

Journalism in Power Relations and Pierre Bourdieu's Concept of "Field": A Case Study of the Coverage of the 1999 Group Bullying Murder Case in Tochigi Prefecture

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Introduction

Japan's media are under severe attack from the authorities and the public. Journalists in Japan say that such trends are symbolized by bills containing the potential to regulate journalistic activities under the guise of protecting human rights. Courts are adopting tougher attitudes toward media coverage when they judge that such coverage impugns people's reputations and infringes on their privacy. Such trends have come to the fore with the upsurge of the public's distrust of the media. I suggested earlier that theorizing about journalistic activities is needed, because the fact that the public is losing sight of the *raison d'être* for journalism will seriously damage freedom of expression, which I believe to be the base of democracy and freedom (Ito 2005:56-58).

One of the most well-known criticisms of Japanese journalism is that of Karel van Wolferen in *The Enigma of Japanese Power*. He severely criticized Japanese newspapers for contributing to the "system" of maintaining the existing power structure (van Wolferen 1989:93-100). Criticism comes from journalists working in the Japanese media, too. One major criticism is against the Kisha club (press club) system, which is said to be unique to Japan. As the club membership of some authorities including police agencies is still limited, for all practical purposes, to journalists of major newspapers and TV stations, the club functions as a barrier preventing the dissemination of information to journalists working for magazines and foreign presses.

Those criticisms are worth listening to. It seems, however, that such criticism sometimes does not go far beyond criticism for the sake of criticism. Van Wolferen's remarks are relevant in many ways, but the presses still have a history of uncovering things the authorities want to hide and pushing the powers that be to work for the good of the public or individuals in need of help. Van Wolferen's analysis does not explain why such cases happen from time to time.

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It seems that the criticism of Japanese journalism that we often hear today starts with an idealistic image of journalism and then criticizes actual practices for failing to meet that ideal. However, except for rare cases, the press organizations are basically business corporations working for profits. Journalists working for the major media are normally hired as employees with stable positions in the life-time employment system. With these assumptions, it goes without saying that we are always discouraged by the actual activities of journalists, viewing them as being insufficient at doing their jobs in a way to match their public mission. What should not be overlooked, however, is that society is still moved by journalistic activities that uncover hidden scandals of persons in power.

I do not argue that Japanese journalism is better or worse than that of other developed nations. Journalists are always targets of criticism, even in foreign countries. The positive research of social science normally starts with the realistic observation that people are not always rational, but when it comes to journalism, we tend to start with the ideal, resulting in our being discouraged with the reality.

Therefore, I would like to suggest the need to change that point of view. We should first discern the conditions restraining journalists and the media, and then focus more on exceptional cases, that is, cases of journalists and journalistic organizations (media) to be praised, or cases where journalistic activities had significant impact on the authorities and the public, to explore how those cases are possible under actual conditions.

We should not, however, be satisfied with addressing case studies only. We must address challenges to theorizing about journalistic activities to understand how such exceptional journalistic activities are possible. A back-and-forth movement between theories and case studies is indispensable.

To consider conditions restraining journalists and the media, we need to look at the role of journalists and the media in relation to the state and society, as journalists and the media are destined to work within the state and society.

Susan J. Pharr once pointed out that the literature of political science and media studies suggested how extraordinarily complex and varied media roles are, and that the contradictory nature of their interpretations poses a formidable problem in attempting to ask and answer questions about the relationship of the media to society and the state. (Pharr 1996: 23-24) Then she continued as follows:

The media, after all, include a wide range of actors in a variety of relationships to institutions, so it is not surprising that collectively they adopt no single consistent stance in relation to state and society. (Pharr 1996: 24)

I completely agree with Pharr's remark. Although she used the image of the "trickster" to explain the contradictory nature of media, I would say that what is more relevant in the situation where the public tends to lose sight of the *raison d'être*

for journalism is not the need to introduce a general concept to explain such a contradictory nature of journalism, but the need to develop an analytical framework, based on case studies, to describe and understand the nature of journalism.

