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*To my mama Ljiljana and tata Ratko,
the bravest, most resilient, and loving people I know.*

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Abstract

Since the mid-twentieth century, journalism scholars have studied how journalists understand their roles and, more recently, what audiences expect of them. However, within this scholarship several shortcomings exist: 1) roles and expectations have primarily been studied separately; 2) research has overwhelmingly focused on political journalism over popular journalism; 3) research rarely accounts for the impact of social identity on roles and expectations or has treated identity categories as independent variables; and 4) scholarship has been predicated on relatively limited theoretical engagement, a Western-Liberal understanding of journalism, and quantitative approaches. To address these gaps, this study draws extensively on role theory (Biddle 1979) to examine how roles and expectations shape one another. It studies how both political and lifestyle journalists reinforce/challenge boundaries, and relies on intersectionality theory (Crenshaw 1989; 1990) and Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of 'capital' and 'habitus' to examine how identity categories (race-class-gender) shape roles and expectations. In studying journalists and audiences in South Africa, it challenges existing understandings of roles and expectations informed by normative Western theories. This study utilises 48 qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with political and lifestyle journalists and eight audience focus groups with 58 participants. Three key findings emerge: 1) Roles and expectations shape one another, with varied levels of (in)congruence between journalists' role conceptions, their imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations. Greater levels of incongruence exist between political journalists and their audiences, compared to lifestyle journalists and their audiences; 2) Political and lifestyle journalists share key roles, suggesting boundary-blurring, but also evoke explicit gendered boundary markers; 3) Social identity shapes audiences' expectations and prompts narratives of 'othering'. The theoretical implications of this research include re-evaluating how we study roles and expectations, acknowledging how identity shapes journalism's occupational ideals and audience expectations, and exposing how portions of the public are rendered (in)visible to journalism's dominant ideology.

Keywords: Role theory, journalistic roles, audience expectations, intersectionality, boundaries, South Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Information

The concept of journalistic roles is central to understanding journalism's identity and function in society. It is through specific roles and practices involved in conveying news to the public that journalists have set themselves apart from the broader domain of communication, thus carving out a journalistic field and with it a sense of societal authority in providing a public service (Donsbach 2010). Perhaps it is for this reason that there has been no shortage of scholarship examining journalists' roles, with three significant areas of research having emerged: journalistic role conceptions (how journalists cognitively understand their role in society), role performance (how journalists enact their roles, visible in news products), and role expectations (what others, primarily audiences, expect from journalists) (Tandoc and Duffy 2016). Of the three key strands – conceptions, expectations, performance – studies of how journalists conceive of their roles have the longest history in scholarship, amassing a significant body of empirical and conceptual scholarship over the past 60 years. More recently, scholars have become concerned with examining levels of congruence and incongruence among the three strands. Studies that have explored the extent to which journalists' role conceptions are visible or detectable in the news they produce have detected both congruence and incongruence, noting influences at organisational (editorial) and societal (political) levels that contribute to discrepancies (Mellado et al. 2016; Mellado and van Dalen 2013; van Dalen et al. 2012; Carpenter et al. 2016). These studies also point to much broader changes in journalism brought about by technology, specifically, how technological innovation has changed journalistic practices and introduced greater competition and economic pressures – a development commonly referred to as the crisis of journalism.

These technological changes have also been felt in the changing relationship between journalists and audiences, prompting scholars to examine levels of (in)congruence between journalists' role conceptions and what audiences expect from journalists (Loosen et al. 2020; Schmidt and Loosen 2015; Tandoc and Duffy 2016), finding both parallels and divergences. Digital developments and technological innovation over the past 30 years have dramatically changed the relationship between journalists and audiences, enabling levels of online interaction and communication that were not previously possible (Karlsson et al. 2018). Feedback mechanisms and tools such as web analytics and reader comments reveal to

journalists directly and indirectly audiences' evaluations, beliefs, and feelings about news, which in turn shape how journalists perceive their audiences and adjust their role orientations (Hanusch and Tandoc 2019). Until this dramatic shift in levels of interaction, journalists had little impetus to reconsider or challenge their own role ideals within a field that had remained largely walled off to outside influences and interlopers (Eldridge 2018), including audiences. However, audiences and their ability to express their expectations have emerged as a new and perhaps disruptive force within the field, prompting inquiry into how audience expectations may lead to role change. More specifically, observing these changes warrants a closer examination of journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations.

With this in mind, the main topic of this thesis is to explore *how the changing relationship between journalists and audiences as a result of technological transformations becomes visible in the way journalists understand their roles, what audiences expect from journalists, and how these perspectives shape one another.*

In reviewing key scholarship on journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations, several key shortcomings emerge, which this study addresses: 1) roles and expectations have primarily been studied separately; 2) roles research has overwhelmingly focused on political journalists over other popular forms of journalism, such as lifestyle journalism, reinforcing a value hierarchy and dichotomy; 3) research has rarely accounted for the impact of social identity on role and expectations or treated identity categories as independent variables; and 4) much of roles and expectations scholarship has been predicated on relatively limited theoretical engagement, a Western-liberal understanding, and quantitative approaches. These shortcomings are discussed in more detail in the following section. Each shortcoming forms the foundation for this study's guiding research questions, outlined below. These are more fully elaborated at the end of the theoretical framework and literature review chapter. Further below here, the broader aims of this study are also summarized.

1.2. Problem statement: Key research gaps

Scholarship in journalistic role conceptions is vast and over time this has led to an extensive typology of journalistic roles that continues to expand (Hanitzsch et al. 2019; Weaver and Willnat 2012; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). More recently, scholars have also begun exploring more closely what audiences expect from journalists, and to what extent these expectations are (in)congruent with the occupational roles that journalists have carved out for themselves (Loosen et al. 2020; Vos et al. 2019). However, these studies have tended to rely on established

role conceptions and surveys that rely on role statements to examine this congruence. To this researcher's knowledge, few studies have simultaneously explored journalistic roles and audience expectations within a single study (Schmidt and Loosen 2015; Heise et al. 2013) or have done so qualitatively. Past scholarship has also suggested that journalists in the pre-digital era had a "vague image of the audience" (Gans 2004: 229), or a distorted and stereotypical idea of them as "disinterested, sensation-seeking and unintelligent" (Donsbach 1981: 56). They often relied on "gut feelings" to imagine their audiences as a passive recipient and dependent public and decide what their audiences ought to know or may expect based on their own normative role conceptions (Lewis and Westlund 2015). However, in the digital age, journalists rely on various feedback mechanisms to judge what audiences expect. Journalists' vision of their audiences is shaped by three types of interaction: direct (e.g. email), institutional (e.g. web analytics) but also personal (e.g. friends and fellow colleagues) – interactions that have consequences for whether journalists perceive their audiences as reasonable and thoughtful or as an extension of themselves in terms of class and race (Coddington et al. 2021). In light of these changes, this study also examines how journalists understand their roles, how they imagine their audiences and their expectations, and audiences' actual expectations, to triangulate these various perspectives and levels of congruence.

The large body of role conceptions scholarship has tended to focus more on journalists based in Minority World Countries, commonly referred to as the West or the Global North, than Majority World Countries, commonly referred to as 'beyond the West' or the Global South. The outcome of this has been a commonly accepted recognition of a traditional-liberal understanding of journalism and media theory as the ultimate (hegemonic) model of journalism (Wasserman and de Beer 2009; Nerone 2013; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) that has gone on to inform the way scholars study roles of journalists in countries with different political and social histories (Ramaprasad and Rahman 2006; Pintak 2014). Again, while these studies have provided seminal insight into the extent to which journalists in countries like Bangladesh or Nepal share or differ in their role conceptions to journalists in Anglo-American and European regions, they have also to some extent perpetuated normative journalistic values against which 'other' or 'hybrid' journalistic values, such as those found within development journalism, have been measured against (Josephi 2005; de Beer et al. 2016). Some of this has been exacerbated by the studies' overreliance on quantitative survey approaches where role conception statement batteries used to study journalists in the Global North are adapted to explore the role conceptions of journalists in the Global South, leaving little room for hybrid roles to emerge qualitatively (this methodological shortcoming is elaborated on in Section 1.4).

Scholars have also argued that within role conceptions research there has either been an absence of theoretical engagement, suggesting this area of research is “thin on theory” (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017: 117), or an overreliance on a certain set of theoretical approaches, such as the sociology of news production (Schudson 1989; Cassidy 2005), Bourdieu’s field theory (Bourdieu 2005; Perreault et al. 2020), and the hierarchy of influences model (Shoemaker and Reese 2013; Xu and Jin 2016). A similar suggestion can be made about audience expectations research, with a key exception being studies that rely on sociological inclusion theory as a framework (Loosen and Schmidt 2012; Schmidt and Loosen 2015). While these studies have all provided seminal insights and made key contributions to the theoretical advancement of how we understand role conceptions and audience expectations, the study at hand aims to address the broader theoretical shortcoming by engaging extensively with a theory from which role conceptions seem to take their name, and which indeed is constructed almost entirely on the central argument that roles and expectations shape each other. Role theory, as will be discussed at length in the following chapter, argues that expectations generate roles and vice versa (Biddle 1979, 1986). Surprisingly, only recently have several journalism studies appeared to engage with role theory. These have tended to focus on various role theory concepts that address disruptions to roles, including role conflict and role strain (Goode 1960), to explore how journalists who also work as court media coordinators negotiate potentially conflicting occupational roles (Tandoc and Peters 2015), or how freelance journalists who also work as public relations professionals negotiate any tensions (Obermaier and Koch 2014). This study draws on such concepts to explore how audiences may be a source of conflict or strain. Tandoc and Duffy (2016) also draw on the concept of role expectations to explore what audiences expect of journalists in Singapore, however, they do not utilize role theory’s argument that expectations can be expressed in three modes: prescriptive (norms), descriptive (beliefs), and cathectic (preferences) (Biddle 1979). Likewise, to this researcher’s knowledge, no study has relied on role theory as a potentially alternative framework to examine journalists’ role conceptions and audience expectations simultaneously, and not only to examine levels of (in)congruence but also the central argument that roles and expectations shape one another, and what factors may influence these dynamics. This study draws extensively on role theory’s concepts of role and expectations to not only understand the relationship between the two, but to expand on how we think about expectations as different modes of expressing a statement about a role (Biddle 1979).

Role conceptions research has also overwhelmingly focused on political journalists over those working within popular forms of journalism, such as lifestyle journalism. In doing

so, scholarship has reinforced a value hierarchy and dichotomy, deeming political journalism as having a central function in democracy and holding the greatest societal legitimacy and authority, while subordinating lifestyle journalism as making a lesser or ‘softer’ contribution to society and audiences, that often have been rooted in gendered narratives (Hanusch 2019; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Zelizer 2013; Costera Meijer 2001). This observation and shortcoming have increasingly been challenged and addressed by scholars who have been exploring the roles of lifestyle journalists closely, finding that they provide audiences with guidance in various ways, touching on different aspects of everyday life, including emotional management, identity construction, and consumption, but also as having public and political utility (Fürsich 2012; Hanusch 2019; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), suggesting some role overlap between political and lifestyle journalists. At the same time, lifestyle journalists have absorbed some of the gendered and economic boundary markers – being perceived as trivial, fluffy, captive to market pressures – used to demarcate them from political journalism (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). However, it seems that no studies have yet examined both political and lifestyle journalists’ roles and self-perceptions simultaneously to allow for comparing not only how their roles may be similar or different, but also how they refer to each other, to explore more explicitly the presence of (gendered or other types of) boundary markers between these two seemingly opposing forms of journalism. In addition, studies of audience expectations have also tended to focus on political journalism, leaving us with limited knowledge of what audiences expect of lifestyle journalists and levels of role-expectation (in)congruence. Therefore, drawing on boundary discourses (Gieryn 1983; Loosen 2015; Eldridge 2018) this study explores implicitly how political and lifestyle journalists’ roles may share common goals and explicitly how the journalists may reinforce or challenge boundaries between each other, while also examining audiences’ expectations of both.

A review of role conceptions and audience expectations research also reveals that many of these studies have concerned themselves with exploring how various determinant or aspects of identity shape journalists’ roles and audiences’ expectations. For example, studies of expectations have commonly accounted for political orientation, age, gender (or sex), and factors such as education, media trust, media use, and medium type (Loosen et al. 2020; Vos et al. 2019; Gil de Zuniga and Hinsley 2013), while studies of roles have paid attention to characteristics such as age, years of professional experiences, and gender (Cassidy 2008; van Dalen et al. 2012). However, scholarship has also suggested that identity categories such as race and class shape journalists’ professional experiences and ideology (Slay and Smith 2011; Daniels 2016; Hovden 2008), and audiences’ news preferences and perceptions of news

(Wenzel et al. 2018; Lindell 2020). This study conceptualizes class based on a person's access to different forms of capital to form a set of dispositions (tastes for cultural products, e.g. news) and one's sense of self (or 'habitus') (Bourdieu 1984). Studies of class have argued that journalists (and journalism) are an elite institution (Hovden 2008), while audiences of a higher class tend to feel more included in news (Lindell and Sartoretto 2018). Taking this into account, this study makes the argument that race and class, along with gender, may therefore play a significant role in shaping journalists' role conceptions and audience expectations of journalists. While the above outlined studies have made key in-depth contributions to our understanding of how identity shapes journalistic ideology and news consumption practices and perceptions, many of them have approached their investigation by focusing on one aspect of identity at a time, or acknowledging multiple determinants but treating them as independent variables – an observation that has been made more broadly about communication studies (Hancock 2007; Nielsen 2011). Accounting for this limitation, this study takes an intersectional approach, acknowledging intersectionality theory's central argument that various aspects of identity are mutually constitutive, meaning they all work in tandem to shape a person's lived experiences, whether they are experiences of oppression and/or power (Crenshaw 1989, 1990; Collins 2015; Guimarães Corrêa 2020). To address this, the study ensures not only that the sample of journalists and audiences is intersectionally diverse but focuses in its analysis on highlighting where intersectional commonalities and differences might emerge in the way journalists discursively construct their roles and the way audiences express their expectations.

To address the above outlined shortcomings, this study will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: *What do political and lifestyle journalists understand to be their roles?*

RQ2: *How do political and lifestyle journalists imagine their audiences and their expectations?*

RQ3: *What do audiences expect of political and lifestyle journalists, and through which modes do they express their expectations?*

RQ4: *How do class, race, and gender shape journalists' role conceptions and audience expectations?*

RQ5: *To what extent do journalists' role conceptions, their imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations reflect one another?*

RQ6: *How are boundaries between political and lifestyle journalists implicitly and explicitly reinforced or challenged, by journalists and audiences?*

Beyond these research questions, the study will also address key theoretical shortcomings and enquiries. This study's key aim is to *better understand and reconceptualize how we think about journalistic roles and audience expectations* through a theoretical framework informed by role theory (Biddle 1979), intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989, 1990), and boundary discourses (Gieryn 1983; Loosen 2015; Eldridge 2018). Specifically, it relies on these as conceptual tools to examine the following broader theoretical enquiries:

How can role theory's various role-concepts help us better understand the disruptions shaping journalistic roles? How can role theory's concept of expectation modes help us move beyond normative conceptualizations of audience expectations? And how can exploring conceptions vis-à-vis expectations help reconceptualize this journalist-audience relationship?

How can an intersectional approach reveal dynamics of power and/or oppression in the way journalists understand their roles and what audiences expect of journalists? And how does awareness of these dynamics of inequality help us better understand the journalist-audience relationship?

How can boundary discourses illuminate the implicit and explicit markers political and lifestyle journalists rely on to reinforce/subordinate the authority they each hold in society? And how does an awareness of these boundary markers help us reconceptualize established and hierarchical ways of thinking about journalism and everyday life?

The research questions outlined in response to the shortcomings will be answered in the findings and discussion chapters (4-6), while the theoretical enquiries will be addressed more explicitly in the conclusion chapter (7).

1.3. De-centralization of knowledge: South Africa is not a case study

As a country with a unique history, South Africa presents an ideal ‘context’ in which to explore some of the theoretical concepts in this study. However, the study does not seek to approach South Africa as a case study. The main rationale behind this is the argument put forward by Cheruiyot and Ferrer-Conill (2020) that region- or country-centricism ignores and pigeonholes the contributions made by research stemming from and/or focuses on Majority World Countries to knowledge production in communication studies and more specifically journalism studies. They argue that expansion of theoretical and methodological knowledge should not be understood merely as context-specific but rather de-contextualized and thus knowledge-centred. In doing so, conceptual and empirical scholarship can address and bridge the core-periphery challenge and gap between scholarship that stems from/focuses on Minority World countries (i.e. the West, Global North) which set the theoretical and methodological research agenda and is seen as the dominant, normative centre of knowledge production to which all ‘other’ knowledge stemming from/focusing on Majority World Countries (i.e. the ‘rest’, Global South) is seen as complementary, distinctive, specific, and thus ‘peripheral’ to the core (Cheruiyot and Ferrer-Conill 2020). Both methodological approaches and concepts developed at the ‘margins’ (Global South) of the field of knowledge production are seen as “having lower ontological density in the hierarchical disciplinary base of knowledge” (Schoon et al. 2020: 2-3). Bearing this in mind, this thesis acknowledges that South Africa may offer a unique ‘context’ in which to explore some of the key gaps in research stemming from Minority World Countries, such as the overemphasis of journalistic role conception scholarship on journalists located in Anglo-American and European countries and the overreliance of studies on dominant role norms to study the roles of journalists in Majority World Countries (Joseph 2005). However, as Wasserman and de Beer (2009) stress, a critical journalism studies does not merely expand its focus and curiosity to account for journalists ‘beyond the West’ capturing raw, descriptive data, but also attempts to re-examine and thus de-Westernize key normative assumptions and theoretical foundations that define journalism studies. This includes re-examining rather than appropriating concepts produced in Global North scholarship, in the Global South or importing “Western theoretical and methodological approaches as sacrosanct singular ways of knowing” (Schoon et al. 2020: 3). To that end, this study finds itself uncomfortably both attempting to decentralize knowledge by de-contextualizing South Africa as a unique site of knowledge production, and simultaneously appropriating (albeit critically) theories from the Global North to understand and produce knowledge stemming from a unique

Global South site of knowledge production. For example, while role tensions and discrepancies between traditional-liberal and developmental journalistic values have been detected among journalists in South Africa (Wasserman and de Beer 2005; de Beer et al. 2016), this thesis critiques traditional-liberal normative media theory and suggests that such ‘role conflict’ is not unique to South Africa and may be found not only in other post-colonial, post-authoritarian and emerging democracies, but also in those we consider to be ‘developed’ and ‘established’ democracies, commonly countries of the Anglo-American and European region. South Africa’s history of economic and racial segregation and oppression under the apartheid regime presents a unique ‘context’ in which intersectional inequalities may be more pronounced. Despite national identity building efforts by the South African government, identity politics and group identification among key racial groups (Black, Coloured, Indian and White) remain important (Bosch 2014). This makes it possible to explore with greater distinction how race and class may shape journalists and audiences’ roles and expectations as well as critique journalism and journalism education as a White, male, elite institution (Robinson and Culvert 2019; Aleman 2014). Likewise, while intersectional inequalities may be more striking in South Africa, making them more obvious to empirical detection, this is not to say that intersectional inequalities do not exist the world over or are unique to the South African context. To examine intersectional inequalities, this thesis relies on concepts such as intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989, 1990) and social class shaped by access to various forms of capital (Bourdieu 1984) – born of observations of Algerian, French, and American society – that also stand to be critiqued and re-examined should they prove to be inadequate in capturing South Africa’s unique context. All of this is to say that this thesis does not include or feature a ‘South Africa as a case study’ section where theoretical concepts and empirical literature is centralized and clustered while omitted from the rest of the study. Scholarship stemming from and about South African journalists and audiences that are relevant to this study is referenced throughout the thesis as it relates to various discussions. At the same time, the thesis does not remain blind to or uncritical of its reliance on Global North theories within a Global South context.

1.4. Methodological approach

A key shortcoming of role conceptions and audience expectations research alluded to in the previous section is that it has primarily relied on quantitative approaches, with some exceptions (outlined in Chapter 2). Of course, there is nothing wrong with quantitative approaches, however, an overreliance on surveys can lead to a kind of bottleneck of knowledge production

for two reasons. What we see in role conceptions research is that studies have often relied on similar if not identical survey batteries of statements intended to explore the presence and levels of importance of role conceptions among journalists in the Global North to test the extent to which similar roles (albeit often expanded to account for local realities) are present among journalists in countries with different political and social realities (Ileri 2016; Ramaprasad 2001). Thus, in some way, and perhaps inadvertently, these studies have transferred and reinforced traditional-liberal roles and values, and at the same time they may have limited the opportunity for alternative roles to emerge (Joseph 2005; Ileri 2016). While these and global comparative studies have provided key insight into how widely spread and commonly held journalistic ideals are around the globe, they have also highlighted key differences across journalism cultures (Hanitzsch et al. 2019), pointing to the need to explore the presence of alternative and hybrid roles in more depth and qualitatively. Here, Voltmer and Wasserman (2014) have stressed how crucial qualitative approaches can be to exploring journalistic roles in transitional societies where consensus around their meaning is still fluid and reflective of realities specific to that country or region.

A similar overreliance can also be observed among the relatively limited number of studies on audience expectations, which have primarily been examined through quantitative surveys using statements that have traditionally been used to explore journalists' role conception in order to examine the extent to which audiences expect the same roles of journalists (Vos et al. 2019). Again, while there is nothing wrong with this approach, and these studies have provided fascinating insights into the levels of congruence between journalists' role conceptions and the extent to which audience expectations (mis)align with them, they may have also inadvertently limited the possibility for expectations to emerge freely and with more nuance, without the normative constraints of pre-existing and pre-determined role conceptions as defined by journalists and scholars of journalism and captured in standardized surveys.

A de-centralized and decolonial approach to knowledge production from the Global South also emphasises grounded, qualitative methods that provide detailed insight into unique lived experiences and meanings of journalists and audiences, and challenge as well as offset some of the flattening and homogenization of those experiences that come from an overreliance on quantitative approaches (Schoon et al. 2020). In recognizing that role conceptions and audience expectations scholarship has more commonly been explored quantitatively including in journalism cultures different to those predominantly found in Anglo-American regions, this study relies exclusively on qualitative methods: in-depth, semi-structured interviews with journalists and focus group discussions with audiences in South Africa.

1.5. Research significance: Key findings and contributions

In light of the outlined shortcomings and research questions this study aims to answer, several key findings emerge allowing this study to put forward key contributions to journalism studies.

In exploring role conceptions and audience expectations in tandem, by triangulating journalists' roles with their imaginations of their audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations, interesting dynamics come to surface. We see not only that roles and expectations shape each other, but we realise that this happens to varying degrees of consensus across the three perspectives. As this study will go on to show, there are greater levels of incongruence across the three perspectives among political journalists and their audiences, than between lifestyle journalists and their audiences. This suggests the stronger and arguably negative impact of technological and economic transformation on the relationship between political journalists and their audiences compared to lifestyle journalism where at least economic pressures and imperatives have been part and parcel of their work practices and journalistic identity. The implications are that lifestyle journalists and their audiences are less likely to have diverging perceptions of one another, compared to political journalists and their audiences, where a dramatic reorientation towards market forces and imperatives has left audiences questioning political journalism and its journalists' identity and roles, bringing up issues of trust. Here, role theory (Biddle 1979) has provided a central framework for examining these incongruences, but its diverse concepts have also allowed this study to highlight where both journalists and audiences experience role- and expectation-disruptions. A crucial contribution of role theory – specifically its argument that expectations can be expressed through three different modes – is that it allowed this study to show that audience expectations of journalists are, more often than not, a set of beliefs based on observations (descriptive expectation) and a set of emotional reactions based on their likes or dislikes (cathectic expectation), and rarely normative demands, except when the demand is made in order to change (improve, correct) a descriptive or cathectic expectation. As such, the study allows us to go beyond seeing expectations as norms that emerge against normative role conceptions. The study also invites us to acknowledge that expectation modes are fluid and interconnected, often evoked at once or consecutively in order to communicate a complex expectation.

