMJ), where researchers, journalists, and others discuss current topics in journalism. In 2019, members of the CEJ organized the World Journalism Education Congress, which took place in Paris. Another annual meeting, the Assises du journalisme, independent of the CEJ, reunites researchers and journalists to discuss a main topic that changes each year. These different working groups show how journalism education is linked to a greater debate concerning journalism, in which journalism researchers are involved.

<sup>68</sup> For the history of journalism schools in France, see Chupin, *Les écoles du journalisme*.

<sup>69</sup> Groupe de Recherche sur les Enjeux de la Communication (GRESEC), "La recherche sur le journalisme: Apports et perspectives," *Les Enjeux de l'information et de la communication*, no. 1 (2005).

<sup>70</sup> Jacques Walter et al., eds., *Dynamiques des recherches en sciences de l'information et de la communication* (Conférence permanente des directeur.trices d'Unité de Recherche en Sciences de l'information et de la communication [CPDirSIC], 2018).



The dynamics between journalism studies and journalism education in France and in Germany are quite different: In Germany, journalism was the main interest that led Bücher to found the first institute to analyze journalism in 1916. This was the beginning of German *Zeitungswissenschaft*, which later became German communication studies. In numerous debates, conferences, and publications, German researchers exchange views about the relationship between journalism studies and journalism education and try to find the right balance between practice and theory. In France, journalism education preceded the French science of communication, and journalism research does not exist as a division within the French communication science association (SFSIC). The orientation of journalism schools towards practical education has led to less research in the field of journalism studies, which might explain why the majority of research on journalism has been conducted outside journalism schools<sup>71</sup> and why journalism research in France is so scattered.

<sup>71</sup> Groupe de Recherche sur les Enjeux de la Communication (GRESEC).

### *Journalism Studies in France and Germany Today*

Journalism studies in France and Germany have certain commonalities, and yet when looked at in detail, they are quite different. As seen above, the thought processes underlying the early phases of communication science in Germany (*Kommunikationswissenschaft*) and *sciences de l'information et de la communication* in France were not the same. In Germany, there was a need to better understand journalism at the beginning of the twentieth century, whereas mass media related questions were the starting point of a new academic discipline in France. Several researchers underline the differences between the two sciences of communication as they are represented in each country.<sup>72</sup> The German *Kommunikationswissenschaft* addresses questions regarding public and mass media communication using empirical research methods, whereas the French SIC have a broader understanding of social communication when analyzing the mediation of signification through communication processes.<sup>73</sup>

Even though it is impossible to point out every development within journalism studies in a given country, a look at the tendencies of journalism research and the major readings in journalism studies helps one to better understand the *esprit* of journalism studies in France and in Germany, especially against the background of the history of its development in alliance with academic journalism education. Journalism studies in France and Germany are geographically close, but differ in many respects—with notable differences in their methodological approaches and core texts, for instance.<sup>74</sup> The object of analysis—journalism—is the same, but the way researchers ap-

<sup>72</sup> Averbeck, "Über die Spezifika 'nationaler Theoriediskurse'"; Sarah Cordonnier and Hedwig Wagner, "La discipline au prisme des activités internationales dans les trajectoires de chercheurs en France et en Allemagne," *Hermès* (2013): 133–35; Lisa Bolz, "Recherches sur le journalisme en France et en Allemagne, un dialogue impossible? Regards croisés sur des méthodologies et des développements divergents," *Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication* 18 (2019); Averbeck-Lietz et al., "Terre du milieu?"; Hubé, "À la recherche d'une universalité."

<sup>73</sup> Averbeck, 212.

<sup>74</sup> Averbeck; Bolz; Hubé.

proach and analyze it differs between France and Germany. It is quite astonishing to see that certain topics are well studied in one country, while receiving little attention in the other.