Journalists and the media can be both diverse and uniform. While journalism is supposed to be independent from other organizations or individuals, it is always under the influence and pressure of outside powers. In relation to the outside world, the world of journalism is not static, but dynamic, and it is always filled with contradictions. We need to grasp this contradictory and dynamic nature of the relationship between journalism and the outside world in theory, based on positive research.

That could be paraphrased in the following way. The world of journalism has the potential to be both for and against the Establishment, to be both uniform and diverse, and to be both independent of and subservient to the outside world. The challenge is not to establish a theory that ignores such contradictions, but to elucidate the mechanism of how and when some aspects with contradictory potential prevail over others.

Based on such basic points of view, I will review previous case studies of journalistic activities in Japan and then analyze how journalism might have had an impact on society, especially on the police administration in a 1999 group bullying and murder case in Tochigi Prefecture. Then I will mention the concept of Pierre Bourdieu's "field" (*champ* in French) as a tool for the theory and analysis of journalism.

Review of Previous Case Studies

Studying actual cases to analyze the process by which journalism has had an impact on the authorities and society in Japan is a rather minor field of study. Campbell stated as follows:

The political science literature contains many studies of media and politics, and many detailed case studies of particular governmental decisions. However, the former rarely discuss actual decision-making processes, and the latter usually mention the media only in passing, or in any case do not see them as an important direct cause of policy change. (Campbell 1996: 188)

Campbell mentions Hideo Otake's analysis of automotive-safety recalls in 1969 as the best example. (Campbell 1996: 190)

In that case, the *Asahi Shimbun*, one of Japan's five national newspapers and the one with the second largest circulation, uncovered that Japan's major car manufacturers did not recall defective cars even after they learned about the defects. Press coverage of the issue drew much public attention. Otake analyzed relations

between the actors including newspapers, describing the process by which the case became an important social issue. (Otake 1996: 29-72)

Although his analysis is enlightening, I can see some shortcomings, which are also common to other studies.

First, among the media, Otake analyzed only newspapers. Moreover, we can see additional case studies wherein researchers analyzed only newspapers to discuss the media as a whole. Such a focus on newspapers becomes more and more irrelevant for understanding the world of journalism as the number of the media available to the public increases.

Second, Otake examined the general influence of newspapers on the political process and did not pay much attention to journalistic activities and differences at individual presses. He mentioned that the *Asahi Shimbun* led the coverage of the issue, but he did not examine how other newspapers followed the *Asahi Shimbun*. He also failed to mention much about the process of newspapers' information gathering and reporting. He did not analyze how actors involved in the political process tried to manipulate the media and how journalists or newspapers overcome the risks of information manipulation. Instead, he paid more attention to general aspects of newspapers like their high research capability, their richness of human resources with reporting techniques, accumulation of information and so forth. In other words, he ignored the subjectivities or self-direction of journalists and individual media. Pharr pointed out that the fact that much of the general literature of political science ignores the media casts the media in the role as more or less passive transmitters among the various real players in politics. (Pharr 1996:20) I would say that this remark is also true for Otake's work.

The tendency for researchers to discuss the general nature of the media and not pay much attention to differences among the media including newspapers prevails in many articles analyzing journalism. Newspapers are different. And even though they tend to report in a similar way, there are lots of different media including TV and weekly magazines. The world of journalism and the media is manifold, but researchers tend to ignore that diversity.

Third, Otake focused on the political process as a whole and gave media a minor role. As his work is based on political science, it is natural that he is mainly interested in the actors who seem to be more directly involved in the process, such as auto manufacturers and the union of car dealers. However, from my point of view, that is a shortcoming for theorizing about journalism.

Other works have also analyzed journalistic activities in the context of political and social communications.

Campbell examined the theoretical framework for locating the role of the media in the process of policy change and then analyzed how major players of welfare issues such as officials of the Ministry of Health and Welfare and intellectuals affiliated with the ministry used the media to make the "aging problem" part of the

public agenda. (Campbell 1996: 187-212) As his work focused on the side of information sources like ministry officials, it seems to me that he did not much take into account the self-direction of journalists and the media. He also discussed the activities of media as a whole and neglected the diversity of journalists and the media.