By exploring the roles of both political and lifestyle journalists this study reveals that political and lifestyle journalists share key roles traditionally associated with one or the other, suggesting a blurring of this boundary marker, however, the study also illustrates that journalists reinforce boundaries by explicitly evoking gendered dichotomies and traditional

discourses of economic autonomy from external forces (e.g. lifestyle industry, advertisers). What is significant here is that these boundaries are not constructed only by political journalists – on the contrary, political journalists simultaneously excluded and ‘othered’ lifestyle journalists by evoking gendered stereotypes but also acknowledged that lifestyle journalists have a contribution and value to society. Lifestyle journalists on the other hand internalized many of the gendered stereotypes and autonomy discourses to self-deprecate and subordinate their own societal value, while at the same time engaging in self-affirmation by suggesting they contribute to their audiences in ways that political journalists do not. Similar patterns of differentiation are found among audiences’ perceptions of lifestyle and political journalism. On the one hand, audiences normalized the distinction between political and lifestyle journalism, claiming both serve different but important functions in everyday life. They conveyed the distinction by drawing on characteristics rooted in gender, utility, and emotion specifically by evoking intimacy-distance, positivity-negativity, and agency-helplessness binaries. On the other hand, audiences reinterpreted or rather repurposed this ‘normal’ distinction to express normative and value-laden judgements, evident in their classist and racist ‘othering’ of those who consume lifestyle journalism. By drawing on implicit and explicit boundary discourses (Eldridge 2018; Loosen 2015; Gieryn 1983), the study exposes both a blurring of boundaries through shared roles, and a reinforcement of boundaries in the way political and lifestyle journalists perceive each other.

Finally, in exploring how social identity may shape journalistic roles and audience expectations through an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989) and Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of capital and habitus, this study shows not only where and how race, class, and gender come through in roles and expectations, but also reveals how an intersectional lens can offer more nuance and expose instances of journalistic inclusion and exclusion. Race shaped Black political journalists’ role of being a change agent. Within this role, these journalists engaged in the additional emotional labour of feeling empathy towards the audiences marginalized along race (and class) with whom they shared aspects of their identity or habitus. Likewise, audiences marginalized along class and race lines held the same expectation of empathy in the way journalists provided solutions to problems. However, we also see that both political and lifestyle journalists, no matter their inherited class habitus (working or middle class) have developed and embody a middle-upper-class habitus that reflects journalism’s institutional elitism (Hovden 2008). That is, while they may identify with their audiences through their racial identity, they simultaneously routinely neglect to address or show the ability to imagine the needs of working-class audiences. Negotiating their experiences of both inclusion and

exclusion based on the personal and occupational habitus, journalists arguably experience role-identity-conflict. Dynamics of inclusion and exclusion became more visible and pertinent in audiences' expressions of their expectations. Here we see that an intersectional approach reveals both expectations commonly held across intersectional identities, but also reveals greater nuance among expectations that are seemingly similar until discourse surrounding these expectations is examined more closely. This study reveals racist and classist narratives and stereotypes deployed by audiences at varying race-class intersections to symbolically distinguish and 'other' marginalized audiences. The central argument and contribution here is that one of journalism's key occupation ideologies that allows it to assert its societal legitimacy is its claim to serve the public. However, this study shows that audiences who are marginalized along class, race, and gender (and potentially other identity categories), find themselves excluded and rendered invisible as well as negatively stereotyped by journalists and even audiences with more intersectional power.

The above summary of this study's contributions is discussed and expanded on in far greater detail in the findings and discussion chapters 4, 5, and 6, as well as the concluding chapter (7). This study has several limitations, which are outlined in the conclusion chapter (Section 7.4) pointing also to avenues for future research, and theoretical implications (Section 7.5). The following section outlines the content of each chapter in more detail.

1.6. Outline of chapters

This introduction chapter has briefly outlined the rationale for the study: the impact that technological changes have had on the relationship between journalists and audiences, where through various feedback mechanisms audiences now have unprecedented tools to express their expectations of journalists to the journalists themselves directly, thus arguably prompting them to renegotiate their role conceptions. The discussion reveals the need, therefore, to examine role conceptions and audience expectations in tandem, qualitatively and relying on a theoretical framework where the role-expectation concept is central. The rest of the thesis is divided across six chapters as described below.

Chapter 2 delves into role theory as an underexplored but fruitful alternative theoretical approach to examining the role conceptions-audience expectation relationship, premised precisely on the theory's key argument that roles and expectations shape one another. After outlining the theory's key grounding concepts, such as social positions, roles, and expectations, the chapter relates these concepts to key literature on: 1) role conceptions,

highlighting key shortcomings, including the scholarship's overemphasis on political journalism over softer, popular forms of journalism, such as lifestyle journalism, and the scholarship's overemphasis on studying role conceptions of journalists located in Minority World Countries (i.e. the West) or primarily quantitative approaches informed by standardized survey statements informed by studies of journalists in Minority World Countries to studying journalists in Majority World countries; 2) audience expectations, examining how audiences and their expectations have become a key consideration for journalists in the digital age, and how being confronted with so much more direct feedback potentially exposes journalists to experiences of various role disturbances, including role conflict; and finally, the chapter highlights a key shortcoming among both areas of research: the lack of consideration for 3) how social identities shape both role conceptions and audience expectations, especially in light of scholarship that has highlighted that journalism is a profession and an institution rooted in Western ideals around whiteness, masculinity, and elitism, and studies that have shown race, gender, and class can shape journalists' experiences of journalism, and audiences' news consumption preferences. This study's research questions are outlined throughout this chapter in response to key theoretical and empirical discussions and subsequently identified shortcomings and are summarized again at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 3 outlines this study's key methodological approaches – a qualitative study relying on interviews to explore journalists' role conceptions, and focus groups to examine audiences' expectations – and also discusses the rationale for selecting these methods. Reflecting the shortcomings outlined in Chapter 2, the study also adopts an intersectional approach to exploring how role-expectations are shaped by the interlocking dynamics of race, class, and gender. This chapter will also describe sampling approaches, the two key sets of samples, fieldwork and data collection experiences, data management and analysis, and the researcher's classed-gendered-racial positionality, acknowledging how her identity and relative power shaped all of these research processes.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present this study's key findings and related discussion against existing literature and theoretical concepts. Specifically, **Chapter 4** presents political and lifestyle journalists' key journalistic role conceptions and their imaginations or perceptions of audiences and their expectations, highlighting intersectional nuances where detected; **Chapter 5** presents audiences' diverse expectations of political and lifestyle journalists, again highlighting intersectional commonalities and divergences across the audiences; and **Chapter 6** presents the different boundary markers that both journalists and audiences evoke in order to reinforce and challenge boundaries and dichotomies between political and lifestyle journalism.

Chapter 7, the final and concluding section of this thesis, discusses the study's key theoretical contributions and implications for how we study journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations, also highlighting the study's key limitations. Specifically, it delves into how role theory and its rich array of concepts can help us gain a better understanding of the potential disruptions shaping role conceptions and expectations, and how considering expectation modes allows us to move beyond a normative understanding of audience expectations. The chapter also discusses how an intersectional approach reveals dynamics of inclusion and exclusion ('othering') of and by journalists and audiences that future research needs to consider more explicitly to address journalism's inequalities. Finally, it raises further questions about how we go on to explore and challenge boundaries between political and lifestyle journalism, to arrive at a journalism that addresses everyday life.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. ROLE THEORY: An alternative framework

Role theory has its origins in the dramaturgical or theatrical perspective where people as actors are understood to play interactive parts according to scripts on a proverbial stage (Simmel 1920; Goffman 1959). Rooted in the notion of interpersonal encounters and the performance of our ideal selves, Goffman (1959) suggested that people control the impressions they make in their interactions with others. That is, this behavioural performance takes place on the ‘front stage’ in front of an observing audience, meaning people wear a proverbial mask and are more likely to feel pressure to behave in adherence to certain rules and acceptable social conventions. These public impressions usually refer to the need to be perceived in a positive light, and to disassociate from anything that could stigmatize one’s identity (Goffman 1963). Conversely, a person’s behaviour is argued to be different away from the public gaze, in the ‘back stage.’ It is within the ‘front stage’ performance where we find the concept of roles, beholden to the judgements and evaluations (or expectations) of the observing audiences. Since its inception, role theory has been concerned with the study of human behaviour and has expanded to include several perspectives and concepts, employed within and across various disciplines, namely psychology, anthropology, and sociology (Biddle 1979). One of role theory’s key arguments is that individuals occupy *social positions* that consist of certain *roles* which are generated by *expectations* stemming from different modes of thought (norms, beliefs, preferences) (Biddle 1986). Beyond these central concepts, role theory is vast and offers a rich typology of concepts that this study draws on to explore journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations.

The term ‘role’ comes from the Latin word ‘*rotula*’ to refer to a wooden dowel or rod on which parchment paper was attached, and then to signify documents used in legal court, and later in connection to theatrical characters (Biddle 1979: 9). The Oxford Dictionary pinpoints the term’s origins to the 17th Century and the French word ‘*rôle*’ or ‘*roule*’ referring to the roll of paper containing an actor’s part (dialogue lines). The concept of **role** in the social sciences developed in the 1920s and 1930s, notably through Vilfredo Pareto (1916 [1935]) and Max Weber (1920 [1947]), and was later more explicitly formulated as a concept by George Mead (1934) and Ralph Linton (1936) when the private realm of life was extended into the public space of organisation and institutions, and there was a need to assign people ‘labels’ and

recognize typical actions associated with these labels (e.g. lawyer, engineer, artist) in order to categorize them (Nadel 1957; Ashforth 2000). As Ashforth (2000: 1) explains: “to satisfy personal needs and desires, individuals must often enter organisations and adopt more or less formal roles,” such as how attending to one’s health requires going to a clinic and interacting with a doctor. At that point, the notion of the role also became separate from the notion of person or self so that people were seen to increasingly interact with others through a variety of roles or socially acceptable (normative) behaviour (Ashforth 2000). The concept of role began to serve as an “intermediary between ‘society’ and ‘individual’” or a strategic space where “individual *behavior* becomes social *conduct*” – that is, where consistent behaviour (roles) associated with a position is accepted by the broader population and transitions into ‘norms’ (Nadel 1957: 20, italics in original). The role concept’s “double reference to the individual and to the collective matrix,” Levinson (1959: 170) argues, is one of its “most alluring qualities” precisely because it allows scholars to bridge the disciplines of psychology and sociology to explore “the thoughts and actions of individuals” and simultaneously acknowledge “the influence upon the individual of socially patterned demands and standardized forces.”

Society or the ‘collective matrix’, broadly defined, refers to “any group of people who have lived and worked together long enough to get themselves organized and to think of themselves as a social unit with well-defined limits” (Linton 1936: 91). The *individual*, on the other hand, refers to a single member of such a unit, and “the whole of the individual’s mental qualities, i.e. the sum total of his rational faculties, perceptions, ideas, habits, and conditioned emotional responses” (Linton 1936: 465). Nestled between these two poles is the concept of role. A role incumbent’s performance of roles is generated and interpreted by both societal expectations and (at least in part) by the individual’s unique conditioning (Nadel 1957; Linton 1936).

Between the macro and micro levels of society, individuals are members of *social systems, structures or networks* of positions. A *social position* is something which an individual can occupy and is “a location in social space, a category of organisational membership” (Levinson 1959: 172). To be a member of a social position means to “share an identity that is widely known” (Biddle 1979: 87). Attached to specific social positions are roles performed by individuals within a broader social system or network of position where the individual is socialised to understand their role as a cluster of “rights, privileges and social relationships” (Jackson 1972: 1). In journalism, such a system may include networks of social positions such as editors, sources, audiences, each with clusters of roles. Throughout role theory literature, social position is often referred to interchangeably as social status, and while the latter is

occasionally linked to the notion of social prestige (Linton 1945), they appear to both refer to “a position in a social system involving designated rights and obligations” (Merton 1957: 110). Adding to the challenge is that much of the role concept terminology stems from and is used in popular discourse. As Coulson (1972: 108) stressed, “sometimes roles is used to refer to a *social position*, sometimes to the *behaviour* associated with a position.” To clarify, positions classify a person, while roles classify their behaviour (Biddle 1979: 93), that is, “role refers to behaviour rather than position, so that one may *enact* a role but cannot *occupy* a role” (Turner 1956: 317). To be a journalist, then, is to occupy a social position (widely shared identity), while reporting in an adversarial way is one of the multiple roles associated with that position.

From this discussion, we can summarize that a position-holder is tasked with and enacts a specific set of roles, however, how those roles may be differentiated and how they come about deserves further, in-depth clarification as it forms the central framework of this study.

2.1.1. Roles

A role becomes a role if it fulfils several key criteria, including whether the behavioural characteristics of a role can be observed among many people or only a few (*generality*) and whether the role exhibits behavioural characteristics that are distinctly dissimilar to those of other roles (*uniqueness*). To determine its uniqueness there needs to be a set of other or alternative roles against which the former stands out (Biddle 1979). Here, role conceptions scholarship has developed a rich typology of unique roles among political journalists (where greatest focus has been placed) but has also offered a way for scholars to differentiate across different types of journalism, for example, political and lifestyle journalists, who arguably hold uniquely different role conceptions (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). Furthermore, role uniqueness has allowed traditional journalists to differentiate themselves from new and alternative journalistic actors who they perceive as demonstrating unique but also disruptive roles to the journalistic field (Eldridge 2018; Ferrucci and Vos 2017). Roles are deemed roles if they demonstrate *complexity*, evaluated by addressing three questions: (1) how many key characteristic behaviours appear in a single role (breadth of role); (2) how much skill and energy the role demands (difficulty of role), where the greater the difficulty the more power and status is given to position-holders who perform such roles (e.g. surgeons), and; (3) how well the different components of a role complement one another (coherence of role), where incoherence can lead to role dissatisfaction. Lastly, a role gains recognition through *visibility* to an audience (whoever that audience may be), or the extent to which other position-holders

within a system and members of society can express reactions towards the role, which is argued to encourage conformity to roles among its incumbents (Biddle 1979: 72-75). The last criterion is particularly important in exploring journalists whose roles are performed and thus visible in two ways: their discursive articulation (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) and their enactment in news content (Mellado et al. 2016; Carpenter et al. 2016). But it is equally key in considering the audiences to whom this performance of roles is visible and thus familiar, giving them the opportunity to express their expectations of them (Schmidt and Loosen 2015; Loosen et al. 2020). Furthermore, the impression a person intends to ‘give’ and the one they ultimately ‘give off’ can be two different things (Goffman 1959). For example, journalists may seek to give audiences the impression that they are reporting in the public good in their roles as watchdogs and advocates, however, the impression they give off – or rather the impression audiences have based on their observation of journalists’ performance – may be that journalists are politically compromised and not advocating for the good of the public.

Similar to the terminological confusion also found in literature on journalistic roles specifically (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017), role theory has endured scholarly disagreement over the definition of what indeed comprises a role – a discrepancy largely understood as terminological rather than conceptual (Biddle 1986). This confusion appeared within role theory at its beginning because various scholars conceptualized (and later in the empirical phase, applied) the term ‘role’ loosely and utilizing multiple terms (Biddle 1979). So much so that Neiman and Hughes (1951: 149) have described the role concept as “vague, nebulous and non-definitive,” while Banton (1965: 28) has remarked that “what Linton and Newcombe define as a role would, in Kingsley and Davis’ terminology, be a status. What Davis defines as a role, Newcombe calls role behaviour, T.R Sarbin, role enactment.” Biddle (1979: 14-15) highlights several contradictory definitions of roles offered by various role theorists throughout history, including seeing roles as positions within a social structure or linked to a function, what people do in relation to others, a set of conditioned responses, social norms, or cultural patterns, behavioural patterns that respond to normative expectations (for full overview see Biddle 1979: 14-15; Turner 1956; Banton 1965). Others have also made a point of distinguishing roles from “job tasks,” where roles are understood as “expected behaviours” that the role incumbent engages in to perform job tasks (Tubre and Collins 2000: 156). The trouble with the above definitions is that each seems to introduce “one new element not given in the other” and often these elements are concepts that originate from other areas of the social sciences and end up conflated (Nabers 2011: 76).

Acknowledging the extent of the confusion in defining the role concept, Biddle (1979) offers a broader, more encompassing definition of *role* and one that this study draws on: “behaviours characteristic of one or more persons in a context” where something is considered characteristic when it consumes a “significant portion” of a person’s behaviour occupying a social position (Biddle 1979: 56/59). Journalist’s acting as watchdogs is a role that has been referred to throughout journalism’s history and forms the backbone of what it means to be a journalist, thus the watchdog role is but one example of a characteristic behaviour constituting a significant portion of journalistic behaviour. Whereas Linton (1936: 114) saw a single role as both a component of a status (i.e. position) and the sum total of a status, Merton (1957: 110) argued that a position consists of a “role-set” or a “complement of role-relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status.” For a journalist, a role-set may consist of roles that develop in response to their relationships with various position-holders in a social network and the influences they have on them (Shoemaker and Reese 2013), such as editors, sources, audiences, and others. In that way, roles are also understood as somewhat welcome social constraints that offer balance against absolute freedom and autonomy, and thus give us structure, make our behaviour meaningful and gratifying when it is performed well, and receives societal approval (Dahrendorf 1968: 26). Levinson (1959) broke the concept of role down into three components: role as a set of demands – “norms, expectations, taboos, responsibilities [...] and sets of pressures and facilitations that channel, guide, impede, support” a person in their social position; role as a personal conception or orientation – “inner definition of what someone in his social position is supposed to think and do about it”; and role as action or behaviour – “ways in which members of a position act” (Levinson 1959: 172). These definitions imply that demands are external instructions for behaviour, conceptions are internal guides for behaviour, and actions are visible enactments of roles. Where Biddle’s (1979) concept of roles becomes particularly useful is that it bridges these various delineations in saying that roles, whether they are external demands, personal conceptions or actions, are in one way or another generated by expectations a person holds of themselves and that others hold of them. In essence, an expectation (whether stemming from others or self) is a demand for specific roles, a guide to how one might conceive of their roles and enact that behaviour.

To see where these influences have an effect on journalism, it is important to clarify what is meant by ‘behaviour’ in reference to roles. Role conceptions by definition are covert expectations a person holds for themselves that guides their internal idea of self (e.g. I expect myself to act as a watchdog) (Biddle 1979). Journalistic role scholars have traditionally defined

‘role conceptions’ as indicative of how journalists understand their normative roles in society, and ‘role performance’ as indicative of how these conceptions of roles become enacted or visible in the news content which they produce, thus denoting behaviour. In this vein, scholars have been concerned with examining levels of congruence between role conceptions and their performance, with studies detecting both congruence and incongruence (Mellado et al. 2016; Mellado and van Dalen 2013; Carpenter et al. 2016). More recently, however, Hanitzsch and Vos (2017) reconceptualized this conception-performance relationship, in arguing that journalism is a discursive institution or field, where journalistic roles are discursively constructed at the attitudinal level (normative, cognitive) and become discursive acts when performed (practiced, narrated). Here then, role orientations consist of ‘normative roles’ constructed in response to the imposed expectations deemed socially desirable in specific contexts, and ‘cognitive roles,’ or values and beliefs, that journalists aspire towards. Role performance refers to how roles are ‘enacted’ or ‘practiced’ and how they become tangible behaviour in both the way journalists justify their role actions or produce news, as well as in the way they narrate roles or what they say they do (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017: 123-127).

In modern societies, journalism contends with multiple actors in an effort to maintain its societal legitimacy, fending off new and potentially disruptive entrants to its field that consist of its own rules and logics (Benson and Neveu 2005). Aside from new journalistic actors, audiences expressing their expectations of journalists through various feedback mechanisms, ranging from social media sharing to commenting and feedback spaces, have arguably also become regular guests within the journalistic field. A key way in which journalists have struggled over and attempted to maintain societal authority and legitimacy has been through their shared, collective discourse on journalistic roles. Discursive institutionalism refers to substantive (cognition) and interactive (communication) processes in which institutions are constructed and changed or maintained through ideas discursively conveyed and exchanged among interacting actors or members of an institution (Schmidt 2010). Journalists discursively define and reproduce the desirable norms, values, practices and narratives that continually stabilize journalistic identity and preserve journalism’s indispensable authority in society, and in doing so, they define the parameters of who belongs to the institution of journalism, and why (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). It is through discourse that roles become formalized as institutional norms (Vos 2016). However, communicative discourse capable of (re)defining institutions can involve both top-down processes coming from institutional leaders (e.g. journalists), and bottom-up interactions from civil society and citizens (e.g. audiences) (Schmidt 2010). The interactive nature of discursive institutionalism

reflects symbolic interactionist perspectives in role theory, where roles and expectations are symbolically and discursively constructed and modified based on the changing social conditions and the dynamic and shifting interaction between actors within a particular role relationship (Merton 1957), discussed in more detail later in this chapter. In considering audience expectations, the question that follows is to what extent and how might the discursive construction and performance of audience expectations prompt journalists to engage in the “discursive (re)creation, (re)interpretation, appropriation, and contestation” of journalistic identity (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017: 121). That is, on the theoretical level, what is the relationship between expectations and roles and how might they discursively shape one another? We can unpack this by understanding how expectations can be both covert and overt, discussed in the following section.

2.1.2. (Role-)Expectations

What becomes clear from the above discussion is that to define a role is to define what generates roles – expectations – and that the two concepts are not separable. Whereas a role refers to characteristic behaviours of a person holding a position, an *expectation* is “a statement that expresses a reaction about a characteristic of one or more persons” (Biddle 1979: 119). Roles create opportunities for both the incumbent of the role and those around them to form expectations of their own or others’ behaviour, because, as Snoek (1966) argues, any person who is concerned with the performance of a position-holder will hold expectations regarding their roles. The nature of the role-expectation relationship becomes evident in multiple definitions of ‘role’ that include references to expectations, where, for example, a role is understood as “behaviour oriented to these patterned expectations of others” (Merton 1957: 110). Örtqvist and Wincent (2006: 399) state that “a role originates from the expectations about behaviour for a position in a social structure” and “expectations define what behavioural requirements or limitations are ascribed to the role either by the person filling that role or by others associated with the role.” From the perspective of identity theory, Hogg and colleagues (1995: 257) argue that “a role is a set of expectations prescribing behavior that is considered appropriate by others.” These definitions suggest that roles exist primarily in response to expectations which guide the required and appropriate behaviour for a person holding a position. Sell and colleagues (1981: 43) also refer to a role as a “set of expectations applied to the incumbent of a particular position by the incumbent and by role senders within and beyond an organisation’s boundaries.” This is important because it acknowledges the breadth of

potential expectation-influences that a role-incumbent faces within and outside an organisational context. A “role sender” is anyone who communicates and/or enforces various role expectations onto a role-incumbent (Rommetveit 1954, cited in Snoek 1966, *no access to original*). For journalists, role senders may include multiple actors from various levels of influence, including at the work routine level (e.g. sources), organisational level (e.g. colleagues, editors), institutional levels (e.g. public relations, advertising), and finally the social systems level, including the audiences. The connection between roles and expectations is thus captured in the composite term ‘*role expectation*’ which refers to both external directives about behaviour (e.g. from audiences), but also internal ones directed at the self (e.g. a journalist’s expectations of self). Self-expectations thus become conceptions about how one should behave and are therefore also understood as ‘*role conceptions*’ or what one understands to be their roles (Biddle 1979).

When considering expectations, several further key conceptual differences need to be clarified. Similar to how Hanitzsch and Vos (2018) conceptualized roles as attitudinal and behavioural, expectations can be both overt and covert. At the substantive level, *covert expectations* are cognitive and normative ideas; that is, norms, beliefs and preferences that are discursively constructed and live in the mind of a person (Biddle 1979; Schmidt 2010). As such, covert expectations provide audiences with cognitive and normative *expectation orientations* towards what journalism could or should be, insofar that expectations can be both aspirational, or needs- and interest-driven (cognitive ideas), and driven by a sense of what is appropriate (normative ideas) (Schmidt 2010; Hanitzsch and Vos 2017). At the interactive level, *overt expectations* emerge once the audience expectation is enunciated (spoken) or inscribed (written). Once discursively articulated, they become demands (norms), assessments (preferences), and assertions (descriptions) (Biddle 1979) – in other words, an outward performance. Whether these articulated expectations are enacted through digital news feedback (e.g. comments, web analytics) in their actual engagement with news, or as self-reports and reflections on news engagement (e.g. surveys, focus groups), they become discursive acts and narrations of what the audience expects of journalists and, thus, emerge as *expectation performance*. Undoubtedly, the digital turn and its accompanying technological affordances have made these expectation performances all the more apparent. Audiences now have greater opportunity to express their expectations, interactively and visibly providing journalists with detailed insight into what is expected of them. This also brings about the potential that audiences’ expectation performances become a source of disruption to journalistic identity,

including the various norms and practices that imbue journalism with societal legitimacy (Vos et al. 2019).