Especially in Germany, many researchers analyzed the history of the academic discipline, and the history and development of journalism studies in particular, and divided the academic field into several different approaches to journalism research. Several handbooks and collaborative books attempt to provide an overview of the many different methodological and theoretical approaches to journalism while at the same time presenting a survey of the large field of journalism as an academic discipline and offering insights into the evolution of journalism research and journalism theory in Germany. In fact, the profusion of handbooks and other such texts in Germany shows that journalism studies in Germany are more structured than in France.<sup>75</sup>

There are different kinds of theories and theoretical approaches to journalism research in Germany.<sup>76</sup> While the early days of German journalism research saw more normative considerations and empiricism, the field from the 1960s on has primarily adopted a sociological orientation, and today's research is mainly theory driven with several theoretical perspectives and approaches. Based on the overviews written by Martin Löffelholz (2004) as well as by Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger (2016), four main perspectives might best describe current research within today's German journalism studies: functionalist system theories, (critical) action theory, integrative social theories, and cultural studies.<sup>77</sup> This list represents neither a chronological development nor a hierarchy among the theories but instead represents the coexistence of multiple theories and the "discontinuous development of a multi-perspective."<sup>78</sup> Löffelholz states that journalism theory is neither a linear process nor a process with different "revolutionary" phases, but rather is characterized by the existence of different theoretical perspectives at the same time, even though the empirical-analytical perspective has been the dominant one in Germany since World War II.<sup>79</sup>

The first perspective is mainly based on Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems (*Systemtheorie*), which has had a major influence on German journalism studies since the 1990s. The system approach to journalism enabled researchers to understand and study journalism within society and journalism as a system in and of itself,<sup>80</sup> alongside other systems such as politics or the economy. Social systems, according to Luhmann, are systems of communication and are defined by the boundary between themselves and the environment, between the interior and the exterior. The distinction between systems is a distinction of meaning (*Sinn*). Considering journalism as a system, therefore, is to define boundaries that distinguish journalism from

<sup>75</sup> Hubé, para. 7.

<sup>76</sup> Löffelholz, 21.

<sup>77</sup> Löffelholz, 62; Löffelholz, "Paradigmengeschichte der Journalismusforschung," in Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger, eds., *Handbuch Journalismustheorien* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016), 54. For an English (but older and shorter and therefore less detailed) text, see: Thomas Hanitzsch, "Journalism Research in Germany: Origins, Theoretical Innovations and Future Outlook," *Brazilian Journalism Research* 2, no. 1 (2006).

<sup>78</sup> Löffelholz, "Theorien des Journalismus," 35.

<sup>79</sup> Löffelholz, 35.

<sup>80</sup> Frank Marcinkowski, *Publizistik als autopoietisches System: Politik und Massenmedien; Eine systemtheoretische Analyse* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 1993); Bernd Blöbaum, *Journalismus als soziales System: Geschichte, Ausdifferenzierung und Verselbständigung* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 1994); Matthias Kohring, "Journalismus als soziales System: Grundlagen einer systemtheoretischen

other areas<sup>81</sup> and to define its structure and functions. The systemic approach underlines the stability of journalistic structures and routines and allows us to understand why new media technologies are not always immediately adopted as “innovation as well as tradition enable evolution.”<sup>82</sup> Different scholars have suggested different ways of applying the theory of social systems to journalism.<sup>83</sup> Siegfried Weischenberg introduced an analytical framework that enabled empirical research on journalism according to the system-theoretical dictum. He suggested four axes for the analysis of journalism: media systems (societal frameworks, historical foundation, professional and ethical standards), media institutions (economic, political, organizational, and technical contexts), media statements (information sources, formats, construction of reality) and media actors (demography of journalists, political orientation, understanding of the journalistic role, professionalization).<sup>84</sup> This way of perceiving and studying journalism is still a current framework among German journalism scholars. During the 2019 conference of the German association for communication science (DGPK) in Münster, researchers even organized a panel to discuss system theory and journalism (“*Journalismus als System* revisited”). In France, in contrast, this approach is not found in journalism research. On the one hand, Luhmann’s books *Social Systems* and *Theory of Society* were only translated into French in 2011 and 2021, and therefore do not (yet) play an important role in French communication and journalism research. On the other hand, the perspective of social systems does not coincide with the *esprit* of French journalism research, which emerged with a more materialistic perspective on journalism and journalistic products taking into consideration both the technical dimension of communication devices and social interaction (“*conception informationnelle*”).<sup>85</sup>