Using his own fieldwork, David E. Groth examined how a citizens' group movement that opposed construction of the *shinkansen* (bullet train) and the pollution (noise and vibration) caused by its operation used the media as a resource for their movement. (Groth 1996: 213-241) His analysis is enlightening, as he took into account the actual interaction between the media and citizens as well as differences among journalistic organizations. However, he mostly analyzed only the role of major newspapers, although he mentioned minor media like the organ paper of the Japan Communist Party and local papers. His analysis also focused on the side of citizens and did not much take into account the self-direction of journalists and the media.

Maggie Farley explored the process of how political scandals were uncovered by the media, studying four cases such as former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's questionable financial dealings and his involvement in the Lockheed scandal and the bribery scandal of the Recruit Company's transfer of shares to major politicians. (Farley 1996: 133-163) Although she mentioned magazines and free-lance journalists, Farley focused only on the failings of Japanese newspapers due to the Kisha club (press club) system.

Yutaka Oishi's studies are the rare case of trying to bridge the gap between theory and case studies in the process by which journalism and the media have an impact on the authorities and society from the point of view of journalism study in Japan. He tried to incorporate the "agenda building" model of the political process study into his journalism study, an attempt that should be evaluated highly, as no other Japanese researcher seems to have taken that approach. (Oishi 1998) However, his studies have the same shortcomings as those mentioned before. He analyzed only newspapers and regarded newspapers' coverage as if they were uniform. His studies also lack the viewpoint that press coverage is created through the interaction or power relations of journalists, media, information sources and the public. So, for example, he never considered the issue of "information manipulation" in his analysis of press coverage of a bill to facilitate the construction of resort facilities all over Japan in the 1980s. (Oishi 1998: 210-236)

These researchers including Oishi made the same mistake of seeing the world of journalism as uniform. One reason must be that Oishi analyzed only newspapers. Making newspapers represent the world of journalism in Japan is insufficient because people watch TV much more than they read newspapers and because quite a few news magazines sometimes influence the authorities and society through "scoops" that newspapers cannot uncover.

From the examination of previous research and its shortcomings, the basic principal to be included in a theory analyzing actual journalistic activities becomes clear. The theory should be a model for analyzing the dynamic process of the interaction between journalists, media, information sources and the public, taking into account the diversities of journalism and media. If we take into account “information manipulation”, this interaction must be said to be one of “power relations”. Of course, we cannot ignore structural conditions restraining journalistic activities including legal regulations and economic conditions. This basic principal must be justified and should be more clearly understood through the case study that I do in the following sections.

The 1999 Group Bullying Murder Case in Tochigi: The Reticence of the Media and Factors Behind It

Media coverage of the group bullying murder incident in Tochigi Prefecture in 1999 was a case where media coverage had a big impact on the actions of the Tochigi Prefectural Police by making the case a “social problem”. Here “social problem” means a problem to be resolved by society because it symbolizes a more general problem of society, not an unfortunate incident that happens to one individual. The media paid little attention to the case right after it became public, but the coverage of one newspaper after the trial began lit a fire in the minds of other journalists and media to report on the case. But the newspaper’s coverage cannot be viewed as a kind of “scoop”, as basically the coverage was based on facts uncovered at the trial and the press conference by the bereaved family. It seems that journalists and the media played a double role of burying the issue as an unfortunate incident and also making the issue a “social problem”.

The outline of the group bullying murder case in Tochigi is as follows:

Masakazu Sudo was killed on December 2, 1999, by three 19-year-old juveniles and one 17-year-old juvenile. The 19-year-old victim had been confined and suffered severe group bullying for two months before being killed. The parents repeatedly called the local police to try to save their son, but the police ignored their request. During the trial, news about the horrible group bullying and police negligence was uncovered. Although the Tochigi Prefectural Police initially insisted that they had made no mistake, they later retracted the statement and admitted they had not taken proactive measures to find the victim before he was killed.