An expectation is first and foremost a ‘reaction’ to characteristic behaviour – it is rarely neutral but rather “asserts, or approves, or evaluates” (Biddle 1979: 119). Expectations are therefore expressed in different *modes* to invite a particular reaction from the role-incumbent. A source of disagreement among role theory scholars is the modality of expectations, the inconsistency of terminology used to refer to these, and the argument that these modes each “generate roles for somewhat different reasons” (Biddle 1986: 69). Dahrendorf (1968: 21) distinguished three forms of expectations, all sanctionable depending on the degree to which the roles have been institutionalized and are considered socially compulsory: *must-expectations* invite compulsory behaviour and are legally sanctionable; *shall-expectations* invite active or model social behaviour and are sanctionable through social exclusion; and *can-expectations* invite voluntary or esteemed behaviour and are sanctionable through unpopularity. Based on a broad review of approaches to the study of expectations and their varied vocabulary to refer to expectations, three modes of expectations or forms of reactions to a role-incumbent have emerged as consistent (Biddle 1979; Bank et al. 1977). These include “prescriptive expectations” or norms, “descriptive expectations” or beliefs, and “cathectic expectations” or preferences, and originate from ancient distinctions of mental functions made by Plato and Aristotle: “cognition, affect, and conation” (Biddle 1979: 131).

Prescriptive expectations (norms) express approval, encouragement or a request for a behavioural characteristic, whether as a form of self-motivation (I should do something) or intent to influence compliant behaviour in others (they should do something) (Biddle 1979). As such they “prescribe or proscribe the characteristic in question” and the subject is likely to feel uncomfortable unless they conform to the norm (Bank et al. 1977: 574-575). Such norms are also more likely to be shared and in existing literature have inconsistently been referred to as “norms, demands, request forms” (Biddle 1979: 131). Throughout the thesis they will be referred to as prescriptive expectations/norms.

Descriptive expectations (beliefs) express objective and assumptive statements about a person’s behavioural characteristics, whether observed in the past, present or future (someone was/is/will be doing something) (Biddle 1979). Beliefs can be *reports* of past events, *intentions* about the future, and *consequences* of actions. However, often descriptive expectations can be the origin of and indicators of “stereotyping... labelling, and deviancy” (Biddle 1979: 128), that is, *stereotypes* in an ongoing present (Bank et al. 1977: 575). Again, these types of expectations have inconsistently been referred to as “beliefs, social perceptions, anticipations,

opinions or cognitions” (Biddle 1979: 131). Throughout the thesis they will be referred to as descriptive expectations/beliefs.

Finally, *cathectic expectations (preferences)* are affective responses, and express a feeling about a characteristic behaviour (one likes or dislikes someone’s behaviour). They are “hedonic in character” and express “desire or aversion for the characteristic” and can therefore also serve as a “potential source of motivation” for an individual (Bank et al. 1977: 575). Cathectic expectations are seen as less likely to be shared, however they can generate conformity in role behaviour if the role-incumbent has no fear of negative consequences, competing norms, and sanctions (Biddle 1979; Bank et al. 1977). They have inconsistently been referred to as “values, evaluations, or sometimes preferences” (Biddle 1979: 131). Throughout the thesis they will be referred to as cathectic expectations/preferences.

Many of the above modes of expectations have been collapsed and treated without distinction, generating “wondrous confusion” (Bank et al. 1977: 576). Studies that have delineated the modality of expectations in their research approach also found evidence of different modes of expectations, albeit employing alternative terminology. For Fishbein and Raven (1962) beliefs are an outcome of cognitive aspects and measurable by scalable terms such as impossible-possible, false-true, existent-non-existent, probable-improbable, while attitudes (or preferences) related to “affective or motivational aspects” and captured in terms such as harmful-beneficial, wise-foolish, dirty-clean, bad-good, sick-healthy. Importantly, norms, preferences and beliefs refer to covert expectations, unuttered and cognitively held. Once they become overtly enunciated or discursively articulated, they become *demands* (norms), *assessments* (preferences), and *assertions* (descriptions). These terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis to refer to how audiences express expectations through different modes. Expectations can be expressed as singular, or ‘simple expectations’ which rely on one mode at a time. However, expectations can also be complex “containing one or more modality or reference components that may be analytically decomposed into simple expectations without loss of semantic content” (Biddle 1979: 144-145). For example, audiences may say, ‘I don’t like it (cathectic) that journalists act as watchdogs (descriptive).’

Finally, in exploring the expectations of audiences, this study is also concerned primarily with ‘*positional expectations*’ or those that role-senders (audiences) hold for people in public, social positions (journalists). These expectations tend to be based on “abstract and context-general” perceptions and experiences of the position-holder (Biddle 1979: 124). At the same time, the proximity of audience to journalists has narrowed as a result of interactive digital technologies. Besides their organisational membership, journalists have increasingly

become brands in their own right (Holton and Molyneux 2015), and audiences are able to observe and communicate with journalists more directly than even before (Karlsson et al. 2018). As such, there is a growing need to consider '*personal expectations*' which a person holds of individuals close to them and are based on "concrete and context specific" experiences (Biddle 1979: 124). The increasingly reciprocal and intimate connection between audiences and journalists is somewhat evident in the way in which reader commenters evaluate the press and journalistic norms by referring not only to professional norms (objectivity, accuracy, etc.) but norms rooted in social values which "guide individual morality", criticising journalists for being "judgemental," "lazy or sloppy," "sanctimonious or pompous" and "dehumanizing," among others (Craft et al. 2016: 685-686). Commenters rely on moral value-judgements to "address the news organisations as persons, as individual human beings" and shape their criticism based on their perceptions of how a "good person should behave" (Craft et al. 2016: 686). The increased opportunity for audiences to interact with and criticize the press and journalists "on social grounds is indicative of the flattening of the hierarchical relationship that previously existed between readers and journalists" (Craft et al. 2016: 687). In examining audiences as a collective force and shaper of journalists' role conceptions, the study is also concerned with their '*shared expectations*' (consensus expectations) which can be powerful in eliciting and reinforcing "behavioural uniformity" among role-incumbents (Biddle 1979: 123).

Because of its vastness, role theory offers a rich typology of concepts, however, with this comes conceptual confusion and contradictory definitions. This includes, as already briefly highlighted, the various and disconnected perspectives from which role theorists have studied roles, and the disagreement over how roles should be studied and defined. This includes: whether the study of roles should concern the individual or the social position; diverse definitions and terminology to refer to similar concepts, many of which have emerged because scholars have applied role theory to diverse contexts, settings and disciplines with little overlap and crossover; and disagreement over the value of considering expectations (and its diverse modalities) in relation to roles (Biddle 1986). Role theory has developed out of various strands and approaches to the theory without necessarily building bridges among these traditions (Jackson 1972). Perhaps the biggest source of ambivalence includes how some social scientists have focused on roles as patterns of behaviour, some as expectations that generate those patterns, some as behaviours associated with positions, and others related to cultural, social and personal behaviour, and yet others have concerned themselves with roles as controlled either by internal variables, or by external expectations of roles (Biddle 1979). An outcome of this confusion is also a multitude of definitions of the role concept stemming from different

sociological perspectives within role theory. Thus, scholars have suggested that role theory “is not a theory but a set of interrelated, yet sometimes contradictory, concepts” (Nabers 2011: 75) or rather a “special analytical tool” (Nadel 1957: 20). Others have referred to role theory as an “old fashioned cliché” and even “naïve” in its limited and at times deterministic approach to understanding roles as stable states of being rather than changeable based on interaction (Simpson and Carroll 2008: 30). These issues and critiques, Biddle argues, have made it difficult for role theory to move beyond being a taxonomy to a formalized, integrated theory, suggesting “role theory is as broad as the ocean and as shallow as a mud puddle” (1979: 8).

However, despite role theory’s terminological divergences, it offers a conceptual richness that allows this study to begin to explore and reconceptualize how we think about journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations. In the interest of conceptual clarity, Table 1 outlines key concepts and their definitions emerging from the above discussion that are relevant to and will be applied within this study.

Table 1: Key Role Theory Concepts		
CONCEPT	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Position	A shared identity and membership that an individual can occupy (e.g. journalist)	Biddle 1979; Levinson 1959
Role	Behaviours that are characteristic of one or more persons associated with a position (e.g. act as watchdog)	Biddle 1979: 56
Role / Position Incumbent	A person who holds a position or associated role(s) (e.g. journalist)	Biddle 1979
Expectation	A statement that expresses a reaction about characteristic behaviours of one or more persons associated with a position (e.g. journalists should act as watchdogs)	Biddle 1979: 119
Covert Expectations ' <i>Expectation Orientations</i> '	Cognitive and normative ideas that are discursively constructed and live in the mind of a person (i.e. norms, beliefs, preferences)	Biddle 1979; Hanitzsch and Vos 2017; Schmidt 2010 (<i>Adapted by researcher for this study</i>)
Overt Expectations ' <i>Expectation Performance</i> '	Discursive acts and narrations of what a person expects (i.e. demands, assertions, assessments)	
Prescriptive Expectations (Norms – Demands)	Approval, encouragement or request for a behavioural characteristic (Journalists should be watchdogs)	Biddle 1979; Bank et al. 1977

Descriptive Expectations (Beliefs – Assertions)	Objective and assumptive statements about a person's behavioural characteristics, usually based on observation (Journalists are / are not watchdogs)	Biddle 1979; Bank et al. 1977
Cathectic Expectations (Preferences – Assessments)	Affective response or feeling about a characteristic behaviour (I do / do not like journalists being watchdogs)	
Positional Expectations	Expectations held for someone in a public position based on abstract perceptions and experiences of the position-incumbent	
Personal Expectations	Expectations held for someone in a position within a personal/close relationship, based on concrete experiences of the position-incumbent	Biddle 1979
Shared Expectations	Expectations for a position-incumbent, shared by a group of people – can enforce role consensus / conformity	
Role Sender	Someone who expresses an expectation (e.g. audiences)	Rommetsveit 1954; Snoek 1966
Role-Set	A set of complementary roles associated with a single position (e.g. watchdog, disseminator, mediator etc.)	Biddle 1979; Merton 1957
'Role-Set Relationship'	Network of relationships with different role senders, within which an incumbent holds specific roles (e.g. journalists' relationships with editors, audiences, public relations, sources etc.)	Biddle 1979; Merton 1957 <i>(Adapted by researcher for this study)</i>

The following section outlines dominant perspectives and concepts to determine their relevance and usefulness as a theoretical framework for the study of journalistic role conceptions in relation to audience expectations.

2.1.3. Dominant theoretical perspectives

Role theory draws on five dominant perspectives that broadly fall into two camps: the structural-functionalist approach where position-roles have a function within a structured social system configured in predictable, even mathematical formulations; and the symbolic interactionist approach where roles are negotiated and emerge out of the interaction between individuals or groups (Ashforth 2000; Biddle 1986).

The functional, structural and organisational approaches share to a greater or lesser extent a deterministic understanding of roles, positions and systems as stable (even rigid) hierarchical structures where roles are maintained almost exclusively by conformity to normative expectations and the avoidance of sanctions. *Functionalists* see roles as “the characteristic behaviors of persons who occupy social positions within a stable social system” in which position-holders are socialized into and conform to roles based on “shared, normative expectations,” which, if contradicted, lead to sanctions. With this approach, roles are an outcome of expectations that prescribe as well as proscribe behaviour (Nabers 2011: 75). *Structuralists* focus on the structured role relationships of a set of persons with patterned behaviours within a stable organisation, where any observations or arguments about the social environment are “more likely to be couched in mathematical symbols” (Biddle 1986: 72-73). The *organisational* perspective – among the most commonly used – focuses on roles within “formal organizations (and) social systems that are preplanned, task-oriented, and hierarchical” (Biddle 1986: 73). Here, roles are understood to be created by normative expectations, stemming from several official, organisational and informal sources, which potentially leads to role conflict or role strain. Drawing on Weber’s (1946, 1947) theory of bureaucracy, Levinson (1959: 171) argues that the relevance of individual agency is largely excluded from organisational approaches which view an organisation as a “monolithic edifice” with clearly defined normative roles filled by position-holders devoid of choice, motivation and individual creativity. Within such bureaucratic organisations, “impersonal rationality,” discipline, and obedience rule, and “emotion is regarded merely as a hinderance to efficiency” (Levinson 1957: 171).

Within these three perspectives, systems are understood as a series of ‘input-output’ processes or “role episodes” where expectations are sent, roles are received, and role behaviour is enacted in response to the expectations (Simpson and Carroll 2008: 30). While these perspectives are useful for considering how journalists understand their roles within relatively structured social systems, whether a newsroom or more broadly the journalistic field, they leave little room for considering how journalists may contest or reject certain role expectations, as well as negotiate and adapt roles based on shifting expectations, for example, as a result of their growing interaction with audiences, new journalistic actors, and non-human technological actants (i.e. technologies) (Lewis and Westlund 2015). Indeed, the above approaches have been criticized for assuming and overemphasizing the stability of social systems and the ability for them to stimulate conformity, and have not accounted for the impact that non-normative expectations can have on role-incumbents (Biddle 1986: 70). The following two perspectives acknowledge this complexity and limitations and offer a more flexible understanding of roles, chiefly as an outcome of interaction.

The symbolic interactionist and cognitive role theory approaches treat roles and expectations as symbolically and discursively constructed and modified based on the changing social conditions, and the dynamic and shifting interaction between actors within a particular role-relationship (Merton 1957). *Symbolic interactionists* focus on “the evolution of roles through social interaction” among individual actors, and roles are understood more broadly and flexibly to “reflect norms, attitudes, contextual demands, negotiations, and the evolving definitions of the situation as understood by the actors” (Biddle 1986: 71). This perspective does not neglect the influence of social structures or systems on roles but conceptualizes them as “an ongoing process of social construction that depends upon the interplay between a fairly predictable, static social order, and the creative actions of actors” (Simpson and Carroll 2008: 30). As such, role-incumbents are members of both a somewhat orderly system of rules and regulations, but also hold agency to adapt their roles (or adopt new ones) by interacting with various expectation-senders and negotiating their expectations. Similarly, *cognitive role theory*, with the broadest empirical application and several subfields, focuses on the relationship between role behaviour and expectations, and the social conditions that generate and shape expectations, and how these expectations affect social conduct (Biddle 1986: 74). Importantly, this perspective is also concerned with how individuals perceive others’ expectations and how these affect their behaviour. Conversely, criticism of these approaches includes paying less attention to the “structural constraints upon expectations and roles” (Biddle 1986: 72). Simpson and Carroll (2008) go further to say that despite its greater

flexibility, the symbolic interactionist approach is in fact similarly rooted in the functionalist view of roles and identity as enduring, stable, and singular rather than evolving. Even taking into consideration that the dramaturgical approach to understanding roles as the performance of scripts (Goffman 1959) is rooted in the symbolic interactionist tradition, Simpson and Carroll (2008) argue that ready-scripted roles are merely part of a static system with a predefined role repertoire that actors can access to perform the prescribed demands of their social positions.

In outlining the major perspectives through which roles and expectations can be studied, the benefits and limitations of each become evident. We also see that to a greater or lesser extent, most perspectives at their foundation see roles as simultaneously constrained and changeable by expectations. In that sense, the delineation of each perspective obscures in some way that each perspective offers a partial but valid perspective on the complex nature of roles, and that perhaps none function ideally in isolation from others.

Key to this study is that a framework for studying how journalists and audiences understand their roles and expectations should draw on multiple perspectives in an attempt to bridge gaps between role analysis at the system or macro-level (structural, functional), the meso level (organisational), and at the individual or micro-level (symbolic interactionist, cognitive) (Stryker 1980) without pretending that any of these perspectives speaks exclusively to one particular level of a system, but rather they overlap. Relying solely on one would also dismiss the idea that journalistic roles are on the one hand discursively and symbolically constructed and their relationship to audiences is one increasingly built on interaction and, on the other hand, that journalists operate within an institution that is organised and hierarchical in nature, where roles are generated in response to the expectations directed at their journalistic position. That is to say that none of these perspectives employed in isolation could explain the complexity of roles. This is echoed to some extent by scholars of role enactment in news content, who argue that understanding why journalists' role conceptions are often not reflected in news content requires taking into account how the organisational and societal levels (deadlines, political systems, economic powers) shape journalists' roles and work practices (Mellado and Hellmueller 2015). Similarly, drawing on multiple perspectives acknowledges that the individual and their identity as a member of a larger social system or network becomes more or less central to understanding how roles are generated.

Although role theory has been characterized as broad and shallow, it also offers a conceptual richness that helps us understand with more nuance how roles emerge in response to internally and externally held expectations, and therefore offers a framework for

understanding the changing relationship between journalists and audiences, their roles and expectations, respectively. While journalists' role conceptions have been explored quite extensively (as will be discussed in the following sections), the expectations that others hold of journalists remain relatively underexplored but they may hold key insights into how journalists' roles have evolved and continue to evolve in response to these diverse expectations.

2.2. JOURNALISTIC ROLE CONCEPTIONS:

From neutral-advocate binaries to extensive typologies

How roles are developed and understood by journalists is shaped by journalism cultures (Hanitzsch 2007), media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004) and envisioned professional ideals and norms which emerge out of different countries' and regions' historical, political, social and economic contexts, and traditions of journalistic professionalization (Donsbach 1981, 2008; van Dalen 2012). However, journalistic roles also become social and institutional norms by being articulated. That is, roles as discursive constructions are "those things journalists set out to do and that they believe to be their social and moral responsibility" (Vos 2016: 42). A lot of what we know about journalistic role conceptions has grown out of seminal research of journalists in the US and European countries, mainly Germany, both with distinct histories and key differences. For example, whereas American journalists were committed to pursuing objective and balanced reporting, German journalists more explicitly challenged one's ability to be truly objective and placed value on providing interpretive analysis and opinion on social and political issues (Donsbach and Patterson 2004).

Journalistic roles have a long history, and have been informed by ideal types, normative standards and empirical typologies (Donsbach 2010: 40). In his analysis of their surrounding historical discourses, Vos (2016) outlined several roles that emerged throughout the three centuries of US history, including roles no longer espoused today, such as the prophetic role, the forum role, the agitator role, and the mirror role, among others. However, many of the roles that emerged back then, such as the gatekeeper and watchdog roles, continue to define journalists' occupational identities to this day (Vos 2016). Over the past few decades, conceptual and empirical work has continued to expand journalistic role typologies (Hanitzsch et al. 2019; Weaver and Willnat 2012; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Some of this earliest role conceptions research conceptualized roles as a binary value system that to a large extent continues to define and shape our understanding of journalists' roles today. Journalists were seen to live a "bifurcated professional existence" torn between two dichotomous role

conceptions: the neutral role within which journalists are informers, educators, interpreters and instruments of the government; and the active or participant role which sees journalists as a representative of the public, a critic of government, a maker and advocate of policy (Cohen 1963: 19-20). In many ways, this distinction is seen in roles rooted in traditional-liberal versus development media theory, where, for example, South African journalists negotiate and fulfil the roles of being a watchdog and being an advocate and supporter of national development (de Beer et al. 2016) and whether the media should serve in the ‘public interests’ or the ‘national interest’ (Wasserman and de Beer 2005).

A similar distinction was made by Janowitz (1975: 619) between the gatekeeper and advocate roles. The former concerned itself with the pursuit of objectivity, and the journalists’ role “rested on his ability to detect, emphasize, and disseminate that which was important” (Janowitz 1975: 618). The latter role in particular emerged strongly in the 1960s when journalists began to question the feasibility of objectivity, in particular as a response to the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam war protests in the US, and entailed interpreting, criticizing and advocating for the interests of “excluded and underprivileged groups”. As Vos (2016: 48) highlights, many of US journalism’s key roles “emerged during times of social unsettledness” when established meaning systems and social ideologies are dissolved and replaced to reflect new realities. What further differentiated the two early role orientations were the journalists’ perceptions of their audiences and how they went about selecting news (Donsbach 2008). Whereas the gatekeepers believed in providing neutral news to an audience they saw as enabled to pursue their own interests, the advocates felt they had to act on behalf of audiences by providing news which empowered specific and often marginalized social groups (Donsbach 2008). As such, the advocate role was perceived as a “political act” and a departure from journalistic professionalism which revolved around the detachment or objectivity norm (Janowitz 1975: 621) criticised by Tuchman (1972: 661) as merely a “strategic ritual” that journalists engage in to “deflect criticism” and ward off accusations of irrationality and subjectivity in storytelling. The objectivity norm has since been recognized as a news value that reinforces White privilege and allows journalists to perpetuate racist stereotypes (Robinson and Culvert 2019). Whiteness is rooted in news practices such as an overreliance on official documents which are “tied to ideas of ‘reason’ and ‘objectivity’” (Aleman 2014) (further discussed in Section 2.4.2.2).

Janowitz (1975) also argued that neutral journalists were consensus-oriented towards “news which binds the social order,” while the “participant journalist holds conflict-based news values” and thus “generates conflict and dissent” (Johnstone et al. 1972: 535). The advocate

role has since its inception been seen as problematic to journalism's professionalization; ambiguous, irresponsible, secondary to gatekeeping, and lacking the power to inform a rational, democratic society. This view led Janowitz (1975: 662) to conclude that the advocate role "if it is to persist with effectiveness and responsibility, it will require an element of professionalization to ensure its independence and to define its limits and potentials." This view is rooted in journalism's professionalization project (Nerone 2013). Increasing monopolization of the newspaper market, ownership and post-World War I propaganda all contributed to growing perceptions of the media as having too great a power to be trusted to deliver the fairest compilation of the news-of-the-day. The professionalization project assured audiences that journalists "would have the capacity as independent and autonomous professionals to overcome the biases inherent in both the untrained cognitive machinery of ordinary humans and in the interested industrial machinery of the press as a big business" (Nerone 2013). Professionalization was intended to increase the public's perception of journalism as a prestigious occupation and legitimate source of news. However, journalism's professionalization also led to greater detachment from and diminished opportunity to communicate with the public. As McLeod (1964: 538) put forward: "in accepting a professional outlook, the journalist is actually moving away from the public in his judgement."

Journalism's professionalization project and the ensuing treatment of journalists' opposing roles has been a source of "competing expectations" for journalists to "master two opposing psychological states" (Johnstone et al. 1975: 524). At the same time, this "basic tension at the heart of the journalist's work between neutral mediation and active participation has been a constant theme of subsequent research on the organization of journalistic work up to today" (Christians et al. 2009: 141) and continues to define how scholars study journalistic roles.

These early accounts of binary roles prompted the expansion and modification of measures and typologies and set into motion sustained research to understand journalistic roles through large-scale, longitudinal and representative studies of journalists in the US (Johnstone et al. 1975; Weaver and Wilhoit 1986, 1996; Weaver et al. 2007; Weaver and Willnat 2016), and later also globally. Developing the first set of survey role items that could examine the neutral-participant binary concepts, Johnstone and colleagues (1975) found stronger support among journalists towards participant roles (investigating government claims, providing analysis to complex problems, discussing national policy, and developing intellectual and cultural interests among public) than neutral ones (reporting as quickly as possible, avoiding non-verifiable stories, reporting stories of interest to the broadest audience, and providing

relaxation and entertainment). In 1983, Culbertson identified the traditional, interpretive and activist roles or “belief clusters” (Culbertson 1983: 7). In the traditional cluster, journalists believed in the importance of conventional news values such as reporting in a timely manner, having consequences, and human interest, as well as formalities such as relying on the inverted pyramid. The interpretation cluster saw journalists believe in the importance of recognizing a problem, and defining its causes and implications, similarly to those in the activist cluster who displayed greater concern for writing longer pieces on controversial issues but also faced challenges in justifying their news judgements and time/space concerns to editorial management. Responding to popular rhetoric that depicted journalists at that time as “an arrogant, meddlesome elite, bent on being adversaries”, Weaver and Wilhoit (1986: 112) added to the original repertoire two more survey items that would test journalists’ inclinations to be an adversary to government and business. However, this was perceived as the least important role among journalists, throughout all their studies. In a follow-up study, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) revealed three roles: adversarial, interpretive (akin to participant/advocate), and disseminator (akin to neutral/gatekeeper). Ten years later, debates on the value of public journalism prompted the addition of two more survey items that revealed the populist mobilizer role.