Along with the functionalist system theory, action theories are another of the major perspectives on journalism in German journalism studies. Whereas functionalist system theory excludes the individual actor in the theoretical framework, action theories take into consideration individual and collective actors. Action theory focuses on the “formalized processes which build the frame of reference for journalistic activities and the consumption of news by the public.”<sup>86</sup> Based on Habermas’s *Theory of Communicative Action*, certain researchers explain journalistic action as “social action in both its everyday life and its systemic contexts.”<sup>87</sup> Susanne Fengler, for example, examines economic-rational motives of actors within journalistic contexts.<sup>88</sup> Hans-Jürgen Bucher insists that analyzing journalistic actions and system theory can be complementary, as journalists are not only acting on a personal or individual level but also within social structures. Certain tendencies in journalism cannot be reduced to individual ac-

Journalismustheorie,” in *Theorien des Journalismus*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004); Bernd Blöbaum, “Die Struktur des Journalismus in systemtheoretischer Perspektive,” in *Theorien des Journalismus*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004); Alexander Görke, “Programmierung, Netzbildung, Weltgesellschaft: Perspektiven einer systemtheoretischen Journalismustheorie,” in *Theorien des Journalismus*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004); Wiebke Lossen, “Journalismus als (ent-)differenziertes Problem,” in *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*, ed. Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016).

<sup>81</sup> Matthias Kohring, “Komplexität ernst nehmen: Grundlagen systemtheoretischer Journalismustheorie,” in *Theorien des Journalismus*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000); Kohring, “Autopoiesis und Autonomie des Journalismus: Zur notwendigen Unterscheidung von zwei Begriffen,” *Communication Socialis* 34, no. 1 (2001).

<sup>82</sup> Löffelholz, 27.

<sup>83</sup> Armin Scholl and Siegfried Weischenberg, *Journalismus in der Gesellschaft: Theorie, Methodologie und Empirie* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1998), 76.

<sup>84</sup> Siegfried Weischenberg, *Journalistik: Theorie und Praxis aktueller Medienkommunikation; Band 1, Mediensysteme, Medienethik, Medieninstitutionen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), 69.

<sup>85</sup> Nicolas Pélissier, *Journalisme: avis de recherches; La production scientifique française dans son contexte international* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 2008), 4.

<sup>86</sup> Hanitzsch, 45.

<sup>87</sup> Hanitzsch, 45.

<sup>88</sup> Susanne Fengler, “Journalismus als rationales Handeln,” in *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*, ed. Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016).

tions and have to be considered as collective dynamics—for example, digitalization within journalism.<sup>89</sup>

The huge importance of the systemic point of view within German journalism research can eclipse the journalist from the theoretical framework. In order to go beyond the division between individual and system, or between individual action and structure, several German journalism scholars introduced theoretical models that combine macro and micro level perspectives on journalism, relying, for example, on the actor-structure dynamics by the sociologist Uwe Schimank.<sup>90</sup> Christoph Neuberger points out that journalism should be analyzed on different levels that would include other sociological concepts beyond social system theory.<sup>91</sup> Sabine Schäfer is another researcher who seeks to overcome the division between actor-centered theory and system theory. She suggests that journalism be thought of as a social field based on the theory of Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>92</sup>

Some of the most recent journalism research in Germany is influenced by cultural studies<sup>93</sup> and focuses more on the journalistic product, the consumer perspective, and journalism as cultural discourse<sup>94</sup> and cultural practice.<sup>95</sup>

Even though the research field is quite structured, this should not undermine the multiplicity of points of view in German journalism studies. Perspectives beyond the theoretical approaches discussed here exist, of course. Among these are research on journalism ethics,<sup>96</sup> research on journalism and gender topics,<sup>97</sup> and comparative research,<sup>98</sup> not to mention all the research done in other academic disciplines, such as media studies, for example. Even though German journalism research is mainly theory based, researchers have also been critical of this way of doing research, with some arguing that theory building might predetermine the research and, accordingly, calling for more theory openness.