As the above explanation indicates, the police changed their stance and admitted their mistakes. It should be reasonable to infer that the power to cause such changes came from media coverage, as various media reported the case, including information about police negligence, which made the case a “social problem”, pushed the public and made police officials involved change the official police stance. However, the case did not attract much media attention right after the suspects were arrested.

Initially, the case was just an unfortunate incident that befell one unlucky person. It was not until May 2000, five months after the murder happened, that the case drew the attention of the Japanese public in general.

If we look at the process by which the case became a “social problem”, we can understand that media coverage was created by the power relations between the information sources (especially the police, in this case) and journalists (or the media). And the power relations changed during the time that more and more media became interested in the case.

Police learned about the murder when the 17-year-old boy went to a police office under the jurisdiction of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police to confess. He was involved only in the final phase of the two-month-long group bullying and went to the police in Tokyo as he lived there. Therefore, the case became public through an announcement by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. The major media including TV and newspapers reported the case just as the police had announced it: A 19-year-old juvenile was killed by fellow members of a motorcycle gang. The announcement regarding the relation of the victim to the suspects was later found out to be totally baseless, but right after the arrest of the suspects, the media reported the wrong information, just as the police had announced it.

Gentaro Saigusa, a journalist at the *Sankei Shimbun*, the paper with the smallest circulation of the five major national newspapers, wrote that news of the case never became a topic of interest to journalists and people in Tochigi, where the incident took place. This is because the public tends to partly blame victims and pay little attention to cases involving a member of a motorcycle gang being killed by fellow gang members. Thus, the murder case was not thought of as “newsworthy” initially. (Saigusa 2002: 96)

The case failed to enter the public agenda because initial media coverage was based on an erroneous announcement by the police. How did the erroneous reporting and announcement happen? Two answers to that question come to mind. First is the Tochigi Prefectural Police’s intentional manipulation of information to hide their negligence. Second is a structural factor concerning criminal cases involving juveniles under the framework of Japan’s Juvenile Law.

Akio Kuroki, author of a book about the case, pointed out, “The announcement was clearly intentional manipulation of information by the Tochigi Prefectural Police”. (Kuroki 2001:231) He supposed that the Tokyo Metropolitan Police must have made inquiries about the identity of the victim and three major suspects because they were residents of Tochigi prefecture. The information about the identity of the victim and suspects could not have come from anywhere but the Tochigi Prefectural Police. If the bereaved family learned that the media falsely reported the victim as “a member of a motorcycle gang”, they would distrust journalists and never contact journalists to publicize their anger toward the police. Therefore, the prefectural police gave wrong information to the Tokyo Metropolitan Police to make them

announce false information, which led media to report the false information.

This is Kuroki's conjecture, and I cannot confirm the intention of the Tochigi Prefectural Police. However, it was confirmed the police lied to the victim's parents and the public in the course of the case going on the public agenda.

When the parents accused the police of negligence at the press conference held after the first trial, the police responded on the same day that their handling of the case had been appropriate and they could detect no errors.

The parents claimed, among other things, that an inadvertent act by the police had triggered the killing of their son. When the parents went to the police office at Ishibashi, under the jurisdiction of the Tochigi Prefectural Police, they received a call on their mobile phone from the suspects. A police officer took the mobile phone from the parents and talked with the suspect, identifying himself a police officer. As the suspects thought that the police were investigating their confinement of the victim, they decided to kill him to conceal any evidence.

In the May 27 written reply to the parents' accusation, however, the Tochigi Prefectural Police denied that fact. It was not until May 29 that they admitted to their misconduct.