What these early studies began to show is that the binary belief system was more of a continuum (Johnstone et al. 1975), a “misnomer” (Weaver et al. 1986) and a “conglomerate” (Köcher 1986) of competing roles, with journalists endorsing both or multiple roles depending on the political, cultural, and institutional demands specific to their country (Willnat et al. 2013). Over time, role conception scholarship has become increasingly complex, with scholars expanding their curiosity across regions and the globe in comparative studies revealing differences across journalism cultures, at regional, global and media system levels (Hanitzsch et al. 2011; Weaver and Willnat 2012). For example, amongst continental European journalists, Germans and Italians followed the advocacy model of journalism over Swedish journalists who were closer to US and UK journalists in their orientation (Donsbach and Patterson 2004). Although within the same media system, Swedish journalists oriented towards the neutral-disseminator role of reporting quickly, concentrating on issues of broadest interest to audiences and providing entertainment and relaxation (Strömbäck et al. 2012), while Danish journalists placed more value on representing citizens’ interests by being critical of those with political and economic power (Skovsgaard et al. 2012). However, in her study of German and British journalists, Köcher (1986: 57) concludes that even when journalists orient more strongly towards neutral or advocacy roles – finding that British journalists were bloodhounds (neutral

hunter and reporters of news) and German journalists missionaries (taking up grievances) – this divide is more so a “theoretical construct” and in empirical reality both forms exist simultaneously.

What the early evolution of role conceptualizations also indicates is that many of the roles that society associates with journalists today emerged not only because journalists discursively constructed them but also because scholars sought them out in response to prominent societal debates of that time, taking place in particular cultural, political and societal contexts (the US, UK, and Germany). Since then, numerous studies have gone on to use Weaver and colleagues’ (1986, 1996, 2007) role survey items as a blueprint for examining the role conceptions of journalists in countries with unique political and social histories, by adding role items to account for local contexts and to test for the presence of additional roles (e.g. Ramaprasad and Rahman 2006; Pintak 2014). International-scale, comparative studies have shed further light on the similarities and differences across journalism cultures, expanding existing role typologies, but also highlighting great variation in the importance journalists in different countries assign to different roles (Hanitzsch et al. 2011; Weaver and Willnat 2012). Importantly, these global studies began to incorporate journalists located in countries commonly referred to as ‘beyond the West’ identifying four unique professional milieus featuring different countries and journalism cultures – the populist disseminator, detached watchdog, critical change agent and the opportunist facilitator (Hanitzsch et al. 2011). This raises the question: How have these studies gone on to contribute to the normalization of a “hegemonic Western model of journalism” (Nerone 2013) and the way journalism scholarship has continued to study and conceptualize roles within a Western framework (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018: 147)? In these and other studies inclusive of journalists in Majority World Countries, scholars have found that journalists have hybrid roles by adapting Western conceptions to local contexts, prompting scholars to emphasize the importance of qualitative approaches to exploring roles in under-researched journalism cultures and especially transitional societies (Votmer and Wasserman 2014; Ileri 2016, discussed further in Section 2.2.2).

Qualitative, interview-based role-conceptions studies have often revealed greater variation and emergence of alternative journalistic roles. For example, focusing on social justice journalists – those who cover social issues such as mental health, criminal justice, and homelessness, among others – Steinke and Belair-Gagnon (2020: 12) found that beyond being objective disseminators and watchdogs, journalists also felt their roles were to “manage and guide audiences through emotional work” of interpreting often emotionally intense issues, as well as to motivate them into “action by putting readers in somebody else’s shoes” and

inspiring them to “create new, better ways of living together as a community.” In many ways, these roles resemble those found among lifestyle journalists who seek to guide audiences’ emotions, and inspire and motivate them to improve their lifestyles (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). Similarly, through interviews with over 500 journalists in Germany, Meyen and Riesmeyer (2012) found them to have roles as diverse as being service providers, sentinels, teachers, detectives, lobbyists, artists, traders and promoters. Here, for example, the service provider is strongly oriented towards the audience and supplying them with news that is useful, resembling in many ways the service providers role found among lifestyle journalists (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). Yet, role conception scholarship has tended to study political journalists separately, seeing their roles as unique compared to other forms of journalism, for example, lifestyle journalism (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2019).

This review of literature on journalistic role conceptions shows a well-developed area of research, and no scarcity of role concepts contributing to a rich typology. However, it begins to highlight key shortcomings. Firstly, role conceptions scholarship since its inception has overwhelmingly focused on the roles of political journalists and its central function in democracy, and in doing so has perpetuated its social relevance and legitimacy in contrast to softer forms of journalism that address everyday life, such as lifestyle journalism. This is despite some evidence that ‘non-lifestyle’ journalists share similar role conceptions to lifestyle journalists (Steinke and Belair-Gagnon 2020). Secondly, scholarship on journalistic roles has historically been developed and studied predominantly quantitatively and within a Western framework (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), despite evidence that journalists in Majority World Countries negotiate hybrid role conceptions (Votmer 2013). The following two sections delve further into illustrating these shortcomings.

2.2.1. Political versus lifestyle journalism

Journalism research has tended to prioritize political journalism as playing a key and only function in democracy and citizenship, at the expense of considering the societal contribution of softer forms of journalism (Zelizer 2013). Having somewhat neglected non-political forms of journalism for much of the 20th century, the dramatic changes in the industry since the turn of the 21st century have led journalism scholarship to increasingly explore softer forms of journalism. One area that has received growing attention is the field of lifestyle journalism. Compared to scholarship on role conceptions of political journalists, scholarship on lifestyle journalism is in its relative infancy but steadily growing. Scholars of lifestyle journalism have

stressed that this genre of journalism has been treated as “unworthy of the term journalism” (Hanusch 2012: 3), “relegated to the backburner of journalism studies” (Fürsich 2012: 12), and occupying “a marginal space” (Vodanovic 2019: 1) in the field of journalism studies research. However, the enormous transformations in journalism, alongside the flourishing of consumer culture allowing consumer audiences to craft out specific lifestyles globally, have led scholars to explore lifestyle journalism’s place in society more deeply (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2012; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). To better understand the significance of lifestyle journalism in society, we also need to understand the social significance of lifestyle itself. Chaney (1996: 4) referred to lifestyle as “patterns of action that differentiate people,” while Featherstone (1987) saw lifestyle as a “distinctive style of life of specific groups,” and a particular “taste” visible in how people exercise their “individuality, self-expression, and stylistic self-consciousness” (Featherstone 1987: 55). The relevance of Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of “taste” is elaborated later in this thesis, in discussing how access to different forms of capital (cultural, economic, social) shape a person’s social class and their taste for cultural products. Lifestyle journalism thus offers an *orientation* for how people manage their lives; how people *perform* their lifestyles; and, how people *express* or *articulate* their identity (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013).

Much of scholarship’s growing focus on lifestyle journalism can also be attributed to the societal shifts in response to modernization, seen particularly in Western countries, towards individualization and de-traditionalization, social value change, and mediatization (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). *Individualization* speaks to the fact that traditional institutions have become less important when it comes to providing people with normative guidance and orientation. Instead, individuals now have greater responsibility and more choices in managing themselves and their everyday lives. Articulating or performing an identity has become an individual task rather than something you are born into. The dimension of *social value change* is a response to a shift from an emphasis on “survival values to self-expression values,” especially where people have the economic resources to secure survival needs, and money can be reallocated to express or exhibit a personal way of life through purchasable lifestyle products and services (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013: 946). Finally, media has become an extension of who we are, how we express ourselves, how we go about our daily lives, and how we access information, indicating a process of *mediatization* of daily life. All of these changes have located lifestyle journalism firmly in the repertoire of what news media audiences consume on a daily basis. Despite these changes, scholarship has overwhelmingly studied journalism by separating its relationship with political life from that with everyday life, privileging the former

(Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). In doing so, journalism and communication scholarship has perpetuated a hierarchical boundary between public-political life and private or domestic-personal life, subordinating journalism's relationship with everyday life to that with political life (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). This distinction "signifies mainly an acceptance of a hierarchy of journalism rather than a useful division between truly different kinds of journalism" (van Zoonen 1998: 37). As a result, the conceptual validity but arguably also empirical evidence of the political-everyday (lifestyle) journalism binary has increasingly been questioned.

Boundary discussions are a key dimension of journalism studies (Vodanovic 2019; Loosen 2015), particularly as a way to understand how technological changes have allowed new journalistic actors to 'disrupt' the traditional journalistic field (Carlson and Lewis 2015; Eldridge 2018). Work examining journalistic boundaries has often drawn on Gieryn (1983: 782) who applied the concept of 'boundary work' to examine how scientists use institutional characteristics to discursively distinguish themselves from 'non-scientists'. Boundary work has been conceptualized as a process occurring in three forms: expulsion or rejection from the core of those who challenge established journalistic practices and values; expansion or acceptance of peripheral actors into the legitimate field; and protection of autonomy from external influences (Carlson 2015). This exertion of autonomy is most visible in journalism's claims of resistance to market pressures and commercial influences (Coddington 2015: 67).

From the perspective of social systems theory (as advanced by German sociologist Niklas Luhmann), the notion of (blurring) boundaries can also be understood as a process of 'de-bounding' or 'de-differentiation' of journalism or some aspect of it, and even more broadly the transformation of society's various systems (Loosen 2015). To better understand the blurring of boundaries, de-bounding can be considered as a process, accounting for its point of departure (a differentiated/bounded journalism), time-duration of change (how long the unravelling of boundaries has been happening), and extent to which de-bounding has occurred (what sort of boundary markers/changes have been observed and/or challenged) (Loosen 2015). The concept itself is useful not only for examining discourses of exclusion and inclusion between journalism and other types of media or other forms of communication, but also between areas or genres within journalism (Loosen 2015) – for example, between political and lifestyle journalism and how boundary markers are used to assert/challenge claims to authority and societal legitimacy. Some of this can be seen in how journalists evoke "a familiar lexicon of idealised roles and functions" to discursively assert in-group and out-group boundaries, most commonly between themselves as traditional news media and interloper or peripheral media (Eldridge 2014: 3). However, even within the in-group of traditional journalism, digital

journalists as a sub-group have discursively differentiated themselves from others both within (print journalists) and outside (citizen journalists) the field (Ferrucci and Vos 2017).

Journalism, or specifically political journalism, as Nerone (2013) writes, is an ‘-ism’ and thus a belief system which historically has professionalized itself into a position of authority and responsibility over dispensing news to the public. In that process it has engaged in the othering and questioning of news practices that it deems to be non-journalistic, including gossip, tabloid news and sensationalist or entertaining reporting styles. The rise of popular forms of journalism has roots in the socialite gossip columnists of the 1920s interwar era in Britain. These journalists had access to elite social spaces, a personal approach to reporting, interest in upper-class fashion and culture, and a friendly writing style which was a “response to public demand for personal forms of journalism that focused on the latest forms of leisure and fashion” (Newman 2013: 713). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the middle-class political journalist rejected such hybrid socialite-journalist figures and their journalism as mere circulation-hungry stunts (Newman 2013).

A rise in soft forms of news has often been treated with caution among journalism scholars. Hanusch (2012: 2) has highlighted that scholars typically see this trend towards “tabloidization of the news media” as undesirable and “run[ning] counter to idealized notions of what journalism should be and do” and in particular its normative connection to politics and democracy (Zelizer 2013). While some have argued that a decrease in the quality of hard news has led to politically uninformed and disengaged citizens, others suggest that soft news in fact helps audiences, especially politically inattentive ones, gain political knowledge (Baum 2003). Journalistic coverage of everyday life has regularly been denigrated as too uncritical, too beholden to outside interests, or perhaps simply too ordinary to be considered worthy of serious analysis (Hanusch 2019). While political journalism creates the normative expectation that audiences should consume quality, serious news that contributes to democratic engagement and good citizenship, ‘soft’ forms of journalism (e.g. tabloids and lifestyle journalism) are often seen as pertaining to the everyday and thus not considered serious journalism (see Hanusch 2019; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Reinforcing this hierarchical duality is the view that political journalism is “important for an informed citizenry” and popular forms of journalism and media “frivolously focus on individual pleasure and consumption” (Fürsich 2012: 17). Indeed, lifestyle journalists appear to have absorbed such characterizations by suggesting their political journalism peers see their work as trivial and fluffy, and consisting of fun and holidays (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013: 955).

In recent times, however, this divide has been challenged, with scholars questioning the centrality of democracy and politics as key to understanding the purpose of journalism in society, arguing that it needs to be broadened (Zelizer 2013). Other boundary markers frequently evoked to differentiate political and lifestyle journalism are those pertaining to economic or market forces and pressures. Indeed, lifestyle journalists are confronted with economic pressures perhaps more than political journalists, precisely because the nature of their work demands that they more readily and frequently engage with lifestyle industry bodies (e.g. hotels, fashion and beauty brands, technology companies) who may offer them free products (freebies) or demand coverage in exchange for advertising investment. Here lifestyle journals have been found to experience these various sources of pressure as soft or hard forms of power (Hanusch et al. 2019) and to negotiate these by both resisting them creatively or being resigned to the fact that they are economically dependent and that accommodating such pressures is part of the game (Hanusch et al. 2016). Journalism's growing market orientation and its struggle to gain and maintain audiences has led to the "feminization of journalism" which sees journalism focus on shorter stories, greater use of colour and graphics, paying attention to lifestyle issues and emphasizing human interest, sensationalism, greater emotional involvement in storytelling, and, importantly, caring about audience's needs and desires; that is, focusing on news that is useful to audiences rather than following the "democratic or professional journalistic imperative of what would be in the public service" (van Zoonen 1998: 37). These changes, of course, have been "fiercely criticized by scholars and traditional news journalists who feel that their professional ideals have been sold to market forces" (van Zoonen 1998: 37).

That the tension between political and lifestyle journalism is gendered becomes all the more evident when considering the public-private 'grand dichotomy' which has structured much of social reality.

2.2.1.1. The public-private grand dichotomy

The public-private "grand dichotomy" is a social construct and ideal that stems from Western-liberal thought and permeates political, economic, anthropologic, and feminist debates around what constitutes public and private life (Weintraub 1997). For example, where in political theory the 'public sphere' is a space of rational political debate (Habermas 1991), in feminist scholarship the private refers to the domestic sphere of female subjugation and exclusion of women from public or civil spheres (Pateman 1983). Oppositional terminology associated with

this divide often includes reason, power, culture (masculine/public), and emotion, intuition, nature (feminine/private) (Pateman 1983; see also Alley-Young 2008).

Costera Meijer (2001) has also argued that underneath this classic division between quality (i.e. political) and popular (i.e. lifestyle, tabloid) journalism lie gendered and ethno-centric assumptions about what is and is not quality in journalism; an assumption that has led to the neglect of journalism's relevance to the private sphere, and the emotionality and intimacy of everyday life. Such gendered dichotomies of hard versus soft news, fact versus opinion, fast daily news versus human interest, public versus private, perpetuate a "gender-differentiated news agenda" (Ross and Carter 2011: 1149) and the marginalization of those perceived to belong to the female domain. Other scholars have argued that journalism is inherently a patriarchal, masculine field (Djerf-Pierre 2007; Steiner 2020). Journalism's history is rooted in "independence and individual autonomy rather than subordination and dependence" from which gendered oppositions have emerged between man as "solitary and untrammelled" and woman symbolizing "concord, harmony, affiliation, community," thus bringing individual components into unity (Covert 1981: 4). The quality-popular journalism binary plays out in several dimensions of journalism: 1) the public sphere is associated with democracy and citizenship, while the private sphere is associated with female matters of reproduction, nurturing and family life; 2) expressions of emotion are inappropriate compared to the rationality deemed relevant for democratic discourse and culture, while a focus on the legitimacy of emotional experiences rather than the experiences themselves leads to othering and silencing of minorities whose cultural practices and experiences are not shared by the majority; and 3) journalism's orientation towards autonomy and detachment are rooted in "the Western-liberal model of the White independent male," which neglects the idea that individuality is relational and embedded in collective identity (relationships with family and friends) that celebrates dependency and involvement (Costera Meijer 2001: 199). That news is gendered, Van Zoonen (1998) argues, is evident in the topics, angles, sources and ethical orientation employed to construct news. While masculine news focuses on politics, crime, and finance, employs angles that are fact- and sensation-driven, relies on male sources and upholds an ethics of detachment, feminine journalism focuses on topics of human interest, consumer news, culture, and social policy, their story angles pay attention to backgrounds and effects, compassion, and is general (gender-neutral), their sources are female, and their ethics are guided by audience needs.

However, as much as everyday life itself cannot really be separated from the political (Gardiner 2000), several studies have identified how what are often considered mundane or

ordinary forms of journalism can have political utility. Studying everyday life in relation to journalism “includes realities such as securing daily provisions, self-maintenance and entertainment. Through it, all persons must manage their emotional state and negotiate their identity” (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018: 151). Scholarship on journalism and everyday life can be grouped into four strands (Hanusch 2019). *Consumption* refers to a crucial aspect in today’s journalism ecology, with news media “increasingly addressing audience members in their capacity as consumers by featuring various kinds of purchasable products and patterns of leisure-time activities” (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018: 12). *Identity* refers to the fact that social origin and background are now less important determinants of people’s identity as are a broad range of influences that shape their sense of self. Here journalism and the everyday provides people with “orientation for the management of self and everyday life, and for developing a sense of identification and belonging” (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018: 158). *Emotion* is an important component of journalism’s role in everyday life and helps individuals regulate their mood (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Scholarship has shown the growing centrality and importance of emotion in journalistic practice and consumption (Wahl-Jorgensen 2020). Finally, the *public quality* strand of scholarship refers to lifestyle journalism’s political utility and public value.

Scholarship has shown that lifestyle journalists seek to entertain, inspire, and offer life orientation and exemplars of desired lifestyles, to be a service provider (offer advice, tips, product review) (Fürsich 2012; Hanusch 2019; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), friend and mood manager, as well as a marketer – roles that speak to the interrelated domains of consumption, identity, and emotion (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Many of these role conceptions, especially the service provider, stem from service journalism or ‘news-you-can-use’ which provides audiences with information – advice, commentary, help – that speaks to the problems of everyday life (Eide and Knight 1999). However, lifestyle journalists also seek to advocate by monitoring and scrutinizing lifestyle industries, roles traditionally found in political journalism (Hanusch 2019). A closer look at the role conceptions of lifestyle journalists across various genres reveals norms and values that are similar in their orientation to those found among political journalists. Lifestyle journalism in its coverage of the everyday is in many ways political (Hanusch 2012), and this can be seen in the topics and issues covered by lifestyle journalism across genres. For example, travel journalism reflects critical discourses on tourism and the environment, where travel journalists “play an active role in promoting global environmental concern” (McGaurr 2012: 57). As cultural mediators, travel journalists promote cross-cultural understanding and knowledge, but are also critical of social, political and tourism industry developments that may be detrimental to a destination (Hanusch 2011). Food

journalism contributes to constructing but also negotiating cultural values, beliefs, and identities, as well as cultural boundaries. Duffy and Yang (2012) found that food journalism in Singapore contributed to nation building as defined by the country's government, through narratives of self-improvement, promotion of cosmopolitan attitudes, and ethnic-cultural authenticity of food. Health journalists think of themselves as advocates, educators, informers, and importantly translators by turning the complex language of science into everyday language that can be understood by broad audiences. Hinnant and colleagues (2016) found that US health journalists see their roles on a spectrum, from disseminating (least supported), to being adversaries in questioning sources, interpreting and critically analysing information and offering audience context around health issues, and finally (most strongly supported), the facilitative role, where journalist advocated for change by offering solutions to health issues and challenges and mobilizing audiences to get involved in bringing about change. While relatively limited, this literature begins to suggest overlap and a blurring distinction between political and lifestyle role conceptions.

A significant number of studies have also dealt with how journalism students conceptualize their roles as future journalists before newsroom socialization, finding that journalism students' news consumption practices also shape how important they believe certain roles are (Tandoc 2014). In contrast to industry journalists, students rank the importance of certain roles differently, perceiving the value of soft news as equal or higher than hard news (Coleman et al. 2018). This makes sense as the news consumption preferences and practices of younger audience generations indicate that they are challenging the private-public, quality-popular binaries (Costera Meijer 2007). Doing so does not mean abandoning quality; Costera Meijer (2007) argued that quality (independence, factuality, trustworthiness) is as important as ever to young audiences, but they expect quality to be presented in a captivating (not "boring") and entertaining way. They also expect media to promote social integration and cohesion, represent diverse voices and ethnic groups, offer understanding through humour and empathy, and foster collective memory and a sense of community belonging (Costera Meijer 2010). Audiences are more likely to find relevant and remember news stories that are dramatic, vivid and demonstrate the personal or human-interest element in public events, because they allow audiences to connect with others (Bird 1998).

For audiences, attraction to and satisfaction from news consumption means feeling empowered to learn and understand the complexity of political news, expectations that appear to be different from what political journalists produce (Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer 2017). For young people, political comedy and humorous content can increase political trust,

evaluation of political efficacy and engagement (Becker 2011). Beyond the assumption that news of any kind must lead to political knowledge or engagement, lifestyle journalism's value to audiences also includes the provision of entertainment, relaxation and often an escape from the negativity and burden of political news, among other functions that speak to audience's everyday life needs and preferences (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013).

Lifestyle journalism therefore is a “reflective practice and a producer of niche audiences and communities, at times showing continuity, at others disruption, of traditional roles” (Vodanovic 2019: 5). Fürsich (2012) has argued that lifestyle journalism is capable of contributing to the democratisation of the public sphere by enhancing social cohesion. Similar arguments have been put forward by scholars of cultural journalism. Seeing themselves as closer to artists and cultural critics than journalists, cultural journalists orient themselves towards the educator role more than being watchdogs (Hovden and Knapskog 2015) – once again roles that are traditionally associated with political journalists. Since cultural journalism often engages in debates on issues of political significance to society (e.g. race, religion, immigration) studies have pointed to the presence of the political in cultural journalism, calling for a “re-politicisation of cultural journalism” (Kristensen and From 2015: 762). However, beyond politicizing cultural or lifestyle journalism, evident to some extent in the above literature, this study also seeks to examine the presence of and challenge the ‘artificial’ and ‘gendered’ boundaries that separate the political from lifestyle, the public from the private (Costera Meijer 2001).

Besides the dichotomy and hierarchy that has characterized the division between political and lifestyle journalism, similar hierarchies are seen in the division between roles associated with the traditional-liberal models of journalism, and those associated with the development of journalism more often found in countries or regions beyond the West or the Anglo-American world. These tensions are discussed in the following section.

2.2.2. Journalistic roles ‘beyond the West’ but not beyond Western frameworks

In recent years there has been a growing recognition and criticism of journalism scholarship's focus on Western contexts, with calls to de-Westernize or Africanize media theory to better understand the role of journalism in postcolonial and post-authoritarian societies (Mabweazara 2015; Rodny-Gumede 2015). This involves developing frameworks based on indigenous epistemologies such as the moral philosophies of *Ubuntu* in South Africa or *Ahimsa* in India (Rao and Wasserman 2007). An ubuntu-driven journalism framework would see South African

journalists report in the service of a broader, more inclusive and representative public while also playing a role in nation building (Rodny-Gumede 2015). It also involves challenging Western and Eurocentric normative conceptions of journalism as a hierarchical binary between the more revered traditional-liberal journalism values such as critical watchdog reporting and values found within development journalism such as acting as a social change agent, which may involve supporting national development in a fragile democracy (de Beer et al. 2016). What many studies reviewed in the following section show is that journalists hold hybrid roles. In other words, journalists' roles are informed by a two-way consideration of both global and local epistemologies, with their roles "glocalized" to reflect their national and cultural context (Wasserman and Rao 2008).