As the major research perspectives in German journalism studies are based on the texts of German sociologists such as Luhmann, Habermas, and Schimank, whose texts were not received at the same time and in the same way in France, and as major French texts that influenced French journalism studies are not read in Germany—with the exception of Pierre Bourdieu's texts—it is no surprise that each of these countries has a different approach to journalism. Nevertheless, certain points of view and research areas seem similar, such as sociological approaches regarding the main actor in journalism—the journalists—as an individual or as a collective actor<sup>99</sup> and within a journalistic field.<sup>100</sup> More macro perspectives<sup>101</sup> were and are also common, as well as culture-oriented research<sup>102</sup> and the analysis of gender topics<sup>103</sup> in French journalism studies. The field of journalism research in France is not as structured and institutionalized as

<sup>89</sup> Hans-Jürgen Bucher, "Journalismus als kommunikatives Handeln: Grundlagen einer handlungstheoretischen Journalismustheorie," in *Theorien des Journalismus*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004).

<sup>90</sup> For more on this, see Hanitzsch.

<sup>91</sup> Christoph Neuberger, "Journalismus als systembezogene Akteurskonstellation: Grundlagen einer integrativen Journalismustheorie," in *Theorien des Journalismus*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004).

<sup>92</sup> Sabine Schäfer, "Journalismus als soziales Feld: Das relationale Denken Pierre Bourdieus als Grundlage für eine Journalismustheorie," in *Theorien des Journalismus: Ein diskursives Handbuch*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004).

<sup>93</sup> See also Andreas Heep, *Cultural Studies und Medienanalyse: Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2010).

<sup>94</sup> Rudi Renger, "Journalismus als kultureller Diskurs: Grundlagen der Cultural Studies als Journalismustheorie," in *Theorien des Journalismus: Ein diskursives Handbuch*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004); Margreth Lünenborg, "Journalismus als kultureller Diskurs," in *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*, ed. Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016).

<sup>95</sup> Johannes Raabe, "Journalismus als kulturelle Praxis," in *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*, ed. Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016).

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, Barbara Thomaß, "Ethik des Journalismus," in *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*, ed. Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016).

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, Elisabeth Klaus and Margreth Lünenborg, "Der Wandel des Medienangebots als Herausforderung an die Journalismusforschung: Plädoyer für eine kulturorientierte Annäherung," *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft* 48, no. 2 (2000); Elisabeth Klaus, "Von Subjekt und System zur Kultur: Theorien zur Analyse der Geschlechterverhältnisse im Journalismus," in *Theorien des Journalismus: Ein diskursives Handbuch*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004).

in Germany, and the journalism research community is therefore less visible and cohesive. Whereas German journalism studies have a theory-based approach to journalism and media, involving rather strict research protocols (validation or not of a hypothesis), and aim to systematize empirical research results and to obtain a holistic perspective; French journalism research values the heterogeneity of different research approaches.<sup>104</sup> There is not one common way of doing journalism research in France or a common methodology. In fact, the openness of journalism research with respect to other academic disciplines has been one of the main developments in the field since 1996. The qualitative approach, as well as the disciplinary openness (interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary) in France, is seen as a lack of methodological rigor by some German researchers, whereas others perceive this as a chance to pursue other research questions.<sup>105</sup>

While discussion of theory, models, and empiricism is important in German journalism studies and defines this field of research,<sup>106</sup> French journalism research is structured by a large panel of topics that are the core identity of the academic discourse as well as the volitional openness regarding disciplines and research methods. The association of directors of the French research units in communication science (Conférence permanente des directeur.trices d'Unité de Recherche en Sciences de l'information et de la communication, CPDirSIC) has provided an overview of current research in the field of journalism. The five main orientations they have identified are: social and economic aspects of media organizations, the morphology and working conditions of the journalistic profession, media coverage and media representation of events and social identities, media as places of discussion, and the interdisciplinary dimension.<sup>107</sup>

There is more and more research on journalism within French communication research,<sup>108</sup> and journalism is still an interdisciplinary research topic in France. In particular, historians, sociologists, and scholars of literary studies participate in the general research into journalism which underlines the interdisciplinary history of French journalism research. Pélissier and Demers identify three characteristics of French journalism research: the concentration on the activity of journalistic production, which mainly means a focus on journalists and the media message; the collection as well as the editing and the dissemination of journalistic news; and, finally, the internal interactions within newsrooms and external interaction between journalists and other actors in society.<sup>109</sup> The focus on the writing and editing process,<sup>110</sup> with a discourse analytical approach<sup>111</sup> or a semiotic-pragmatic interpretation, as well as on concrete and daily journalistic practices, is specific to French journalism research in comparison to Germany: *écritures* and *pratiques* of journalism are the

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, Frank Esser, "Journalismustheorie und komparative Forschung," in *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*, ed. Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016).