A structural factor that led to the Tokyo Metropolitan Police announcing incorrect information can also be mentioned. Japan's Juvenile Law prescribes that a person under the age of 20 is a juvenile. The law's fundamental principle is not to punish an assailant based on a strict confirmation of facts, but to protect and rehabilitate him or her. Therefore, it is said that the police tend not to be so proactive in investigating such cases. Thus, the police report cases based on the confession of suspects, and the media just reiterate police announcements, practices that cause mental distress to victims and their families, as suspects tend to distort the truth to their convenience. (Kuronuma 1999:113-114)

We must also consider the nature of Japan's media organizations (especially newspapers and TV), which report incorrect information based on police announcements. In Japan's newspaper industry, five national newspapers and one powerful regional paper in each prefecture, called a prefectural paper, compete with each other in almost every prefecture. As regional newspapers widely cover national news using Kyodo News, a news agency operated with membership fees of regional newspapers, there is not so clear a functional diversification between regional papers and national papers. They compete aggressively with each other for the same readership. Such intense competition in the market causes fierce competition for news. If newspapers put more emphasis on the speed of reporting than on correctness of news, they may be sued for defamation after incorrectly reporting an incident. According to judicial precedents, however, news coverage based on police announcements is basically exempt from the liability of defamation. As long as the media report the news according to police announcements, they feel safe.

Those structural factors, as well as factors unique to the incident, were behind

the erroneous reporting of the group bullying murder case right after it was uncovered. However, the case initially ignored by the media as well as the public greatly drew their attention in the end. What caused these changes in the media coverage? I will consider that question in the following section.

Upsurge of Media Coverage and Factors Behind It

Right after the case was uncovered and announced by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, newspapers (dated December 6, 1999) and television stations reported it the same way as the police announcement had. (Saigusa 2002: 94-95) In that sense, the media coverage was uniform.

After the first report, the *Asahi Shimbun* reported in the evening edition of December 28, 1999, that the original announcement was not correct and that it had been learned that the victim had nothing to do with the motorcycle gang and was just a colleague of one of the suspects. The article also reported that the victim had suffered extreme bullying that included having his entire body burned before he was killed. It seems that the paper's reporter based the article on information from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, as the leading part of the article stated those facts had been learned by the investigative headquarters of the Mita police office of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. However, the article did not cause any response from the other media.

The case became a "social problem" through a series of 15 articles in the Tochigi local pages of the *Sankei Shimbun*, begun on April 7, 2000, after the trial had started and the victim's parents had voiced accusations against the Tochigi Prefectural Police. The articles, which ran every day until April 21, did not start with the information exclusively given to the reporter of the paper. The author of the articles, Saigusa, wrote in a book on the incident that he learned the case was totally different from that first reported by the media and was exceptionally atrocious when he attended the first trial. (Saigusa 2002:98)

As mentioned earlier, the parents of the victim had voiced accusations against the prefectural police at the press conference after the first trial. Newspapers like the *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* all reported the parents' accusation against the prefectural police as well as the police's denial of the accusation in the local pages on March 15, 2000. The three major national newspapers never tried on their own to confirm whose statement—that of the police or the parents—was correct.

Only the *Sankei Shimbun*'s Saigusa became interested in the incident. After he and some colleagues investigated the case, they started the 15-article series on April 7, 2000. As the national papers allocate one or two pages to local news, the 15-article series on local pages must have been quite a big challenge for them. However, the articles did not draw much attention of either the public or other journalists working

in the prefecture. Saigusa wrote as follows:

What bothered me is not so much the sarcasm voiced to us by the executives of the prefectural police as the fact that we received little response from readers even after half of the 15-article series had run. The articles appeared only on local pages in Tochigi Prefecture. Although the cruel incident took place in the prefecture, the series of articles seemed to cause almost no response by the readers. (Saigusa 2002: 150)

What changed this situation was that other media followed up on the *Sankei Shimbun* coverage. After the weekly magazine *Hoseki* reported the case in its May 10 issue, the weekly photo news magazine *FOCUS* ran a two-page article containing the gist of the case and a photo of the victim. The issue appeared on the stands on May 17. The article was said to have caused other media people to learn the alleged truth of the case. Following the *FOCUS* article, TV news and variety programs began reporting the case. Saigusa wrote about the impact of the coverage by magazines and TV programs as follows:

The situation changed drastically after the photo magazine “FOCUS” [no longer published] carried an article on the case, after reading our article. That was early May. The murder of Masakazu Sudo suddenly became nationwide news. Not only TV news programs but also variety shows started to cover the case, and the parents of Sudo received requests for interviews almost every day. The trial had once drawn a small audience, but reporters from Tokyo rushed for seats set aside for the public. Local journalists like us had to draw lots for admission tickets. I saw the power of magazines and television, which is far beyond that of newspapers, working there. (Saigusa 2002: 150)

As the above explanation shows, the *Sankei Shimbun* articles were read by magazine reporters or editors, followed by TV journalists, and the case became nationwide news.