What needs to be problematized again is that historically, the active or participant or advocate role often found among journalists beyond the West was and arguably still is associated with conflict and dissent – the antithesis to the consensus-seeking and social-order-restoring neutral role (Janowitz 1975: 662) and historically seen as a threat to journalism's ongoing "professionalization project" (Nerone 2013: 450). In balancing professional norms of detachment revered by journalists in the West and those more suitable to reporting on issues in emerging democracies using principles of development or peace journalism, journalists in contexts beyond the West find themselves balancing "opposing psychological states" (Johnstone et al. 1975: 524). For example, for journalists in South Africa, negotiating hybrid role conceptions is about balancing both traditional (liberal) journalistic values and those enshrined in development projects which emphasise African cultural identities and encourage journalists to report in the national interest (Kanyegirire 2006; Wasserman and de Beer 2005; Rodny-Gumede 2015). Some South African journalists cannot reconcile their role as independent watchdogs serving the public interest function and their need or right to belong to a political party, because of the belief that this would compromise their autonomy in the eyes of the public (Daniels 2017). Nerone (2013: 453) has argued that "any normative model will include an element of fantasy" but what Western hegemonic normative conceptions of journalism have failed to recognize is the fantasy of their model, often treating other models as "noxious." To be legitimate and serve an objective democratic function, Western normative ideals of journalism need to be perceived as autonomous (Hamada 2016), something that is not always possible or desirable in developing contexts. For example, despite there being low support among US journalists for the adversarial role (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986), the presence of this role has often been treated as an indication of an independent press and professional journalism in countries where journalists engage in principles of development journalism.

Development journalism, on the other hand, is often associated almost exclusively with developing democracies where journalists are seen to collaborate with government and work towards fulfilling the national interest – an antithesis to professional ideals of journalism (de Beer et al. 2016). Journalists from regions such as Southeast Asia or sub-Saharan Africa find developmental roles such as education, national development and social intervention considerably more important than detached and adversarial journalism, which are revered by their peers in Western Europe and North America (Kalyango et al. 2017). In post-conflict societies, such as the Western Balkans, journalists balance both traditional journalism values but also feel that they have a much greater responsibility to engage in transitional journalism by addressing a troubled past (Andresen et al. 2017). This sees journalists balancing a “double role” of adhering to professional norms while also using their power to influence society by providing analysis, promoting tolerance and diversity, educating, influencing public opinion, advocating for social change, and supporting national development, while remaining critical of political institutions they perceive as inadequately contributing to the transformation of the region (Andresen et al. 2017: 10). The question of how journalism of development can better serve local communities and articulate their needs and interests has been a key topic within South African journalism research (Fourie 2010). While traditional-liberal journalistic norms and those espoused by development journalism are often seen as binary opposites, journalists perceive both as almost equally important. South African journalists found it almost equally as important to act as monitors and watchdogs of political power as supporting national development (de Beer et al. 2016). While being a watchdog was about standing up and exposing problems and wrong-doing and protecting the public from abuses, supporting national development was about promoting and making audiences aware of beneficial development and improvements to society. As de Beer et al. (2016) conclude, these findings show a binary that is not a binary, and normative theory that does not see these two as contradictory is yet to be developed. Similarly, Rodny-Gumede (2015) also found that although South African journalists prioritised reporting in the public interest over reporting in the national interest, they also claimed that the two role conceptions do not need to be polarized and that reporting in the national interest may actually be in the public interest. South African journalists’ conceptions of their normative roles and practices in the present day are also negotiated against their memory of apartheid. That journalists perceive their role as watchdogs in the present is justified by recalling their role in resisting apartheid in the past and the need to defend their professional freedoms (Wasserman 2011) especially in light of threats to freedom of expression – a topic that has defined public and policy debates and journalism studies among South African

scholars (Fourie 2010). South African journalists' commitment to national development by highlighting beneficial developments at least in some way reflects a commitment to providing solutions to societal problems. Solutions journalists provide audiences with "rigorous reporting on responses to social problems" (The Solutions Journalism Network 2020) that makes audiences "feel less negative" and "hopeless" about the news they consume, which may lead to a more positive relationship with news (McIntyre 2019: 29). For journalists practicing solutions journalism, this entails a more accurate and balanced reporting of problems by focusing not only on tragedy but also and especially on progress. When done right, solutions journalism is rigorous, comprehensive, evidence-driven, providing tangible not hypothetical solutions, and importantly about pushing an issue forward, providing audiences with information that mobilizes them to act and contribute to solutions, to ultimately encourage societal change (McIntyre and Lough 2019). Solutions journalism – specifically principles of peace journalism – are deemed important in South Africa, where the media often rely on emotion and divisive "conflict narratives" in their coverage of political leaders (Hyde-Clarke 2011: 52). More broadly, solutions journalism has been found to be especially important among marginalized audiences (discussed further in Section 2.4.2.2).

2.2.2.1. Hybrid role conceptions

Single-country studies of journalistic roles beyond the West have been sporadic and largely modelled on concepts and quantitative survey items developed and used in studies of journalists in the West, most often Weaver and Wilhoit's (1986, 1996) and Weaver and colleagues' (2007) studies of American journalists, and more recently, borrowing from global comparative studies (Weaver and Willnat 2012; Hanitzsch et al. 2019). While these may have served as a seminal blueprint for the study of under-studied journalistic populations outside of the US and European countries, the normative role values that shaped these surveys may have inadvertently shaped the journalists' responses (Joseph 2005). Using survey items that were developed to reflect and explore journalists in US-specific political, historic, cultural and social conditions has perhaps limited journalists in venturing beyond these pre-determined role boundaries, thus reinforcing not only our knowledge of existing role conceptions but also the journalists' role conceptions themselves. In other words, by asking journalists whether their role repertoire entails being an adversary of the government, we are implying to the journalists that it is their role to be an adversary of the government. Having said that, numerous studies of journalism cultures beyond the West have taken Weaver and colleagues' survey items as

groundwork and expanded on the original role item sets to account for the specific political and historical contexts being studied (e.g. Mwesige 2004; Ramaprasad and Kelly 2003; Pintak and Ginges 2008; Hanitzsch 2005). More recent studies have relied on role items developed in Hanitzsch and colleagues' (2019) global, comparative Worlds of Journalism study, encompassing 67 countries (Ileri 2016; Ranji 2020).

Journalists in countries outside of the West have shown a commitment to very diverse and hybrid sets of role values consisting of those esteemed by journalists in the West and those that respond more closely to the local political and social realities. While journalist in Kenya (Ileri 2016) and Uganda (Mwesige 2004) believe it most important to provide citizens with information, and to do so quickly, in Tanzania and Nepal journalists believe their most important role is to contribute to national development by portraying national leaders in a positive light, publicising government policies, and portraying a positive image of their country and community (Ramaprasad 2001; Ramaprasad and Kelly 2003). In the Arab region – Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank of the Palestinian territories, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates – journalists were similarly committed to the role of sustaining democracy and being change agents by examining and discussing government policy, promoting messages of nationalism and social cohesion, encouraging political reform, using news for social good, and giving ordinary citizens a voice, especially marginalised groups (Ramaprasad and Hamdy 2006; Pintak and Ginges 2008). Israeli journalists driven by a strong sense of injustice and a commitment to making a significant change saw themselves as 'obsessive-activists' – a model of journalism and role conception that Ginosar and Reich (2020) argue is the most interventionist of all models. However, unlike the civic-activist model, where journalists largely act as activists from outside of the institution, obsessive-activists act so both outside and within the professional/institutional domain by combining interventionist with traditional journalist norms and practices (Ginosar and Reich 2020). Indonesian journalists were found to reflect Western journalistic role ideas, such as disseminating news neutrally and objectively, but among roles deemed important was supporting disadvantaged people, which suggests an advocacy or change agent role orientation (Hanitzsch 2005). While Russia and Sweden have different media systems, in both countries journalists found disseminating information quickly and avoiding stories with unverified facts to be most important (Nygren and Degtereva 2012). The biggest difference between the two countries was in the role investigating government claims, which was the third most important for Swedes and least important for Russians, and can be explained by the greater political pressure and censorship that Russian journalists experience (Nygren and Degtereva 2012). Chinese online journalists hold roles that fall into

three dimensions: *the hybrid role* (combining ideals of the Chinese government and party journalism and Western journalism); *the populist mobilizer role* (a localized interpretation of the role, by journalists serving as intellectuals committed to social and political change); and *the entertainment provider and profit-maker role* (facing greater economic pressure and employment uncertainty leads to a greater profit-making orientation through entertainment) (Xu and Jin 2016).

What journalists in all these countries seem to have in common, to a greater or lesser extent, is a balancing act between role conceptions traditionally revered by Western journalists, such as being a disseminator, and roles that reflect the countries' particular historical, cultural and political reality, which sees journalists placing value on roles like being an agent of social change and supporter of national development. Such journalistic role conceptions are often detected in countries that are undergoing democratic transition and are characterised by changing political, social and economic constraints. This includes portraying their government positively and promoting messages of social cohesion, which can contribute to national development. In such contexts, journalists tend to adopt hybrid roles – a mix of those derived from Western contexts and those adapted to the local context (Voltmer 2013).

Reflecting journalism scholarship's broader North American and European bias, literature on lifestyle journalism has typically focused on consumption cultures in Minority World Countries, such as Australia, Denmark, Germany, and the US (e.g. Fürsich 2012; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Kristensen and From 2012; McGaurr 2012). Less attention has been paid to Majority World Countries and those with greater socio-economic divisions, despite evidence of lifestyle journalism's importance (Wasserman 2010; Vodanovic 2019). One reason for this may be the assumption that lifestyle journalism is more prevalent in countries with prosperous economies, although evidence shows it plays a key role in countries with greater socio-economic divisions (Wasserman 2010). With the fall of apartheid in 1994, and the rise of a Black middle class that could expand and grow (Iqani 2017; see also: Burger et al. 2015), so too has emerged a "consumer identity" which allows people "to express their identities by means of conspicuous consumption rather than through the old identity categories inherited from apartheid" (Wasserman 2010: 34). Here a growing consumer identity is not only a response to societal shifts such as individualization, social value change and mediatization (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), but also a response to key political and societal changes that have allowed lifestyle audiences to reject past identities built on racist ideologies (Wasserman 2010).

A rise in lifestyle journalism, especially in post-authoritarian countries, is often accompanied by changes in the media landscape, ownership, and privatization, but also growing importance of entertainment and popular media which speaks to the domain of everyday life and consumption cultures. Turkey's political change in 1980 (a coup d'état) led to a "process of depoliticisation of society, economic liberalisation and rising consumerism" (Sayan-Cengiz 2019: 53). In her study of the Turkish lifestyle magazine '*Aysha*', Sayan-Cengiz (2019) shows how lifestyle journalism in Turkey reconciles religiosity and consumption, by offering audiences individualized advice on what and how to consume, and through doing so articulates a growing middle-class Islamic identity. Showing audiences how to engage in tourism that respects religious beliefs and rituals includes for example, promoting the celebration of religious experiences, such as iftar (breaking fast) during Ramadan in luxury restaurants which promise elegant and meaningful spirituality. At the same time, within the pages of '*Aysha*', Sayan-Cengiz (2019) finds examples of the politicization of lifestyle visible in the tension between consumption and religion, seen for example in content that lacks imagery and promotes more orthodox views on religion and Islamic identity as a way to offset or even condemn some of the impact of consumerism.

The above outlined studies have provided seminal groundwork by capturing dominant professional ideologies that have simultaneously captured journalists' alternative and hybrid role conceptions, and those transferred from and reflecting Western journalistic ideals (Mwesige 2004). Despite their modification to be more sensitive to local contexts, quantitative studies may also have neglected to capture role conceptions that may exist outside of these frameworks. In response, scholars have called for qualitative and grounded theory approaches to studying journalistic role conceptions, especially in under-researched journalism cultures (Ileri 2016). Voltmer and Wasserman (2014) argue that such approaches are particularly important in transitional societies where consensus over the meaning of journalistic norms is still fluid, and individual interpretations of such concepts cannot adequately be captured by standardized methods.

In reviewing the literature on journalistic role conceptions, several key shortcomings emerge. Scholarship on journalistic role conceptions reveals: 1) an overemphasis on quantitative methods to examine role conceptions; 2) an overemphasis on political journalistic roles over those of journalists in 'softer' genres, such as lifestyle journalism, which has also perpetuated a hierarchical dichotomy and boundary between the two; 3) an overemphasis on journalists located in 'the West' or 'Minority World Countries' such as in North America and Europe, over those in 'Majority World Countries' such as in Africa or Latin America; and 4)

this emphasis has led to a conception of journalistic roles and a journalistic ideology that reflect ‘majority cultures,’ that is, White, elite, and male (Hovden 2008; Steiner 2020; Slay and Smith 2011).

2.3. AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS:

Changes and disruptions to journalistic role conceptions

A shift in the way audiences interact with news and news producers affects both the expectations audiences have of journalists and, in turn, how journalists attempt to meet those expectations by adjusting their role conception (Banton 1996). A so-called “adjusted” person is flexible, adaptable and able to perform their expected roles within a (changing) position well, whereas a “maladjusted” person is unhappy in their position and feels they are unable to perform the roles expected of them (Biddle 1979: 322). Maladjustment can be an outcome of several problems or tensions within a role system, such as conflicting role expectations, an overload of role expectations, or ambiguity about what is expected of a role-incumbent. The extent to which journalists feel they are able to adapt their roles to reflect changing work practices, which includes acknowledging audience expectations more than ever before, will point to their ability to feel at ease or at odds with the changing roles associated with their position.

By challenging journalistic practices, audiences are essentially asking journalists to reflect on the way they continue to discursively construct their role in society (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017) and which norms they will conform to and build consensus around (Biddle 1986). If norms and roles are discursively constructed, they are also “discursively reconstructed” in response to changes in the field. While Bourdieu’s (2005) field theory has been useful in exploring how disruptions brought about by new journalistic actors or increased audience proximity to the journalistic field instigate norm changes, it falls short in elaborating what happens to journalists when norms change (Vos and Singer 2016). The longer a role and its behavioural norms have had to develop and crystalize over time (Popitz 1972), the more disruptive any shift in expectations will be to the role-incumbent. This means that journalistic role conceptions grounded in long-held normative ideologies might be more difficult or slower to change, and journalists might experience such change as disruptive, potentially resulting in experiences of role strain or role conflict.

Role theory’s lack of integration perhaps works in its favour in some ways because over time scholars have developed several diverse concepts, applied across disciplines. In the

lifespan of a role attached to a specific position, several processes can take place that make bearing that role a fulfilling or tension-filled experience for the role incumbent. Applying these concepts to journalists allows us to understand not only how roles exist, but also how changes to roles are contested and negotiated. The audiences' growing ability to communicate their expectations more directly and immediately to journalists is among the biggest changes and disruptions that journalists have had to face.

Much of this change is captured by what scholars have called the 'audience turn' in journalism studies, seen from two perspectives (Costera Meijer 2020). First, scholars as well as journalists and news media organisations have started to pay more attention to audiences and how they matter to journalism, especially in terms of revenue and its economic survival. Within this stronger market orientation, journalists have become more concerned with monitoring various feedback mechanisms (e.g. web analytics) to ascertain what audiences consume to adapt their content and capitalize on this attention. However, as Costera Meijer (2020) argues, the second side of the audience turn is concerned with how journalism matters to audiences; how and why they consume it, experience it, and how and why it becomes valuable and meaningful to them. As such, this study is concerned with both aspects of the audience turn: understanding how journalists understand their audiences, how audiences understand the journalists – and how this turn in mutual attention shapes their roles and expectations.

2.3.1. Audiences and journalists: A shift in relations

Digital transformations and specifically the emergence of social media has shifted the power dynamics and structures impacting how journalism is produced, shared and consumed. Social media's presence has not only been "normalized" within journalistic functions but also in terms of how audiences receive, consume and interact with news, thus disrupting traditional journalism norms and practices (Broersma and Eldridge 2019: 194). Mobile devices have become "the most important platform for news audiences" (Nelson and Lei 2018: 628). Alongside the adjustment to digital technologies in everyday news work, "one of the major changes journalists encounter today is the expectation that they will form relationships with the audience" (Ferrucci and Vos 2017: 13). The tendency often has been to understand the audience-journalist relationship in simplistic terms as one of either unidirectional communication and ignorance in the pre-digital era, or one of responsiveness and reciprocity since the digital turn (Anderson 2011). However, as Anderson (2011) argues, throughout

history – pre- or post-Internet – audiences’ relationships with journalism have been dynamic, shifting with journalism’s various movements that also reflect different “strands of democratic theory.” For example, public journalism had a deliberative approach to conversation, while citizen journalism used a more radically participatory approach where audiences themselves become reporters (Anderson 2011). While there is certainly far more complexity to be found between the pre- and post- Internet eras, journalists nevertheless had less of an idea of who their audiences were and had less incentive to care than they do now with rich analytics data at their disposal and greater competition to capture audiences’ scarce and scattered attention. Needless to say, the relationship between audiences has been one of both “dependence and disdain,” with journalists on the one hand maintaining control and boundaries around their profession and at the same time recognizing that without dialoguing with audiences and meeting their needs, journalism ceases to exist (Holton et al. 2016).

Prior to technological advances and the arrival of participatory technologies, journalists typically had only a rough idea of who their audiences were and relied on “gut feelings” to imagine audiences in a way that reinforced their enduring normative function as an autonomous monitor and informer of the passive, receptive, and dependent ‘public’ (Lewis and Westlund 2015: 26). Journalists perceived themselves as distanced and “a breed apart” from ordinary audiences, knew little about them, and did not believe they shared any common views (Corcoran 2004). If journalists bothered to imagine their audiences at all, they were “newsmen’s fantasies” (de Sola Pool and Shulman 1959) and remained “abstractions” (Heinonen 2011: 34). Journalists often “had a vague image of the audience” (Gans 2004: 229) or a “distorted” and stereotypical idea of them as “disinterested, sensation-seeking and unintelligent” (Donsbach 1981: 56). Moreover, journalists tend to believe they do not need to adjust their roles to reflect ideas and values held by audiences (Corcoran 2004). This is unsurprising as journalists tend to be most responsive to the views and values held by their professional peers (Donsbach 1981). In the words of Benedict Anderson (1991), audiences to journalists were ‘imagined communities’ – indistinguishable masses to which journalists delivered news in ways defined by journalists themselves. More recently, journalists in Germany were found to imagine their audiences as information-oriented, educated, and politically interested (Weischenberg et al. 2012). Differences in how journalists perceive their audiences also has to do with the ways in which they interact with them. Coddington and colleagues (2021) found journalists’ imagination of their audiences is shaped by three key types of interaction: direct (email, phone, face-to-face), institutional (web analytics, superiors), and personal social world interactions (friends, family and fellow journalists). While the former

two types of interaction lead to a perception of audiences as more rational (reasonable, thoughtful) and treats them as democratically capable and engaged citizens, in the last type of interaction journalists perceive their audiences as homophilous or like (an extension of) themselves, both in terms of class and race, and the beliefs and interests they share. Such homophilous views of audiences can emerge in journalists who are often themselves from middle-class backgrounds (Hovden 2008), covering suburban neighbourhoods, reporting primarily for White audiences and in the process reinforcing racist narratives (Coddington et al. 2021).

Audience have gone from being conceptualized as passive-monolithic, ‘public spheres’ to active-dispersed ‘public sphericules’ with idiosyncratic news consumption preferences and practices (Gitlin et al. 1998). In 2007, Weaver and colleagues noted that the fragmentation and splintering of the media market and therefore audiences meant that the role of ‘concentrating on news that is of interest to the widest possible audience’ decreased in relevance. Despite earlier concerns about what the fragmentation of audiences would do to democratic engagement (Katz 1996), these fragmented audience “communities” (Malmelin and Villi 2016) or “islands” (Lindell and Hovden 2017) have simultaneously also become networked communities (Papacharissi 2010), offsetting the idea that fragmentation has led to their weakened democratic power. Likewise, it might be their fragmentation that enables journalists and media organisations to form more meaningful connections to niche audiences. Nelson (2018: 215) stresses that journalists should define their audiences more narrowly, because “pursuing a more collaborative relationship with the news audience is ill-suited with a mass audience approach to news production.” Rather than focusing on audience size, news producers should try to understand their audience’s traits (attention devoted, loyalty) and “focus on generating unique content [and] value” to set themselves apart from others (Nelson and Lei 2018: 629). Audience fragmentation becomes more complex in multicultural and heterogeneous societies with greater socio-economic inequalities. In South Africa, reporting in the public interest was difficult for journalists who struggled to define a public that is fragmented not only along class and race lines, but also language (Rodny-Gumede 2015).

Greater competition among media in the attention economy of fragmented audiences has seen journalism shift from a civic- to a market-driven orientation, forcing journalists to re-evaluate how they view their audiences (McCollough et al. 2016). In response to increased competition, audience expectations become something that compels traditional journalists to shift their role orientations. Having originally been reluctant to interact with audiences, journalists now appear more open to such engagement and participation, which is arguably

leading to changes in how journalists view the relevance and importance of certain norms (Agarwal and Barthel 2015). For example, journalists are having to strike a balance between maintaining editorial autonomy and loosening their grip on traditional roles such as gatekeeping to make space for roles that respond to the growing influence of audiences and journalism's need to survive, such as the need to market the news (Tandoc and Vos 2016).

Key literature on journalistic roles also makes reference to the different ways in which journalists can relate to their audiences depending on a journalism culture's orientation towards the market. In his work on journalism's institutional roles, for example, Hanitzsch (2007) proposed three dimensions: interventionism, power distance, and, of particular interest here, market orientation. This latter dimension, which has received much attention from scholars, goes "to the very heart of journalism studies" (Hanitzsch 2007: 374). A market orientation is argued to be high where journalists orient themselves toward the "logic of the market" and address audiences as consumers or clients, and low in places where journalists "produce the news primarily in the 'public interest'" and address audiences as citizens (Hanitzsch 2007: 372-375). The latter focuses on what audiences "should know" over what they "want to know", which may also include news and information that centres around their "personal fears, aspirations, attitudes, and emotional experiences" and therefore "provides help, advice, guidance, and information about the management of self and everyday life" (Hanitzsch 2007: 374-375).

Whereas previously the view of the relationship between journalists and audiences was more or less unidirectional, with journalists producing and audiences consuming news, the "development of digital technologies now enables participation on a scale not previously possible" (Karlsson et al. 2018: 578). However, not all journalists are eager to interact and engage with audiences on social media in any sustained fashion, and whether they do so is predicted by their age and medium (analogue/print or digital/online). In a survey of 1,412 Swedish journalists, Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013) distinguished three types of journalists in relation to social media use: 'the sceptical shunner' who tends to be older, works in print, and avoids social media as much as possible; 'the pragmatic conformists' who use social media selectively and pragmatically to scan and collect information but rarely to actively engage; and 'the enthusiastic activists' who tend to be younger and working in online media, and are on social media all the time. Whether they interact or not, digital technologies have narrowed the distance and changed communication patterns between audiences and journalists. And now, more than ever before, "journalists must confront the matter of what to do with their audiences" (Holton et al. 2016: 850).

Journalists now have at their disposal extremely detailed information about audience behaviours through mechanisms such as web analytics, reader comments, and other communication via social media platforms, resulting in increased pressure to deliver on audience feedback and altering journalists' working routines and role orientations (Hanusch 2016). Whether journalists pay attention to reader comments and web analytics has been found to affect their orientation towards audiences. While reading reader comments was a predictor for an increase in both the citizen and consumer orientation, web analytics steers journalists towards the consumer orientation (Hanusch and Tandoc 2019). How journalists perceive their relationship with audiences, how likely they are to interact with them, and whether they choose to do so online or offline has also been linked to particular journalistic roles (Holton et al. 2016). For example, journalists who are more strongly oriented towards loyal support and public service roles were more traditional and paternalistic in their perception of audiences, wanting to limit their interaction with them, report as they see fit, and rely on offline (email and face-to-face) communication to connect with audiences, while journalists with populist mobilizer and entertainer roles were more open to using digital platforms to interact with audiences, likely because by definition their roles entail motivating, entertaining and driving engagement (Holton et al. 2016).