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Rémy Rieffel, *L'élite des journalistes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984); Denis Ruellan, *Le professionnalisme du flou: Identité et savoir-faire des journalistes français* (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1993); Eric Neveu, *Sociologie du journalisme* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001); Roselyne Ringoot and Jean-Michel Utard, *Le Journalisme en invention: Nouvelles pratiques, nouveaux acteurs* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006). See also the issue of *Réseaux* on the sociology of journalists, *Réseaux* 1 (1992).

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2005).

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, Michel Mathien, *Les journalistes et le système médiatique* (Paris: Hachette, 1992).

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, Nicolas Pélissier, "Journalisme et études culturelles: de nouveaux positionnements de la recherche française?" *Questions de communication* 1 (2010).

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, Virginie Julliard, *De la presse à Internet: la parité en question* (Paris: Hermès-Lavoisier, 2012).

<sup>104</sup> Hubé, para. 20–21.

<sup>105</sup> Stefanie Averbek-Lietz, Fabien Bonnet, and Jacques Bonnet, "Le discours épistémologique des Sciences de l'information et de la communication," *Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication* 4 (2014).

<sup>106</sup> Hans Matthias Kepplinger, "Problemdimensionen des Journalismus: Wechselwirkung von Theorie und Empirie," in *Theorien des Journalismus: Ein diskursives Handbuch*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004); Johannes Raabe, "Theoriebildung und empirische Analyse: Überlegungen zu einer hinreichend theorieoffenen, empirischen Journalismusforschung," in *Theorien des Journalismus: Ein diskursives Handbuch*, ed. Martin Löffelholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004).

<sup>107</sup> Walter et al., 19–36.

<sup>108</sup> Christine Leteinturier, "Journalistes et journalismes en France: Bibliographie analytique 1990–2012," Université Panthéon-Assas, 2015.

two terms that characterize a major part of contemporary journalism research in France, especially within the academic discipline of the French SIC.

### Conclusion

It is striking to know that two neighboring countries have such different histories regarding the development of journalism studies and points of view concerning journalism research. On the one hand, German journalism studies position themselves as an empirical social science that uses empirical research methods. Theoretical frameworks shape the scientific discourse. This was not always the case, as the *Zeitungswissenschaft* at the beginning of the twentieth century was more historically oriented. The empirical turning point after World War II was not only inspired by the reception of American empirical social research, but also a way to leave behind Nazi ideology. Journalism and newspapers that were the first research topics in Germany underwent the same evolution towards an empirical orientation.

In France, research on journalism mainly came after the institutionalization of French communication science, and mass media were the primary topic of interest in the 1960s. The history of journalism education and the orientation towards the practical side of the profession enables us to understand why it took so long before journalism research was an important part of communication studies in France and why journalism research remains scattered today.

Research practices and research habits depend on many factors, whether it be the history and the development of the discipline as an academic institution, certain turning points, or the influence of earlier researchers and their opinions. The different dynamics between journalism research and journalism education in France and Germany hark back to such factors and can explain the gap that seems to exist between the two countries, despite efforts on the part of some communication science scholars actively involved in the French-German academic discussion today to establish a “terre de milieu” where not only the differences but also the complementarities would be acknowledged.<sup>112</sup>

All in all, the different dynamics between journalism studies and journalism education, as well as between France and Germany, oblige researchers to recognize the impact that their own education and integration into a particular academic discipline can have on their ability to truly understand the habits of a different research community.

<sup>109</sup> Pélissier and Demers, para. 5–9.

<sup>110</sup> Jean-François Tétu and Maurice Mouillaud, *Le journal quotidien* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1989); Marc Lits and Adeline Wrona, “Permanence et renouveau des recherches sur l’écriture journalistique,” *Revue française des sciences de l’information et de la communication* 5 (2014).

<sup>111</sup> Patrick Charaudeau, *Le discours d’information médiatique: La construction du miroir social* (Paris: Nathan, 1997).

<sup>112</sup> Averbek-Lietz et al., “‘Terre du milieu’?,” 363–80.

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