I would like to consider here if Saigusa is right when he stated, “I saw the power of magazines and television, which is far beyond that of newspapers, working there”, after the case became nationwide news.

The *FOCUS* report was based on the *Sankei Shimbun* articles and basically does not include new information except mug shot of two of the four suspects, with their eyes blocked out in accordance with the Juvenile Law, which prohibits anyone from publicly identifying juveniles suspected of crimes. Without the *FOCUS* article, TV news and variety shows would not have covered the incident. Were it not for the series of articles in the *Sankei Shimbun*, the magazine and TV coverage could not have taken place. In that sense, the *Sankei Shimbun* coverage influenced the reports

in magazines and on TV. But as long as only one national newspaper was covering the news, the case could not enter the public agenda. If the other media had not followed up, the case would have been forgotten by the public.

If we think that way, the point is that it is not very meaningful to deliberate on the influence of an individual medium. What is important is the fact that journalists and the media often refer to each other as they work in the world of journalism. This world of journalists and the media as a whole have the power to influence the authorities and society. Pierre Bourdieu referred to this world and its network as a “field”, an idea I will address in the concluding part of this article.

To think more about the cross-reference aspect of journalists and the media, the situation of the media industry in Japan should be mentioned.

Newspapers sell well in Japan. In no other country do major newspapers enjoy so much circulation. According to the statistics of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, Japan’s total newspaper circulation, as of 2004, is more than 53 million (source: <http://www.pressnet.or.jp/english/index.htm>). The circulation of the five national newspapers—the *Asahi*, *Mainichi*, *Yomiuri*, *Nihon Keizai (Nikkei)* and *Sankei*—accounted for slightly more than 50% of total newspaper circulation. In particular, three major newspapers—the *Asahi*, *Mainichi* and *Yomiuri*—are not full members of the major wire service, Kyodo News, and have branch offices with journalists in every prefecture to cover all the news in Japan on their own. Nikkei and Sankei use Kyodo News services but they also have their own journalists at major cities all over Japan. On the other hand, as mentioned before, basically one powerful regional newspaper has the lion’s share in each prefecture market, except in the prefectures around Tokyo and Osaka. The *Shimotsuke Shimbun* is the regional paper in Tochigi. Circulations of newspapers in Tochigi Prefecture are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Circulations of newspapers in Tochigi Prefecture (as of the latter half of 2004, Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations) (number of households was 701,919 as of March 2004)

	Asahi	Mainichi	Yomiuri	Nikkei	Sankei	Tokyo	Shimotsuke
Circulation	82,846	48,986	204,728	30,662	44,069	6,282	315,612
Share (%)	11.3%	6.7%	27.9%	4.2%	6.0%	0.9%	43.0%

News magazines have much smaller circulations. Japan’s two major weekly news magazines are *Shukan Shincho* and *Shukan Bunshun*, both with circulations of from 500,000 to 600,000 for the past several years. In Japan, there is no respectable news magazine such as *Der Spiegel* in Germany. News magazines in Japan tend to pay great attention to scandals involving celebrities. They are often criticized for sensationalism in their coverage of criminal cases. *FOCUS* was criticized for

downplaying people’s human rights in its reportage and ceased publication in 2001 after much litigation for defamation. The magazine’s circulation was said to have been little more than 150,000 when it stopped publication. As news magazines have limited circulations and limited human resources compared to newspapers, they cannot station their own journalists all over Japan and must depend on the newspaper network for news.