Audiences' greater input and influence on journalistic role orientation and routines has led to a blurring of positions and associated roles captured by terms such as "produsage" (producing-using) (Bruns 2008), "prosumerism" (producing-consuming) (Toffler 1980), "prodience" (producer-audience) (Villi 2012) and "pro-am" (professional-amateur) (Bruns and Schmidt 2011). However this relationship is conceptualized, accessing the journalistic field through digital means has given audiences "a press critic's role and, therefore, makes them potentially powerful shapers of journalism's standards of performance" (Craft et al. 2016: 678). With this seemingly greater influence, audiences are arguably in a position to exercise what the functional-structural-organisational perspectives in role theory refer to as 'sanctions' – which is to boycott actors or their actions if these contradict or deviate from the norms expected of them (Popitz 1972). In doing so, audiences become an "institutional force that can exert pressure on journalists" (Craft et al. 2016: 680). For journalists, gauging the perceived role expectations of their audiences is an elusive process, and when misconstrued, can land journalists in trouble (Eldridge 2018). Gawker's story outing the sexual orientation of a media company executive drew condemnation and "disgust" by commenters, resulting in the story's removal, thus demonstrating the audiences' role in determining what is and is not good journalism (Tandoc and Jenkins 2018). This increased opportunity for audiences to interact

with and criticize the press and journalists on social and moral grounds is also an increasingly relevant indicator “of the flattening of the hierarchical relationship that previously existed between readers and journalists” (Craft et al. 2016: 687).

This review of scholarship shows that audiences have become a significant part of journalists’ everyday working routines, and their presence has changed how journalists perceive their audiences, how audiences perceive journalists, and how their expressions of these perceptions shape journalists’ role conceptions. While the roles of journalists in society have been studied quite extensively over the past several decades (see for example, Hanitzsch et al. 2011; Weaver and Willnat 2012), scholarship has devoted less attention to understanding what it is that audiences expect from journalists. That journalists’ role conceptions are informed by their perceptions of what the audience wants remains “an unexplored assumption” (Tandoc and Duffy 2016: 3338). To address this gap, Eldridge and Steel (2016) argue that a bottom-up approach to exploring audience expectations also allows us to re-evaluate normative roles of journalists.

The following section outlines key discussions and literature on audience expectations, highlighting its key shortcomings at the end of this chapter.

2.3.2 Audience expectations of journalistic roles

To examine audience expectations is to explore what audiences think and feel are or should be the roles of journalists in society, and what audiences find meaningful and valuable in journalism. Audience studies has been a rich area of research since the 1980s, particularly audience reception studies’ focus on news interpretation and consumption as a ritual (Madianou 2009). However, within role conception research, studies of audience expectations remain relatively scarce, although this area of research has been steadily growing over the past few years. Although journalists’ roles are said to emerge from expectations, it is the expectations stemming from organisational, institutional and societal layers (Shoemaker and Reese 2013) and fellow in-group professionals rather than their audiences that have tended to influence journalists’ role orientation to a greater extent (Donsbach 1981). Typically, roles have been studied by focusing on journalists’ views of their relationship with power, the existence of their voice in the news, and how they imagine and relate to their audiences. Switching the perspective from the journalists to that of audiences allows us to more accurately “assess the changing functions which journalism fulfils in society and the roles it enables the public to play in social life” (Mellado and van Dalen 2016: 214).

Expectations not only inform internal standards for role behaviour (role conceptions), but also emerge in response to observed behaviour or role performance in others (Biddle 1979). For example, what audiences expect from journalists is in part an outcome of observing journalistic products (news) and journalists' discursive constructions of their roles in society (Vos et al. 2019; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). That is, audiences' (mostly) normative expectations of journalists are based largely on what they have been implicitly told they should expect from journalists. As audiences have become a prominent feature in journalists' everyday practices due to technological affordances, scholars have more recently started asking what it is that audiences expect from journalists and how closely these expectations reflect the normative role conceptions held by journalists. Audience expectations therefore reveal what they believe or feel are or should be the roles of journalists in society. What we know from a limited but growing body of literature on audience expectations is that these studies are sporadic, geographically scattered, focusing almost exclusively on audience expectations of political journalists, and reveal both congruence and incongruence, between what audiences expect and how journalists understand their roles. Grounded in social role theory, the theory of role (in)congruity was originally proposed by Eagly and Karau (2002) to examine and capture the prejudice that emerges when individuals hold stereotypical gender roles that are incongruent with roles believed necessary to be a leader. The term has since also been referenced to examine the level of congruence or agreement between journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations.

In the US both journalists and audiences hold in equally high regard the roles of reporting things as they are and educating the public, and in equally low regard the roles of supporting government policy or conveying a positive image of political leadership (Vos et al. 2019). Both agree that getting stories covered and reporting quickly are important elements of "good journalism," albeit to different extents (Gil de Zúñiga and Hinsley 2013). At the same time, US journalists say roles within the interpretive function are most important (investigating government claims and analysing complex problems, discussing international or national policy), while audiences expect journalists to be disseminators (reporting quickly, avoiding unverified information, reaching the widest possible audience, and providing entertainment) (Willnat et al. 2019). In another study, US audiences endorsed accurate and objective reporting as important journalistic norms but placed less value on being a watchdog and reporting rapidly (Heider et al. 2005). Focusing on online audiences in the US, Nah and Chung (2011) found that both the perceptions of social trust and media credibility factored into how audiences perceived the roles of professional journalists. Whereas most journalists believe they are doing

an “outstanding” job of informing the public, only about a quarter of the public believe the same, seeing the media as politically biased and influenced by powerful actors (Willnat et al. 2019). This perception has not changed since 2002 when Beaudoin and Thorson (2002) found that journalists perceived news coverage more positively than audiences did, implying that for at least the past two decades audiences in the US have consistently perceived news media more negatively than journalists.

Journalists in Israel placed more importance on the verification of facts and interpretation of news, while audiences expected neutrality and to have their interests accounted for (Tsfati et al. 2006). In Singapore, audiences expect journalists to “serve the public, the nation, and the government,” pointing to incongruity between these expectations and existing journalistic role conception typologies (Tandoc and Duffy 2016). In the Netherlands, van der Wurff and Schoenbach (2014) found that audience expectations reflect civic demands, which reflect traditional democratic functions of journalism such as critical and interpretive reporting, reporting quickly and being a watchdog, allowing audiences to form their own opinion, but also citizen demands, characterized in their study by the commercial function of journalism, and the populist mobilizer role, with an emphasis on allowing audiences to contribute to news and participate in debates. They conclude that there is “considerable common ground” between journalists and audiences (van der Wurff and Schoenbach 2014: 434). While there is consensus about the importance of journalists in Austria observing, informing and entertaining their audiences, journalists also felt they needed to be an analyst, missionary and marketer, whereas audiences place more importance on being a mobilizer (Riedl and Eberl 2020). Journalists and audiences in Germany share the expectation of reporting things as they are, but journalists place more importance on providing news that attracts large audiences, while audiences expect them to motivate the public to participate in political activity (Loosen et al. 2020). Both agree that explaining and conveying complex issues, informing in an objective way, and as quickly as possible, is important (Heise et al. 2013). However, revealing a key shift in the relationship between audiences and journalists is a growing demand and orientation among audiences towards participatory values. In Germany, audiences ranked more highly expectations that related to enabling user-generated content (allowing people to publish their own content), facilitating conversation between audiences and journalists on current events, and wanting journalists to add opinions to news stories, whereas these were not as important for journalists (Schmidt and Loosen 2015). Such participatory values contrast conventional journalistic ideals (Costera Meijer 2013). This gap in expectations has led to a call for greater “emotional expression” among journalists (Wahl-Jorgensen 2020), including empathy as a way of

accessing information, forming interpersonal relationships, conveying authenticity and emotionality in news (Glück 2016), and humanizing members of marginalized communities (Varma 2020). Within journalism, emotional expression involves a certain amount of emotional labour or the management (suppression, enhancement) of often contradictory emotions, such as empathy and the professional norm of detachment (Hopper and Huxford 2015).

Numerous studies have also detected a growing disinterest and avoidance of news among audiences. While news avoidance is not an expectation per se, it could be argued it emerges as a reaction to journalism's failure to meet audience expectations. Audiences avoid news because they perceive it to be negative, causing depression, hopelessness and cynicism; they perceive news as biased, driven by political and economic interests and therefore do not trust it; and they perceive news as irrelevant to them and thus feel disconnected and helpless in changing the status quo (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; Poindexter et al. 2010; McIntyre 2019; Kalogeropoulos 2017; Newman and Fletcher 2017; Toff and Palmer 2019; Schröder 2016). As a result, audiences engage in "measured avoidance" to carefully and often quickly assess what a news item is about and whether it will potentially have a negative effect on their mood (Groot Kormelink 2020: 872). Reasons behind news avoidance do not at first sight resemble what we would imagine to be expectations. However, if we understand these reasons behind news avoidance as beliefs or perceptions of journalism then they become descriptive expectations, and if we understand them to be emotional reactions to journalism, they become cathectic expectations (Biddle 1979). Thus we may be able to infer that, for example, by experiencing journalism as being too negative, audiences expect more positive news (a cathectic expectation).

In addition to negativity, scholars have observed declining trust in mainstream media at a time when the problem of fake news is growing (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019). However, trust is not only about the expectation that journalists will tell the truth and be accurate and timely in their reporting, but about the agreement between journalists and audiences about what constitutes news (Coleman 2012), and as the studies outlined here show, in many cases journalists' role conceptions differ to what audiences expect of them. Failing to align audience expectations with journalists' vision of their roles results in the loss of interest in news and greater levels of distrust (Tsfati et al. 2006). Consuming news without feeling a sense of agency to bring about change not only affects trust but also people's perceptions of political efficacy, that is, the extent to which they feel their expectations as citizens can be met and what role the media plays in facilitating these (Coleman 2012). Especially for young people, political

comedy and humorous content can increase political trust, evaluation of political efficacy and engagement (Becker 2011).

The fact that audiences nowadays have the technological affordances to express their expectations, and the expectation that journalists should interact and engage with audiences and their expectations more readily, brings up a host of potentially disruptive readjustments in how journalists understand their roles. Role theory offers several concepts thorough which these changes can be explored, including role consensus and conformity, which suggest a relatively harmonious adjustment and adoption of changes, based on a mutual understanding of roles and expectations. However, where audience expectations are experienced by journalists as introducing too many contradictory or ambiguous roles, journalists may experience role strain or conflict. These are discussed in more detail below and interpreted against journalism studies scholarship.

2.3.3 Role consensus, conformity, and taking

Role consensus occurs when two or more persons agree on an expectation or set of expectations, whether of themselves (i.e. role conceptions) or those held by others (Biddle 1979: 154). This type of consensus speaks to the fact that over time, journalism's professionalisation project has led to a stabilization and crystallization of role expectations associated with and expected of those holding the position of journalist. Hanitzsch and Vos (2018) call this process "role normalization," where journalists contest and consolidate roles to become norms. Over time, this crystallization of roles has led to a general consensus over expectations of journalists to act as watchdogs, disseminators, adversaries, and so on, and journalists have continued to stabilize consensus by discursively constructing their roles to assert their professional authority, credibility and legitimacy in society (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Role consensus suggests the best-case scenario, as it indicates that roles and expectations are shared and thus likely in harmony and unlikely to be challenged. However, social order – the accepted norms that shape journalism's stable roles in society – may not be the result of normative consensus alone, but also an outcome of force or domination by powerful groups or incentives (Biddle 1986). We see this playing out in the way in which journalistic authority has been challenged by new journalistic actors or "interloper media" who have disrupted the until-recently relatively stable journalistic field because they "do not easily fit existing understandings of journalism" (Eldridge 2018: 6). Similarly disruptive to

journalistic roles and work practices has been the growing presence of audiences and their increasingly visible and shifting expectations (Schmidt and Loosen 2015).

A role incumbent is believed to adapt their roles and conform their behaviour to comply with (new) expectations and changes. This is captured in the concept of *role conformity* – a shift and a response in behaviour determined by an expectation held by the role incumbent or by others (Biddle 1979: 165). As Coyne (1984: 261) has argued: “to enact a role is, wittingly or unwittingly, to invite expectations of further conformity or of future enactments in relevantly similar circumstances.” That is to say, the role-incumbent (journalist) negotiates the “appropriateness and continuity” of their roles vis-à-vis the role-sender (audience) expectations of what is appropriate and should be continued (Coyne 1984: 261). Thus, in the process of conforming, journalists may be asked to engage in role negotiation, internalization, and normalization, by assimilating and appropriating their roles to adapt to the new expectations, and these are integrated into their institutional identity and idea of what makes a ‘good’ journalist (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017: 123-127). If conformity occurs in response to expectations the role-incumbent has of themselves it is seen as evidence of “consistency” (Biddle 1979: 172), that is, journalists behaving consistently with their own (changing) expectations for the self. However, if conformity occurs in response to expectations others hold of the role-incumbent it is seen as evidence of “compliance” (Biddle 1979: 172), that is, journalists shifting their behaviour to obey audiences’ expectations.

Depending on the power audiences have over journalists, compliance may happen out of necessity, as a forced response to pressures journalists have little control over, such as economic constraints. At the same time, compliance to others’ expectations can arguably over time become a form of consistency, as journalists absorb or internalize audience expectations into their own journalistic norms because they believe it benefits journalism. For this discussion, if audiences were to persistently expect journalists to engage with them more, and if journalists eventually began to accept this expectation as a valid norm and value to aspire towards, journalists’ conformance to this expectation would become consistent with their role conceptions. That is, something that may have initially been an act of role-compliance becomes role-consistency. This conformity is seen, for example, in the way in which journalists have had to normalize the presence of social media in their daily working routines and practices, as well as to negotiate a balance between their editorial autonomy and the increasingly important business strategy of meeting the expectations and influences exerted by their audiences and marketing their own news to reach these audiences in an information-saturated online media landscape (Tandoc and Vos 2016).

This concept in particular allows us to question the extent to which journalists are conforming to changes to their work practices routines, and role conceptions brought about by the greater proximity and influence of audiences on their work. Research suggests that in relying on audience analytics, reader comments, and communication via diverse social media platforms to better understand and meet the needs and interests of their audiences, journalists have adapted their work practices and adopted a stronger consumer orientation towards their audiences (Hanusch 2016; Hanusch and Tandoc 2019). The question here is whether a stronger market orientation has truly led to a greater integration of audience expectations into journalist's professional identity and roles, or has it merely been a survival response to the disruption that technological changes and greater competition have had on the field. Such evidence of conformity can be viewed in two ways: as either "instrumental conformity," which emerges in response to their behaviour being visible to others and perceiving others as having power to sanction noncompliance, or "internalized conformity," which is the adoption of norms because one actually believes in them (Biddle 1986: 79). One might argue that even though journalists are increasingly responsive to audiences, their adjustment to their presence is 'merely' a form of instrumental conformity, because journalistic work is visible and sanctionable by audiences and such sanctioning can have serious economic consequences for journalism, at a time when audiences have the opportunity to adjust their news media repertoires with relative ease (Schröder 2015).

Both consensus and to a larger extent conformity may be more easily achieved if the role incumbent and role sender are able to accurately assume each other's roles to better understand each other's point of view. This is known as *role taking* or role attribution – the "imaginative construction of the other's role" (Turner 1956: 317) or "the process of inferring that ego is enacting a particular role" (Turner and Shosid 1976: 993). That is, role taking speaks to the ability of individuals or groups to accurately infer the roles of a role-incumbent that indeed match the roles they hold. Much of the inferential role taking happens as a result of imagination or observation of behaviour (Turner 1956). In the journalistic context, this would mean that audiences correctly assume and imagine the roles of journalists. In some way, role-taking is similar to descriptive expectations. Rather than expressing emotional or normative reactions to journalistic roles, audiences are expressing their beliefs (descriptions) of who journalists are or at least how they perceive this. To be able to do so, some level of role-taking on the part of audiences must occur. The concept, with slight adaptation, is also useful to exploring whether journalists accurately assume or imagine the expectations of audiences. While past studies of audience expectations and journalistic roles have recognized congruence

between journalists' role conceptions and audience expectations, they have not simultaneously asked what journalists believe their audiences expect of them, which would reveal the extent of journalists' *expectation-taking* or accurate imagination of their audiences' expectations. This study therefore asks how journalists imagine their audience expectations and how accurately these reflect the role expectations audiences have of them, and vice versa, how audiences imagine the roles of journalists, and how accurately these match journalists' role conceptions. For conceptual clarity, Table 2 outlines key concepts and their definitions emerging from the above discussion that are relevant to and will be applied within this study.

Table 2: Role-Expectation Harmony		
CONCEPT	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Role Consensus	Agreement among two or more role incumbents on expectations of themselves (role conceptions) or those held by others	Biddle 1979, 1986
Role Conformity	A shift in a role-incumbent's behaviour prompted by expectations held by others (compliance) or themselves (consistency)	Biddle 1979; Coyne 1984
Role Taking and 'Expectation Taking'	Role sender's ability to accurately assume or imagine the role incumbent's roles – but also vice versa, adapted for this study, a role incumbents' ability to accurately imagine a role sender's expectations	Turner 1956; Turner and Shosid 1976 (<i>Adapted by researcher for this study</i>)

2.3.4 Role strain: Conflict, overload, and ambiguity

Where role conformity or consensus are challenged or even absent, role incumbents may begin to experience *role strain*, that is, forms of stress associated with their roles and an inability to adjust to and fulfil (new) sets of expectations (Biddle 1979; Mitchell 1958; Goode 1960). Prolonged exposure to role strain can lead to frustration, feelings of insecurity and failure, and potentially deterioration of health (Biddle 1979: 326). A metaanalysis of literature on role conflict and role ambiguity found that although there is overlap between these two concepts, both should be treated as separate and unique constructs and sources of occupational stress, and both were significantly related to presence of depression (Schmidt et al. 2014).

Role strain can be triggered by a wider range of phenomena: *role conflict* between incompatible expectations; *role overload* of tasks and demands that exceed one's capacity to meet them; *role ambiguity* or implicit assumptions and unspoken rules about how someone ought to behave, amplified by a lack of communication (sometimes deliberate in order to avoid conflict); and the *exertion of influence without having the legitimate authority* to do so, onto incumbents with unequal power (Snoek 1966; Örtqvist and Wincent 2006). Role conflict, Harnisch and colleagues (2011) argue, can also emerge due to *role malintegration* – when multiple roles do not fit well together – and consequently *role discontinuity* – which is what a role-incumbent experiences in having to perform malintegrated roles. There appears to be some confusion in the literature as to whether the above outlined concepts contribute to role conflict, or whether they (including role conflict) contribute to overall role strain (the inability to fulfil role obligations). What some of the concepts (role ambiguity, overload and conflict) do appear to have in common is their consequences on the role incumbent – for example, in causing tension, stress, higher rates of resignations, poor professional performance and job satisfaction, low organisational commitment and confidence, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment – but they also differ in their impact on emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment (Örtqvist and Wincent 2006).

Focusing on elected political officials, Mitchell (1958: 212) examined seven sources of role strain: insecurity around promotion or tenure; conflict among incompatible public roles; conflict between public and private roles; ambiguity of a situation; dispersed responsibility and lack of control over situation; time and pressure of different demands; and status insecurity. Many of these could easily reflect the potential sources of strain journalists today face as a result of increased retrenchments, economic pressures, and technological changes (Zion et al. 2016). Goode (1960) identified several more sources of role strain: role demands are time and context bound, therefore rarely spontaneous or pleasurable; role incumbents have multiple role relationships, each of which calls for potentially contradictory performances; role relationships demand diverse responses based on contradictory norms (e.g. emotionality versus detachment); and finally, role-incumbents face conflicting role obligations based on their engagement in multiple role relationships or role-sets.

A *role-set* refers to a network of relationships and associated roles that a role incumbent has with complementary role holders (Merton 1957) or “*role senders*” – those who communicate and enforce various role expectations (Rommetveit 1954, cited in Snoek 1966, *no access to original*). A slightly different definition by Biddle (1979: 76) treats a role-set as a set of complementary roles that belong together and may consist of characteristically similar

behaviours that are not differentiated from each other. This study finds both definitions of role-set useful, seeing them both as a set of roles associated with a position (Biddle 1979) and as a set of roles associated with various role relationships (Merton 1957). For the sake of clarity, the two will be differentiated slightly. A journalist has ‘*role-set-relationships*’ with role senders at various levels of the hierarchy of influences including their fellow reporters, editors, sources, external influences such as advertisers and public relations professionals, and, increasingly, audiences (Shoemaker and Reese 2013). Within each of these relationships, journalists in their position conceive of and perform roles that make up a *role-set*.

Snoek (1966) found that *role-set-relationship diversity* was a considerable contributor to role strain, as well as role conflict. The greater the role-set-relationship, the more often employees had to interact with role senders, and the greater the size of the overall organisation or role-system, the more they experienced role strain (Snoek 1966). Similarly, Merton argued that the extent to which the social structure is diverse, different position-holders are “apt to have interests and sentiments, values and moral expectations differing from those of the status occupant himself” (1957: 112). The more role incumbents become exposed to diverse role expectations in diverse role-set-relationships, the greater the role conflict (Snoek 1966; Kahn et al. 1964). When individuals or groups do not have consensual expectations of a role-incumbent, and the role-incumbent is struggling to conform to divergent expectations or those that are in conflict with their own value systems, they are likely to experience role conflict (Stryker and Macke 1978) – that is, the “concurrent appearance of two or more incompatible expectations for the behaviour of a person” (Biddle 1986: 82). A growing fragmentation of audiences has inevitably led to a diversification of audience expectations. These expectations vary across countries and journalism cultures, but also based on socio-economic background (Heider et al. 2005). In South Africa, a fragmented news media landscape caters to audiences equally as fragmented based on “socio-economic factors that dictate access and ideas around what is considered news” and journalists are well aware of this (Rodny-Gumede 2015: 110). The more diverse or even contradictory the expectations of audiences, the more likely journalists are to experience role conflict.

Several forms of role conflict have been identified: 1) *intra-sender role conflict* stems from “incompatible expectations from a single role sender”; 2) *inter-sender role conflict* stems from “expectations from one role sender which are incompatible with those from another role sender”; 3) *person-role conflict* stems from the “incompatibility between expectations held by the role incumbent and expectations otherwise associated with his/her position”; and 4) *inter-role conflict* is an outcome of “role pressures stemming from one position incompatible with

the role pressures arising from a different position” (Sell et al. 1981: 44). While this last definition refers to conflicting roles across different positions (e.g. journalist, PR professional, mother), Gross and colleagues (1966) see inter-role conflict as an outcome of incompatible expectations associated with two or more different roles (e.g. being compassionate in roles associated with peace reporting and detached in the role of being a watchdog). Gross and colleagues (1966) add to this repertoire another form of role conflict: 5) *intra-role conflict*, which arises when a role-incumbent experiences conflicting or contradictory role expectations for a single role. In their study of freelance journalists who also work as public relations professionals, Obermaier and Koch (2014) interpret this as an outcome of incompatible expectations within a single position. Similarly, Hall (1972) has argued that women experience greater inter-role conflict (competing expectations stemming from different role senders, e.g. employer, children) than they do intra-role conflict (competing expectations from single role-sender, e.g. their child). Role conflict can also be exacerbated when individuals try to negotiate their occupational and individual identities (Kreiner et al. 2006), in particular when personal identities are stigmatized cultural identities that are not well-integrated with roles associated with occupational positions, as experienced by African American journalists (Slay and Smith 2011). The above outlined definitions reveal some conceptual overlap and diverse interpretations; however, important for consideration in this study is Kahn and colleagues’ (1964) delineation, where intra- and inter-sender role conflict is useful for considering audiences’ conflicting expectations and how they influence journalists’ experiences of intra- and inter-role conflict within a single position (i.e. journalist) as defined by Gross and colleagues (1966), as well as the possibility of role conflict occurring across different incompatible positions and identities.

Examples of various types of role conflicts have been identified among journalists. For example, German freelance journalists who also work in public relations experience inter-role conflict because as journalists they held the normative perception that journalists are not supposed to do PR work, and feel unsure which professional identity takes precedence, which leads to stress and lower job satisfaction (Obermaier and Koch 2014). Journalists who have left journalism and migrated to PR work experience similar inter-role conflict (Belz et al. 1989). Journalists may also experience intra-role conflicts. For example, the expectation to be independent and autonomous from external influences means that journalist may underestimate how reliant there are on PR sources (Koch et al. 2017). PR professionals experience intra-role conflict because their expectations of themselves (self-concept) differ to those journalists have of them (Belz et al. 1989).

Where roles associated with different positions are incompatible, journalists may compartmentalize them (Goode 1960) or keep them segmented rather than integrating them. Tandoc and Peters (2015) found that journalists who also work as media coordinators for the courts segmented their dual roles because of the normative expectation of journalists to remain autonomous from any external relationships or influences (Tandoc and Peters 2015). In a study of environmental journalists, Tandoc and Takahashi (2014) found journalists must balance the expectations they hold at the individual level along with those expectations that the organisation holds for them. US health journalists, however, have been found to experience tension between the expectation to disseminate information or more actively educate audiences (Hinnant et al. 2016).

In her study of Irish journalists, Corcoran (2004: 34) argued that journalists exist in two worlds: “the will to ‘tell it like it is’ must be constantly balanced against the dictates emanating from within the organisational hierarchy and the demands of the marketplace.” Similarly, Sigelman (1973) has argued that a journalist “holds dual citizenship” and is required to demonstrate commitment to both organisational and professional goals and standards, which are often in tension with one another and lead to conflicting orientations. Resolving such conflict comes with great “psychic costs” and, as Sigelman (1973: 141) argued, divides journalists into those who have “lost their self-respect by prostituting their professional ideals” and “sterile aesthetes who clung too dearly to their idealistic virginity.” In his study of journalists at an American metropolitan daily newspaper, Stark (1962) found journalists to be “embittered,” “estranged,” and “embattled” as a result of ongoing conflict with the newspaper management’s control over staff and the imposition of policies that were in direct violation of journalists’ values and ideals. All of these role-set relationships are sources of influence and pressure which “can have a hand in wearing away at journalistic cultural capital” (Craft et al. 2016: 678).

The extent to which a role-incumbent can minimize role conflict depends on several social mechanisms: the relative importance of the different positions within the role-set-relationships (e.g. are editors more or less important to journalists than audiences); differences in the powers of those within the role-set-relationship (e.g. do editors have more or less power to impose demands on journalists than audiences); how visible the role activities of a role-incumbent are to the others within the role-set-relationship (e.g. are editors more privy to the work of journalists than audiences); how aware the members of a role-set-relationship are of each other’s incompatible expectations of the role-incumbent (e.g. are editors and audiences aware they have contradictory expectations of journalists); is the role incumbent aware that

others in the same position as themselves are facing conflicting expectations (e.g. do journalists collectively share similar conflicting expectations); is the role-incumbent able to discontinue a role-set-relationship, that is, perform their roles without the other position in the mix (e.g. could journalists continue to be journalists without their role-set-relationships to editors and audiences) (Merton 1957). No matter how challenging role-set-relationships may be on a role-incumbent, they may also be part and parcel of occupying a position. As Goode suggests, role strain is “normal” within role systems because no person can ever “meet all these demands to the satisfaction of all the persons who are part of his total role network” (1960: 485). At the same time, it is crucial to acknowledge that despite its normality, not being able to fulfil expected roles leads to “psychological conflict” (Schmidt et al. 2014: 91). Role conflict specifically can be a source of lower group performance and performance evaluations, unsatisfactory work relationships and negative attitudes towards competing role senders, as well as fatigue, depression, and unhappiness (see Sell et al. 1981). Role-incumbents experiencing role conflict also have less trust in those imposing conflicting demands, dislike them personally, have lower regard and esteem for them, and communicate with them less (Kahn et al. 1964, cited in Rizzo et al. 1970: 152, *no access to original*).

Role strain and role conflict in particular can also emerge from *role overload* – exposing a role incumbent to a role-set that is too complex and consumes too much of the role-incumbent’s time and energy (Biddle 1979; Snoek 1966) or by “expecting the role incumbent to engage in several role behaviours, all of which may be mutually compatible in the abstract, within too short a time period” (Kahn et al. 1964, cited by Sell et al. 1981: 44, *no access to original*). If a journalist feels they lack time and economic resources to fulfil their various role expectations, they may feel role overload (Obermaier and Koch 2014). At the same time, role overload may not necessarily always lead to role strain, but rather *role accumulation* and various rewards associated with taking on multiple roles. Sieber (1974: 569) critiques Goode’s (1960) and Snoek’s (1966) emphasis on role overload’s negative contribution to role strain, arguing that role accumulation can in fact reward role-incumbents with role privileges. These include status security, resources for status enhancement and role performance, and enrichment of the personality and ego gratification. Theoretical approaches to the study of role strain (e.g. Goode 1960) tend to take a “scarcity approach” to understanding the challenges of managing multiple roles and have thus argued and demonstrated that a lack of time, energy and commitment are scarce resources and responsible for role strain as a result of role overload (Marks 1977: 1922). Marks (1977: 932) critiques this approach as providing theoretical support to “culturally

honourable excuses for the under-committed” and argues that time and energy should be approached as flexible – both expandable and contractable within specific contexts (see Marks 1977 for elaborate discussion of competing perspectives). For example, journalists who also work as media coordinators for the courts experienced role strain but also role accumulation, where their experiences varied depending on the changing contexts and demands of the roles, findings that are positioned on a role strain-accumulation continuum (Tandoc and Peters 2015).

Another source of role strain that may emerge in a role-set is *role ambiguity* – an outcome of a lack of information, clarity and articulation of expectations associated with a specific position and its roles; clear directives and methods in which these expectations could be fulfilled; and a consequence of (un)satisfactory role performance, which leads to uncertainty around the role-incumbent’s expected behaviours, responsibilities and objectives (Biddle 1979; Sell et al. 1981; Schmidt et al. 2014). Role ambiguity can also arise due to several factors: size and complexity of an organisation that is beyond the role-incumbent’s comprehension; sudden organisational growth and reorganisation of members; frequent technological and personnel changes which leads to changes in interdependent relationships; changes in the organisation’s environment along with new member demands; and the misalignment between the philosophies of upper management and members’ own beliefs about the substance of their roles (Kahn et al. 1964, cited in Rizzo et al. 1970: 152, *no access to original*). The higher the role ambiguity – non-existent or inefficient communication about expected behaviour – the lower the role incumbent’s job performance (Tubre and Collins 2000). Too much role ambiguity in organisational settings was found to lead to “increased tension, anxiety, fear and hostility, decreased job satisfaction, and loss of self-confidence, often with lower productivity” (Kahn et al. 1964, cited in Rizzo et al. 1970: 154, *no access to original*). Additionally, studies have associated role ambiguity with lower productivity and involvement with group members, negative attitudes towards role senders, anxiety, tension, depression and resentment, and the tendency to leave an organisation (see Sell et al. 1981).

Lastly, *role (mal)integration* suggests that a group of roles associated with a position are not well integrated or do not fit well with each other, also causing role strain. Malintegration can be brought about by an overlap between roles, because there is competition for scarce resources to perform the various roles, different rewards or sanctions are associated with different roles, and there are several competing forms of authority within a system (Biddle 1979: 77). Role malintegration appears to be mentioned in various studies (Nabers 2011; Gigliotti and Huff 1995) as a contributing facet of role strain, but malintegration seems to have received less empirical examination. It is suggested that when a role-incumbent is in some way

forced to perform a set of roles that are malintegrated, they may experience *role discontinuity* or a lack of coherent connection between the various roles (Biddle 1986: 83). For conceptual clarity, Table 3 outlines key concepts and their definitions emerging from the above discussion that are relevant to and will be applied within this study.

Table 3: Role-Expectation Disruptions

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	CAUSES	IMPACT ON ROLE-INCUMBENT	SOURCE
Role Strain	Stress associated with the inability to adjust to or fulfil various role expectations – also understood as a response to other negative role phenomena (conflict, overload, ambiguity, malintegration etc.)	Promotion or tenure insecurity; incompatible roles; conflicting public and private roles; ambiguity and lack of control over situation; dispersed responsibility; time and pressure over different demands; contradictory norms (emotionality/detachment); too many role-set relationships with diverse/competing expectations	Frustration; feelings of insecurity and failure; deterioration of health	Biddle 1979; Goode 1960; Mitchell 1958; Snoek 1966; Merton 1957
Role Conflict	Inability to conform to too many conflicting expectations or expectations in conflict with incumbents' values	Too many or contradictory / incompatible role expectations from single or multiple role senders, role-sets and role-set relationships	Lower group performance and performance evaluations; unsatisfactory work relationships; negative attitudes towards competing role senders; fatigue, depression, unhappiness; role senders more likely distrusted, disliked, afforded lower regard, and less communication	Biddle 1979; Stryker and Macke 1978; Örtqvist and Wincent 2006
Intra-sender role conflict	Incompatible or contradictory expectations stemming from a single role sender			Sell et al. 1981

Inter-sender role conflict	Incompatible or contradictory expectations stemming from different role senders	Sell et al. 1981
Person-role conflict	Incompatibility between expectations a role-incumbent holds for themselves and expectations associated with their position	
Inter-role conflict	Pressures stemming from roles associated with multiple positions held by one person // Incompatible or contradictory expectations stemming from different roles	Sell et al. 1981 // Gross et al. 1966
Intra-role conflict	Incompatible or contradictory expectations stemming from a single role	Gross et al. 1966
Role Overload // Accumulation	<p>A set of roles that is too complex and consumes too much energy and time // Overload can be seen in positive terms as role accumulation</p> <p>Roles mutually compatible in theory but in practice have to be performed with too little resources, time, energy // Multiple roles can be a source of satisfaction</p> <p>Role strain // Role privileges, position security and enhancement, personality enrichment, ego gratification</p>	Biddle 1979; Snoek 1966; Kahn et al. 1964; Sell et al. 1981; Siebert 1974; Marks 1977
Role Ambiguity	<p>Lack of clarity around expectations associated with a position, how expectations can be fulfilled, and consequences of unsatisfactory role performance</p> <p>Size/complexity of organisation beyond comprehension; sudden growth and reorganisation of members; changes in interdependent relationships due to technology or personnel; new member demands; misalignment between management and members on substance of roles</p> <p>Lower job performance, productivity and satisfaction; decreased confidence; increased tension, anxiety, fear, resentment; high tendency to leave organisation</p>	Biddle 1979; Sell et al. 1981; Schmidt et al. 2014; Kahn et al. 1964; Rizzo et al. 1970; Tubre and Collins 2000
Role Malintegration	<p>Role overlap, competition for scarce resources, different rewards/sanctions for different roles, competing authorities within a system</p> <p>Role strain, role discontinuity</p>	Biddle 1979, 1986; Nabers 2011; Giagliotti and Huff 1995

2.3.4.1 Remedies for the challenges and disruptions to role systems

While there is some inconsistency across studies of various role concepts (conflict, ambiguity, strain, overload) and the impact they have on the role incumbent, they do also tend to show that where any of these are present in abundance, role incumbents have negative experiences of their roles and positions (Sell et al. 1981). Goode (1960) suggests a role incumbent can reduce role strain by manipulating their role structure; which role-set-relationships they engage in; and their performance within each relationship. The role-incumbent can do this by compartmentalizing various aspects and demands of a role, delegating conflicting demands to others, eliminating a specific role-set-relationship, or by creating barriers against intrusion from others in the role-set-relationship (e.g. hiring an assistant as a middleperson). They can also engage in ‘bargains’ or decisions about the cost-to-value ratio of engaging with each ‘role sender’ and deciding the ‘price’ of a role by considering how committed they are to it, how much punishment or reward their performance may result in, and the esteem or critique role senders will direct towards the role incumbent based on their performance (Goode 1960). Role strain can also be reduced by minimizing a role-incumbent’s (over)involvement in fulfilling their role, that is, by creating greater “*role distance*” – appearing casual towards their roles or leaving their occupational roles behind at the office (Biddle 1979: 326). Role incumbents demarcate *role boundaries* or “mental fences” around the various social domains in which they enact expected role behaviours, and in doing so try to control *role transition* or the spilling over of roles from one domain (occupation) to another domain (private) (Ashforth 2000: 5).

Role conflict can be mitigated by respecting two principles in organisational theory; the ‘chain-of-command principle,’ where organisations have a clear hierarchical set of relationships and top-to-bottom flow of authority, and the ‘principle of unity of command,’ where each employee receives orders and is accountable to one superior in order to avoid “being caught in the crossfire of incompatible orders or incompatible expectations” (Rizzo et al. 1970: 150). As far as organisations go, in the traditional sense, journalists may offset role conflict by receiving orders only from one editor, however this ignores that journalists receive multiple direct and indirect orders (expectations) for actors outside of the organisational context and other levels of the system (Shoemaker and Reese 2013). Furthermore, role-incumbents can engage in personal development, seek adequate communication and receptiveness by upper management to their ideas; coordinate workflow, be adaptable to change, and have adequate authority (Rizzo et al. 1970: 161). Van de Vliert (1981) suggested three further ways to deal with role conflict: choosing among different conflicting norms

(preferably the one that is perceived as more legitimate and less likely to attract sanctions); compromising among norms, and – if these do not alleviate role conflict – then withdrawing from the situation (more frequent where both norms are equally legitimate or illegitimate, and sanctionable). Hall (1972) suggested role-incumbents could engage in “structural role redefinition”, similar to Goode’s (1960) “role bargains” by negotiating and agreeing with role-senders to revise their expectations, or reallocating and sharing role tasks; they could engage in “personal role definition” by altering the way they perceive the expectations and demands of the roles instead of changing the expectations themselves; or the role incumbent can engage in “reactive role behavior” by improving their role performance and satisfying the demands of the role senders.

Where roles have become “threatened by destabilizing conditions,” role incumbents may recognize the need for *role change* (Turner 1990: 90). This includes: when a role becomes dysfunctional and no longer has the desired effect or meets its demands; when the role invokes unfavourable sentiment or perceptions; and when the costs or tenability of holding on to and performing this role outweighs its benefits, as judged by the role incumbent (Turner 1990: 89). Role change or role transition therefore may be seen as a bridge connecting and providing a sense of continuity in the process of *role exit* and *role entry*, that is, abandoning one role and transitioning to another (Ashforth 2000: 12). Motivations for role change include a misalignment between the role and its incumbent (e.g. character); demands by collaborators (e.g. client, competitors), or changes in social structure and cultural values (e.g. lack of demand for this role’s functions and goals, or resource to support it) (Turner 1990: 99). In turn, impetus for role change will happen if: an “achievable alternative” is recognized and its cost/benefit ratio is better than the former role; there is “structural autonomy” to go ahead and change; role incumbents are mobilized by a collective desire for role change; clients of the role incumbent demand the new services under the new role; the new role has “cultural credibility” and institutional as well as legal support (Turner 1990: 100). If role change is not possible because there is insufficient personal or professional autonomy to do so, role incumbents may engage in “petty deviance” – straying from their official roles by developing informal roles or elaborating on formal ones (Turner 1990: 91). When journalists are unable to negotiate and adapt to the behavioural demands of new roles and changing expectations of role senders, they may exit the occupational position entirely (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017). “Exit conditions” refers to the departure of a person “from the position through resignations, retirement, or being discharged for cause” (Biddle 1979: 103). Relinquishing or exiting the position is often a painful process and can be a source of disorganisation and distress, as has recently been

observed among professional journalists who were made redundant as a result of the economic crisis in journalism (Zion et al. 2016). For conceptual clarity, Table 4 outlines key concepts and their definitions emerging from the above discussion that are relevant to and will be applied within this study.

Table 4: Remedies to Role Disruptions		
CONCEPT	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Manipulation of role-structure and role-set-relationship	Compartmentalizing or delegating conflicting role demands; eliminating role-set-relationships or creating barriers (middleperson)	Goode 1960
Cost-to-value ratio bargaining	Evaluating role-incumbent's commitment to a role; extent of punishment-reward, esteem-critique role-sender likely to direct at role performance	
Role Distance	Minimizing (over)involvement in fulfilling a role (i.e. leaving work at work)	Biddle 1979
Role Boundaries	Demarcating social domains with different role-sets	Ashforth 2000
Role Transition Control	Controlling the spilling over of roles from one domain (occupation) to another (private)	
Chain-of-Command // Unity-of-command Principle	Role-incumbent is part of a hierarchical set of relationships and top-to-bottom authority flow // Role-incumbent is accountable to one superior	Rizzo et al. 1970
Structural role definition	Role-incumbent can: ask role-senders to revise their expectations; alter/redefine their perceptions of conflicting expectations; improve role performance to satisfy expectation demands	Hall 1972
Role Change (Role exit-entry)	Transitioning from one role to another, or exiting a role because it: no longer meets demands; invites negative reactions; role misfits the incumbent; changed demands by competitors; function no longer needed Change possible if there is a better role alternative, autonomy and collective desire to make the change; new role behaviour is in demand	Turner 1990; Ashforth 2000
Petty role deviance	Straying from or elaborating official roles / developing informal roles when role change impossible	Turner 1990

The above concepts reflect a series of changes and challenges to role incumbents – journalists whose roles may be emerging, adjusting, conflicting, disappearing, in response to digital transformations, greater economic pressures, and the growing importance of audiences in journalistic work. These concepts will be used to evaluate the extent to which journalists in South Africa exhibit role consensus, role conformity, role taking, various forms of role strain (role conflict, ambiguity, overload, malintegration, and discontinuity) role transition/change or exit, to gain a fuller and more nuanced insight into how journalists understand their roles.

In reviewing key literature on the shifting relationship between audiences and journalists, and the potentially disruptive impact audience expectations can have on journalistic role conceptions, we see that audience expectations have become an important consideration when studying journalistic role conceptions. Specifically, in relation to audience expectations literature, several shortcomings emerge. Studies have consistently examined how various demographic factors may affect audience expectations, however, these have (1) focused primarily on factors such as education, age, political orientation, media use, and gender, over social identity constructs such as race and class, although these have been shown to shape audiences' perception and consumption of news media (Lindell 2020; Robinson and Culvert 2019). Likewise, in relying on quantitative approaches, studies have often approached studying the impact of identity on expectations in a disassembled way, treating identity as discrete categories that are controlled independently. These studies have also (2) primarily examined audiences' expectations of political journalist over other genres such as lifestyle journalism, and (3) have paid limited attention to audiences in 'Majority World Countries' and especially those with younger, developing democracies and greater socio-economic inequality where other forms of journalism (development, solutions, peace) may shape audience expectations. Finally, studies have (4) largely examined audience expectations quantitatively and in response to journalists' existing role conceptions, perhaps inadvertently limiting the opportunity for audience expectations to emerge without such normative constraints. Furthermore, as journalists discursively construct and perform their (normative) roles (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) these have become common knowledge to audiences, and thus their expectations tend to reflect the normative roles of the journalistic field. To expand on this, the present study goes beyond norms (prescriptive expectations) to explore audience expectations that are beliefs about journalism (descriptive expectations) and feelings about journalism (cathectic expectations) (Biddle 1979).

To address these gaps, this study examines audience expectations through qualitative approaches, specifically focus group discussions; besides exploring audience expectations of

political journalists it also focuses on their expectations of lifestyle journalists; it explores the expectations of audiences in a Majority World Country and a younger democracy, remaining open to how this might reveal alternative expectations of journalistic roles, and finally it considers how identity categories underexplored in previous audience expectations research (such as race, class, and gender) may shape expectations. The last of these shortcomings is discussed in greater detail in the following section. It argues that when we consider how social identities may shape audiences' specific expectations of journalists, we begin to see that some audiences' expectations end up excluded or rendered invisible by a journalism ideology and profession that itself favours those with an elite, White, and male social identity. It proposes intersectionality as a useful theoretical approach to furthering our understanding of not only audience expectations but also how social identity may shape journalists' role conceptions.

2.4. HOW SOCIAL IDENTITIES SHAPE ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Numerous scholars have highlighted in various ways that journalism as an occupation and an ideology is rooted in 'majority cultures' that promote elite (middle-class), masculine, and White worldviews (e.g. Hovden 2008; Steiner 2020; Slay and Smith 2011). The gendered nature of journalistic role conceptions scholarship is visible in the overwhelming focus on political journalism as having an indispensable function in society over the function of other softer forms of journalism (Costera Meijer 2001), as well as in the way journalists have tended to maintain detachment and distance from their audiences (van Zoonen 1998). At the same time, audiences whose social identities are marginalized have also found themselves on the periphery of journalism's dominant professional ideology. Working-class audiences' news practices and preferences are often excluded by not only the news media but by other audiences higher up in the social class hierarchy (Lindell 2020). Similarly, African American audiences find journalists neglect to focus on their communities (Robinson and Culvert 2019), and Black, Coloured and Indian audiences in South Africa feel journalists do not adequately provide solutions to the problems they report on (Malila et al. 2013).

These observations suggest two things: first that journalists whose social identities do not reflect those that dominate journalism as a professional ideology will, at best, feel they have to constantly negotiate several opposing identities, namely their journalistic role identity and others that are in opposition (e.g. being a woman), and at worst, struggle to negotiate these role identities and experience conflict. Second, audiences will feel perpetually invisible and

underrepresented in the traditional, legacy news media they consume, potentially seeking alternative sources of news, or abandoning news all together and become news avoiders. Both scenarios place considerable strain on those who find themselves not at the core of journalism's ideology.

In this part of the chapter, these arguments will be elaborated on by drawing on key concepts in multiple intersecting role identities and social identity theory (Hogg et al. 1995) and the concept of habitus (Bourdieu 1984; Benson and Neveu 2005) to understand how socially constructed identity categories of class, race, and gender may shape journalists' role conceptions and audience expectations. Additionally, as literature on role conceptions and expectations indicates, identity categories have been primarily explored in a unitary way, treating these as independent variables. To account for this, the last section of this chapter proposes an intersectional approach.

2.4.1. Social Identity Theory and Habitus: Journalists' and audiences' multifaceted identities

Journalists' work is shaped by influences at various levels, including social systems, social institutions, organisations, working routines, and finally, the individual (Shoemaker and Reese 2013). Journalist's role conceptions are located at the individual level. However, roles are generated not only through the expectations they have of themselves, but also the expectations others have of them, implying that roles are constructed by the interplay between the micro- and meso-macro-sociological levels of the individual, organisations, group memberships, and society. As studies have shown role conceptions play a vital function in guiding journalistic work, but other influences have a hand in shaping the final product (Mellado et al. 2016; Carpenter et al. 2016; Hanitzsch and Mellado 2011).

To occupy a social position is to have roles, and to have roles is to be "associated with sets of persons who share a common identity" so that even when we do not know people personally, we are able to behave and interact with them appropriately because "they hold identities which are commonly recognized" (Biddle 1979: 87). Identity theory refers to these commonly recognizable identities as "role positions" or "role identities" interchangeably and argues that they form the building blocks of an individual's sense of self, or identity (Hogg et al. 1995: 256). Role identity is "a set of characteristics or expectations that simultaneously is defined by a social position in the community and becomes a dimension of an actor's self" (Charng et al. 1988: 304). It is in this interactive space between the individual and society that

identity – “a person’s perception of himself as he relates to his environment” – is constructed (Hall 1972: 472). Which is to say, an individual gets to know who they are by interacting with other individuals and social groups. Because society is multifaceted, an individual’s interactions with society lead to the development of multiple but interlinked role identities that reflect the values and expectations of other individuals and groups they interact with. Thus, to occupy a social position of a journalist is to have a set of roles associated with an (occupational) identity which is in constant interaction with other role-identities or role-positions formed in relation to society. For example, a person simultaneously holds and negotiates their journalistic identity and roles with their other role-identities as a woman, citizen, or mother, among others. Therefore, as Stryker (1968) has argued, the self is not autonomous but socially constructed as a result of this social interaction and based on the multiple role-positions a person holds in society. The self is therefore “a multifaceted and organised construct” that consists of differentiated but connected role identities (Hogg et al. 1995: 256). Hall (1972) has referred to role-positions as subidentities which compete for dominance and a larger stake in the overall identity, and the space where all these different subidentities overlap is understood as the “core” (Hall 1972). Perhaps most poignantly, Goffman (1959) argued that people, in their encounters and interactions with others, perform various aspects of themselves by foregrounding different masks while suppressing others, depending on the impression they seek to make on the other person. Far from suggesting the person takes on a different persona, they merely emphasise different facets of their whole selves.