Japan’s major TV stations consist of a public broadcaster, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), and private TV stations. NHK, operated with fees charged to citizens, is a very big organization, boasting 8 channels for TV and radio broadcasting. On the other hand, it is said that NHK can be influenced by politicians and bureaucrats as it is under the control of the Ministry of General Affairs as well as the Diet for approval of its annual budget.

The first private broadcaster started operations in 1963. Television’s share of the advertising market exceeded that of newspapers in the middle of 1970s and in 2004 accounted for more than 50% among the four mass media (TV, radio, newspapers and magazines). Five major broadcasters are called “key stations,” with their headquarters in Tokyo and affiliated stations all over Japan. According to the regulations of the Ministry of General Affairs, a private TV station is basically not allowed to do business outside the prefecture where it is established. The metropolitan area of Tokyo and surrounding prefectures are an exception, and key stations cover the whole metropolitan area. Not only news programs but also variety shows carry news. Like magazines, variety shows are often criticized for sensationalism.

Although broadcasters are very powerful in economic terms and key stations have network systems covering all of Japan on their own, their human resources for journalistic activities are much more limited than those of newspapers.

Tochigi Prefecture is included in the metropolitan area covered by the key stations of Tokyo. The total number of employees working at reporting sections in each key station is listed in Table 2. It is supposed that most of the reporting staff members are assigned to Tokyo to cover the Diet, national ministries and big business. Looking at the number of employees at reporting sections of the *Shimotsuke Shimbun* who are able to concentrate on covering local news, we can see the richness of the regional paper in terms of human resources.

Table 2: Number of employees working at reporting sections in key stations and those of the *Shimotsuke Shimbun* (as of 2003, source: Nihon Shinbun Kyokai 2004)

	NTV	TBS	Fuji	TV Asahi	TV Tokyo	Shimotsuke
Number of employees	237	186	175	278	131	155

As the above shows, newspapers, TV and magazines have different industry backgrounds and different networks of human resources available for their journalistic activities. But as I mentioned before, the various media and their networks of human resources are not discrete. While they compete with each other, they sometimes cooperate with each other. Although magazine journalists always complain that they are not admitted to the Kisha clubs (press clubs), they still depend on the wide network of newspaper journalists to obtain useful information. The wide network of newspaper journalists is indispensable to magazine journalists.

The newspaper sector is burdened with a strong sense of public mission and social responsibility as a public medium because of its high circulation and penetration rate. Television is regulated by the Broadcasting Law not to lessen public safety and harm public morals, among other things. Consciousness of their public mission and social responsibility as well as legal regulations require newspapers and television to observe self-regulation and avoid sensationalism. However, readers and audiences are sometimes not satisfied with such well-restrained news coverage. Magazines and TV variety shows appeal to the public's simple emotion for justice to punish criminals as well as to people's curiosity.

In other words, each medium is functionally diversified in the "marketplace of ideas" and develops its own capacity to serve the demands of the public.

What we saw in the course of the group bullying murder case in Tochigi Prefecture becoming a "social problem" was that the functionally diversified media and journalists referred to and used each other to report the case. The diversity of the marketplace of ideas or the existence of a functionally diversified world of journalism enabled the case to enter the public agenda and become a "social problem".

Before I move on to the concluding section, I should mention one more thing. In the end, the group bullying murder case in Tochigi Prefecture received wide press coverage. That happened because journalists and the media decided that the case would attract the public's attention. Why was it thought the public would pay much attention to the case? Saigusa explained as follows:

These days, when atrocious crimes by juveniles do not surprise us much, lots of attention was paid to the case because the crime plotted by the three juveniles was grisly and atrocious enough that capital punishment might be warranted. (Saigusa 2002: 7)

It is true that most of the 15-article series in the Sankei Shimbun was dedicated to a description of the crime itself, not mistakes by the police. While a series of police scandals came to light around 1999, the atrocity of this case might have had more emotional impact on a public that hates grisly crimes. However, coverage appealing to the emotions of the public can be very close to sensationalism and, by inference, a method of reporting that is difficult for newspapers and TV news

program to use. Therefore, we can see clearly that major national newspapers like the *Asahi*, *Mainichi* and *Yomiuri* focused on the police scandal in reporting the case and rarely criticized the criminal conduct of the suspects and the Juvenile Law protecting those juvenile suspects, although I cannot prove that with objective data here due to the limitation of space. We might infer that the emotional needs of a public that hates grisly and atrocious crimes can be satisfied through coverage by magazines and TV variety shows, both of which are often criticized for sensationalism.

Pierre Bourdieu's Field Theory and a Theory of Journalism

In reviewing previous studies, I remarked that they tend to make newspapers represent journalism as a whole and to argue for a general nature of the media, downplaying the diversity of the world of journalism. Then I examined an actual case in which journalism had an impact on the authorities and society and the mechanism that works in the process of a case becoming a "social problem". I suggested that journalists and the media work under pressure from information sources, as seen in the group bullying murder case in Tochigi. The functionally diversified network of journalists and the media functioned to overcome manipulation of information in that case.

Those analyses were made possible by thinking that media coverage appears only through the interaction and power relations between journalists, media, information sources and the public, with structural conditions restraining their activities.

As a step to formalize such basic concepts of my analysis, it is useful to refer to the concept of "field" (*champ* in French), presented by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Here, field can be understood as a world composed of a group of actors having something in common and factors unique within the group like rules and senses of values. In the context of discussing the field of politics, Bourdieu explained the concept of field as follows:

Talking of politics as field means that the field of politics is a micro-cosmos (I cite this word from Raymond Barre), that is, relatively autonomous and small social world in the grand social world. We can find many of the same kind of proprieties, relations, actions and processes in the micro-cosmos as in the grand society, but the processes and phenomena take a particular form in the micro-cosmos. What is included in the concept of autonomy is: a field is an autonomous micro-cosmos in the social macro-cosmos. (Bourdieu 2000: 52)

A field is autonomous, but it is not stable. Bourdieu stated, "A field is a field of forces, and a field of fighting to transform the power relations." (Bourdieu 2000:

61)

Each field is defined by the relations between the actors in the field and the relations between the field and other fields or the actors of other fields. The field of journalism enjoys less independence of other fields, compared to other fields. The field of journalism tries to put other fields under its jurisdiction, but it is also highly vulnerable to the pressures of other fields. Regarding such characteristics of the field of journalism, Bourdieu wrote as follows:

Journalists—I should say the field of journalism—owe their importance in the social world to the fact that they actually monopolize the instruments of production and diffusion of information to a large degree, and through instruments, they also monopolize the access of ordinary people as well as other cultural producers including servants, artists and writers to what was once called “public space”, that is, the ground of diffusion. (Bourdieu 1996: 52)

The field of journalism has a particularity: It is much more dependent on the external forces than any other field of cultural production, such as the field of mathematics, the field of literature, the field of judiciary, the field of science and so forth. It directly depends on the demands of actors outside of the journalistic fields. It is more dependent on the sanction of market and to popularity, probably, than the field of politics. (Bourdieu 1996: 61)

While the field of journalism has a contradictory nature, the field of journalism is a field of cross-reference:

Nobody reads so many newspapers as journalists do, while journalists tend to think that everybody reads as many newspapers as they do.----- For the journalists, reading newspapers is an indispensable activity and the review of presses is a tool of their work: to know what they say, we have to know what the other said. This is one of the mechanisms to cause uniformity in the products offered to us. (Bourdieu 1996: 24)

Bourdieu’s remarks are very insightful. I would like to emphasize, however, that such cross-reference also creates diversity among journalists and the media, as they must provide readers or their audience with information that is not the same as others did. Cross-reference can cause uniformity and diversity at the same time.

As the field of journalism is filled with the potential of such contradictions, it is very misleading to generalize the nature of journalism by ignoring such contradictions and diversity. Therefore, we need to accumulate studies based on actual cases where power relations between several actors including journalists and the media produce media coverage.

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