In many ways, the concept of social identity is reflected in Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu 1984; Benson and Neveu 2005). A person’s *habitus* is shaped by socialization; exposure to diverse experiences, opportunities and struggles within society that shape their sense of self (Eldridge 2018). The nature of these experiences is determined by the level of access an individual has had and is likely to have in the future to different forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986). Forms of capital include: (1) economic capital, through possession of money and property; (2) cultural capital, found in educational qualifications; and (3) social capital, found in social connections and thus social clout. Importantly, the second and third forms of capital can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu 1986). A person’s access to different forms of capital determines the kinds of social positions they can occupy, but also dictates a person’s dispositions – distinct orientations and tastes in cultural products – which shape how one interprets their roles associated with a social position. This implies that “people who share *positions* are likely to share *dispositions*” (Lindell 2018; Bourdieu 1984) whether this refers to a person’s taste in fashion (Blumer 1969; Simmel 1957), political behaviour

(Verba et al. 1997), news consumption (Lindell and Sartoretto 2018) or a journalist's acceptance into the field and ability to reflect its dominant vision (Hovden 2008). That is, those who share common "cultivated dispositions" are said to share a *habitus* – conditioned, internalized preferences and perceptions of distinctive, cultural practices and goods – that are structured by and structure class divisions within the social space (Bourdieu 1984: 170). In other words, the *habitus* refers to the "situated self" that emerges as a result of "experiences of socialization that have shaped the positioning of individual social agents" (Eldridge 2018: 43), whether journalists or audiences.

For journalists, the *habitus* is understood as a journalistic identity, or "the way journalists position themselves against what they understand societal expectations of journalists to be" (Eldridge 2018: 44). *Habitus* is often associated with particular spaces, such as the newsroom, that both contribute to socialization and at the same time limit differences among those being socialized (Eldridge 2018). It is "a specific way of playing the news game" and the specific dispositions a player in the game (journalist) must have to position themselves within the game – a certain knowing of how the game is played (Willig 2013: 374). Therefore, the journalistic field reproduces the 'silent orchestration of *habitus*' where journalism education and recruitment perpetuate the (self-)selection of journalists whose *habitus* predisposes them to and corresponds with the dominant vision of the profession (Hovden 2008: 103; see also Hovden 2012). Once in the field, new members develop a 'journalistic *habitus*' – a tacit understanding or "feel for the [journalistic] game" that shapes their work practices and ideals (Willig 2013: 378). *Habitus* (e.g. gender) can affect journalists' preference for genre specialization and journalistic ideals (Hovden 2008). For audiences, the concept of '*habitus*' is visible in their '*taste*' or varied ways in which people choose to live and distinguish themselves from others, namely through social class (Lindell 2020). However, a person's *habitus* and cultivated dispositions, built on their socialization within specific environments, can arguably go beyond class distinctions to refer to dispositions that emerge as a result of their gendered or racialized socialization. Bourdieu's social space, although primarily structured through class stratification, is also defined "by a whole set of subsidiary characteristics which may function, in the form of tacit requirements, as real principles of selection or exclusion without ever being formally stated (this is the case with ethnic origin and sex)" (Bourdieu 1984: 102). Steiner (2020) has argued that "ways of thinking and knowing are highly influenced by social identity, in turn, affected by experiences, differences in socialization, and social history."

Identity is constructed not only based on an individual's occupation of various role-positions, but also their belonging to social categories, thus creating a social identity, that "both

describes and prescribes one's attributes as a member of that group" (Hogg et al. 1995: 260). Behavioural prescriptions become norms for the member of the in-group, and how they differentiate themselves by employing discriminatory stereotypes and perceptions of members of the out-group. Group members adjust their behaviour to match dominant internal norms, "share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves," and develop a positive evaluation of their shared social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986: 283). Experiences or even anticipation of competition and a survivalist attitude is often a key factor that leads to formation of in- and out-group bias and favouritism (Brewer 1979). The same goes for journalists, for example, who unknowingly engage in the informal, implicit and dispersed process of socialization or "attitude promotion" (Sigelman 1973) in order to maintain a particular newsroom culture – a "socialized set of norms and values embedded in the daily undertakings of those in the newsroom" (Filak 2004: 218). Once journalists adopt this newsroom culture, they become part of a social in-group that will show favouritism to its own members and rejection of its outsiders (Filak 2004). A defining aspect of social identities is that they are "relational and comparative" allowing members of one group to deem others better or worse than them (Tajfel and Turner 1986: 283). Using social identity theory as a framework, Ferrucci and Vos (2017) found that digital journalists define their in-group status against the out-group of traditional journalists on the one hand, and bloggers and citizen journalists on the other, evoking three distinguishing features: the media they publish on (online, but linked to established media); the organisation backing and legitimacy they get from belonging to a media organisation; and having different role conceptions.

Group belonging therefore is based on what Bourdieu captures in the concept of 'doxa' which refers to the "tacit suppositions" (Bourdieu 2005: 37) or the "unspoken but acknowledged criteria of belonging" to a specific social group, or specifically the journalistic field (Eldridge 2017: 224). It is the "unspoken, unquestioned, taken-for granted, understanding of the news game" (Willig 2013: 374) and a belief system shared by the members of that group/field which "emerge as ideal-typical role conceptions" (Eldridge 2018: 42). Both the habitus and the doxa shape the journalistic field internally and generate a dominant vision of the field (Eldridge 2017). While this belief system allows journalists to maintain boundaries between themselves and those they perceive as non-journalists (Eldridge 2018), in-group/out-group tensions can emerge along other identity axes within the organisational context. For example, within organisations, members of marginalized groups or "stigmatized cultural identities" (Slay and Smith 2011) may experience psychological anxiety as a result of competing social identities and out-group stereotyping. Exploring organisational diversity in

South Africa, April and colleagues (2012) found that a fear of being reprimanded for calling out discrimination, means employees remain silent for the sake of inclusion in dominant organisational cultures and groupthink (April et al. 2012: 1756). Black women in upper management roles are often “faced with the dual challenge of transforming stereotypical images and simultaneously creating new professional roles” – a process steeped in racism and sexism that can “trigger psychological conflict” and “heighten Black women’s psychological anxiety” (Bell 1990: 460). As Slay and Smith (2011: 102) in their study of African American journalists have argued, “little professional identity research has examined how the professional identity construction process may be altered to allow for the negotiation of professional and stigmatized cultural identities.”

Critically, Simpson and Carroll (2008) have argued that roles are not acquired in a linear or formal process of socialization into positions but they become in and of themselves sites of identity negotiation vis-à-vis a person’s multiple, competing identities and through their interaction with other actors. Rather than seeing roles as “a fixed social construction that functions purely as a determinant of member behaviour” it becomes a “boundary object” or an “an intermediary translation device that sits within the relational process of identity construction” (Simpson and Carroll 2008: 33). Levinson (1959: 172) also saw the role as a meeting point “between societal prescription and individual adaptation.” In other words, beyond imposing a socially prescribed set of normative behaviours and expectations on a person, a role as a boundary object becomes “a site or medium for the negotiation of identity and difference” between the self and other actors, or the “multiplicity of subjective selves that constitute identity” (Simpson and Carroll 2008: 35). Thus, a role is subject to change in response to the role-incumbent’s various identities, for example, a journalist’s interpretation of the role of ‘change agent’ is shaped by their multiple identities. Similarly, a journalist’s interpretation of the role of ‘change agent’ is subject to change based on their interaction with other actors, for example, audiences. The same principles can be applied to our understanding of expectations – as boundary objects that are constructed and adapted based on an audience member’s multiple identities.

2.4.2. How race, class, gender shape journalists’ role conceptions and audience expectations

Why journalists become journalists, their education and recruitment, the beats they choose or feel ‘supported’ in, and their role orientations are a reflection of their personal and professional

habitus – the classed, gendered, and racialized dispositions, reinforced or undermined by dominant newsroom cultures that socialize journalists to abandon aspects of their personal habitus in favour of the accepted and preferred journalistic habitus and doxa (Hovden 2008; Willig 2013). As such, the journalistic field becomes a classed (middle-class, elite), gendered (patriarchal), racialized (White) space. This results in a dominant journalistic culture constituting ‘us’ within an ‘us-them’ socio-cultural binary, prompting the “selective articulation” of news that reinforces “naturalized” differences between dominant and ‘other’ groups (Bailey and Harindranath 2005: 278). Issues are “considered newsworthy only if they are seen by journalists as affecting or being of interest to the ‘we’” (Sonwalkar 2005: 271). Similar patterns of ‘othering’ are also found among audiences, where at least in terms of class, those with greater volumes of capital (higher-class) engage in moral and affective degradation and stereotyping of those from lower classes whom they perceive as engaging in dubious news consumption practices by either avoiding news entirely or consuming only ‘soft’ forms of news (Lindell 2020). ‘Othering’, a concept coined within post-colonial theory, is a process of us-them differentiation, degradation and dehumanization where those with power symbolically construct and subordinate ‘the other’ based on interlocking systems of oppression such as class, race, and gender (Spivak 1985). As such, the concept of othering can be understood as a mechanism or tool through which to identify the symbolic acts of power and/or oppression evident in racism, classism, and sexism, among other forms of oppression (Crenshaw 1989, 1991). Spivak (1985) identified three dimensions of othering: 1) the powerful ‘master’ makes the subordinate aware of who is in power and constructs the subordinate ‘other’; 2) the powerful constructs the subordinate ‘other’ as “pathological and morally inferior” rooted in stereotypes of brutality and lack of intellectual refinement; and 3) the powerful is the owner and sole possessor of knowledge and technology (Jensen 2011: 64-65, see also Alley-Young 2008). In her study of ethnic minority men in Denmark, Jensen (2011) highlights that the concept of othering does not afford the ‘othered’ adequate agency to resist othering, and identified two dimensions of agency: 1) capitalization – othering discourses are not refused but appropriated and infused with value through which the ‘othered’ refuses to be devalued; and 2) refusal – the othered distances themselves from the othering discourses thus “refusing to occupy the position of the other” (Jensen 2011: 66). As will become apparent in the below review of literature on journalists and audiences in relation to race, class, and gender, such acts of ‘othering’ as well as resistance cut across different forms of oppression and/or power.

One of journalism’s key professional ideologies and a source of journalistic legitimacy surfaces through their commitment to roles of public service and addressing broad audiences

(Vos et al. 2019). However, as the literature review on audiences will also show, journalism's dominant occupational norms and journalists' role conceptions result in the routine neglect and othering of marginalized audience groups and issues of relevance to them, rendering them invisible. Such discrimination upends one of journalism's stated ideological goals of providing a public service to all audiences.

What audiences expect depends on whether something affects them personally and reflects their personal, lived experiences (Schröder 2019). Audience expectation research accounts for this by examining the impact of various identity strands on expectations. These have focused on political orientation, age, gender (or sex), and factors such as education, media trust, media use, and medium type. For example, audiences with a liberal political orientation were found to support active and more involved roles (advocating social change and promoting cultural diversity), while politically conservative audiences expect journalists to be detached observers (Vos et al. 2019: 1017). Older audiences expect journalists to be detached observers who scrutinize political actors (Vos et al. 2019; Loosen et al. 2020), while younger ones want to publish their own material (Loosen et al. 2020), for news to be presented in captivating and entertaining ways (Costera Meijer 2007), and for journalists to be "agenda setters, influencers, advocates, entertainers, and advice givers" (Vos et al. 2019: 1016). Perceiving news consumption as important increases the level of importance afforded to all journalistic roles, especially reporting things as they are and enabling audiences to make political decisions (Vos et al. 2019). Regular consumption of news leads to more positive assessments of journalistic performance (Gil de Zuniga and Hinsley 2013). However, audience expectation studies have rarely explored the impact of class, race and gender which have nevertheless been shown to play a role in shaping audiences' experiences and consumption preferences of news.

Individual-level influences (Shoemaker and Reese 2013) on journalistic role conceptions have been explored to a greater extent because this area of research is much richer than that on audience expectations. Nevertheless, studies have paid more attention to characteristics such as age and year of professional experience, finding some or very limited influence on role conceptions (Cassidy 2008; van Dalen et al. 2012) and gender differences, finding both little significance (Hanitzsch and Hanusch 2012) and some significance (Cassidy 2008) on journalistic role conceptions. However, once again, race has received less attention although studies have shown that it shapes journalists' experiences of professional stigmatization (Slay and Smith 2011), and more recently, scholars have explored the social class structure of the journalistic field (Hovden 2008, 2012). In the interests of providing a comprehensive insight from both journalists and audiences perspectives, the study explores

how social identity shapes both journalistic roles and professional experiences, and audience expectations. Likewise, although gender has received relatively more attention within role and expectations scholarship, it is socially construed identity that spurred Kimberly Crenshaw's (1989, 1990) development of intersectionality theory, to account for the discrimination of women at the intersection of race. While there is a much wider body of work that has focused specifically on either race, or class, or gender as concepts, to fully engage with all this work would extend beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, in the interests of highlighting the aspects of the scholarship that does relate to the questions being explored here, the following sections detail how class, race, and gender relate to journalistic roles and audience expectations, as well as more broadly to journalism and audience studies.

2.4.2.1. Class

The journalistic field is a classed space (Bourdieu 1984; Benson and Neveu 2005). It is a field of cultural production, and journalists act as cultural intermediaries between the public and culture, consumption and production (Bourdieu 1984; Hovden 2008). They have the professional legitimacy to be taste instigators, shapers, and manipulators in the economy of cultural wants and needs, matchmaking consumers' tastes to goods (Smith Maguire 2014). As cultural intermediaries, journalists are the cultural bourgeois, and the journalistic field is often composed of those with inherited capital and origins in the social elite (Hovden 2008). A person's relative position within the class structure is determined by access to cultural, economic, and social capital (Bourdieu 1986). Overall capital volume positions a person into broad class groups, while capital composition distinguishes their volume of specific forms of capital within a class group, placing them into class factions (Bourdieu 1984). Class factions distinguish themselves through oppositional and distinct 'tastes' or dispositions for cultural practices and consumption styles, which broadly shape a person's lifestyle (Bourdieu 1984: 184).

The concept of class is particularly intricate in South Africa, where the population is divided into 10 Living Standard Measures (LSMs)¹ – a marketing tool that identifies audiences based on ownership capital. Differences between socio-economic (e.g. occupation) and socio-cultural (cultural capital, status) factors, and a person's raw income may not reflect classic class markers (Seeking and Natrass 2015). South Africa's middle class is a "fluid" and "arbitrarily

¹ Recently, this has been updated to the Socio-Economic Measure (SEM) which accounts for overall quality of life (see South African Audience Research Foundation).

defined” space (Melber 2017: 146) where boundaries are constantly confirmed and contested by those who discursively adopt or reject the middle-class label (de Coninck 2018). It consists of ‘established’ middle-class factions (higher salaried professionals) and ‘vulnerable’ groups who identify more closely with the working class and feel insecure about sustaining membership (Burger et al. 2015). According to Schotte and colleagues (2018), only one in four South Africans can be considered to be a part of a stable middle class or the elite. Socio-economic inequality (poverty, obstacles accessing education and employment) is found at the intersection of class and race (Seeking 2008). Groups considered to be poor can be further differentiated into those living in chronic or transient poverty (Schotte et al. 2018). Similarly, the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2021) found that 50% of South African live in chronic poverty, 11% belong to the transient poor class, 15% to the vulnerable middle class, 20% to a stable middle class, and 4% are the elite. This discussion reveals just how fractioned social class in South Africa is, specifically exposing the multiple layers of what would otherwise be broadly considered the working class, or the middle class. While this is critical to acknowledge, for feasibility purposes, this study groups its participants (journalists and especially audiences) into broader class factions (this is elaborated on in Chapter 3).

Of particular interest to this study is how classed dispositions may shape journalists’ role conceptions and audience expectations. Journalism’s classed dispositions were evident in the earliest newspaper gossip columnist, an upper-class, university educated and wealthy journalistic figure – the socialite “gentleman journalist” whose role entailed presenting a view into the fashionable and the cultural upper-class society (Newman 2013). The language of the newspapers at the start of the 18th century projected “a bourgeois and a male domain” from which women and the working classes were excluded (Conboy 2008: 252). Such classed exclusion begins with journalism education, which Hoffmann (1991: 24) has argued is “creating a middle-class, professional mentality among young journalists that does not include an appreciation for differences and diversity.” Corcoran (2004) found that Irish journalists tend to be drawn from the narrow, college-educated, middle- and upper-class echelons and are “likely to represent primarily their own class interests” – an argument also advanced by Aleman (2014) in her study of how the racial identity of journalism students shapes their news selection practices. The media ritually distinguishes between social classes and its intersection with race and gender.

To report on class issues effectively, journalists need to provide audiences with context on social issues affecting certain communities; acknowledge the complexity of social class and inequality; include the voices of those across social class groups; devote proportional and

accurate coverage to a range of issues affecting diverse communities; and report authentically by providing truthful depictions of issues (Thomas and Hendricks 2015). However, this often does not happen. Chiumbu and colleagues (2016: 14) found that although South African newspapers' coverage of socioeconomic rights affecting marginalized communities was positive and featured unheard voices, it failed to address "structural causes of inequality and poverty." Where listening to the voiceless does happen, it is among South Africa's community media journalists who are embedded in communities, hold dialogue and pay attention to issues raised (Garman and Malila 2017). Here an "ethics of listening" among journalists – a commitment to hearing and reflecting the needs and interests of the under-heard communities – becomes critical as a way of closing the "communicative gap" (Wasserman 2013; Ward and Wasserman 2014) between journalists as members of an elite institution and 'the other' audience.

Class inequalities have also been detected in news representation literature. A study comparing tabloid and traditional broadcast news coverage of crime news in the US found that tabloids more often report on criminals who belong to the middle or upper class, while quality news programmes report on criminals as members of the working class, although both focused primarily on crime committed by 'people of colour' (in this case, Latino for tabloids, and African American for quality) (Grabe 1996). Similar patterns of stereotyping and "class disgust" are found in and perpetuated by British journalism's coverage of "chavs" – White, poor, working-class, women, who "appropriate Black American popular culture" and engage in "sexual intimacy with working-class Blacks and Asians and immigrant populations" and therefore exemplify a "dirty whiteness [...] contaminated by poverty" (Tyler 2008: 25). In such coverage that speaks for rather than includes the voices of marginalized communities, Tyler (2008: 32) argues "there has been little if any shift in the alliance between elite media industries and traditional social institutions and hierarchies: class allegiances reproduce social inclusion and exclusion in a seemingly unbreakable cycle of class privilege." Media coverage of US college shootings has also been defined by social class. When comparing news coverage of the Columbine and Red Lake school shootings in the US, Leavy and Maloney (2009) found that the race and class of the killers as well as the racial and class make-up of the residents of both locations disproportionately dictated how much coverage was devoted to either and how the killers and those murdered were framed. The Columbine killers were framed as children that could be 'any one of us' in that their middle-classness and whiteness were normalized and invisible, while the coverage of the Red Lake killer focused on the fact that he was Native American and from a low-income community. The authors go on to argue that "the news is

reported with White, middle- and upper-class American citizens as the target audience” and that there is “implicit racism and classism in American journalistic practice” (Leavy and Maloney 2009: 280). Similarly, US media’s coverage of the award-winning ice-skating figure Tonya Harding portrayed someone whose entire existence in the public imagination was one of a working-class woman who was a high school dropout, grew up poor, in violent conditions, lived in trailers, and whose body and behaviour – never feminine enough, too masculine, powerful, pool-playing and bar-going – betrayed her middle-class aspirations (Foote 2003).

Nowhere is the relationship between social class and journalism more visible than in the distinctions reinforced by those who produce and have a taste for consuming lowbrow (tabloid, popular media) and highbrow (quality, broadsheet) cultural products, that is, news. Whereas the former refers to the symbolic products associated with the poor, uneducated, working, “uncultured classes,” the latter is associated with “high culture” and includes the consumption of “symbolic products that are preferred by members of the educated elite” (Grabe 1996: 928). Such classed treatment of different cultural products serves as a strategy used by the privileged to ignore the lived realities and issues affecting the marginalized, that is, those that the privileged dominate (Grabe 1996). South Africa’s mainstream ‘quality’ media reinforces a middle-class worldview (Friedman 2011), therefore tabloids such as the *Daily Sun* serve an important role of speaking to an audience community that is primarily Black, working-class, with a high school education, and that has been neglected by the mainstream press (Steenveld and Strelitz 2010) and has “remained on the margins of the post-apartheid mediated public sphere” (Wasserman 2008: 788). Social class also shapes how journalists perceive their audiences and which audiences they speak to, reinforcing their fragmentation and distinction (Lindell 2018). The South African government has stressed that the “news media only serve a small elite” (Rodny-Gumede 2015:110) and scholars have pointed to the fact that the mainstream, quality news media speaks to upper-middle-class, suburban South Africans (Friedman 2011). Journalists from privileged classes are argued to perceive audiences as a ‘distant mass’ and approach them with detachment and ‘cynicism’, while those from lower classes tend to feel compassion (Hovden 2008: 95). This opposition, Hovden (2008: 95) argues, reflects Bourdieu’s (1984) distinction between pure taste, exemplified by the privileged class’ “neutralizing and distanced relation to works of art,” and the working class’ barbaric taste, “characterized by empathy and the lack of distance to the depicted people and their suffering.” South African journalists, for example, are aware and recognize the criticism that they reflect an elitist logic which leads to the neglect of marginalized audiences and empathize with the need to better address the concerns of the poor and marginalized audiences (Rodny-Gumede

2015). In Corcoran's study of Irish journalists, although they perceived themselves as distant to their audiences, they were personally sympathetic to the view that the media "exclude certain disadvantaged sections of society in its news coverage" (Corcoran 2004: 31).

Audience expectations studies have rarely accounted for class (Heider et al. 2005) even though class shapes and distinguishes audiences' diverse news preferences and "such dissimilarity is difficult to disentangle from social inequality" (Lindell 2018: 3030). Relying on Bourdieu's cultural and economic capital to conceptualize social class, Lindell and Sartoretto (2017) found that in Sweden and Brazil social class shaped young people's perceptions of the value of news, their consumption preferences and patterns, and used these practices to "draw cultural and moral boundaries" that reinforce established class hierarchies. Those with higher capital were "avid consumers of cultural goods" and perceived themselves as "active citizens" and a "member of society," and judged working-class audiences as "the same people who skip school," while the working-class audience themselves resisted "the normative news order," which they perceived to be exclusionary, and thus further excluded "themselves from the 'legitimate' culture" by refusing that from which they are refused (Lindell and Sartoretto 2017: 2057-8). The authors conclude that class, social position, and socialization through the family and school systems all influence "the extent to which young people 'buy into' the normative order that regards news as inherently 'good', valuable and worthwhile" (Lindell and Sartoretto 2017: 2057). Similar distinctions were found in the US, where television and newspaper consumption separates audiences with lower and higher volumes of capital, respectively (Friedland et al. 2007). In a study of readers of offline and online text news across five European countries, Fortunati and colleagues (2014: 134) found that audiences with lower education read less news (print, online, mobile, free), and that practicing and engaging in cultural and recreational activities (attending theatre, opera, going to pubs and dancing, and participating in religious and political associations) predicted higher likelihood of news reading, which they say shows the "strong relationship existing between the world of news and that of the culture." Consumption of sport news and entertainment is also a classed activity, where audiences' taste for certain sports reflects their social class (Bourdieu 1978). In South Africa, class determines whether audiences access international or local media content (Schieferdecker 2017), and audiences discursively reflect on their consumption and avoidance of specific media to position or socially distinguish themselves from others who do or do not consume the same media within the classed space (Bosch 2014: 908).

In an early study of how ethnicity (here referring to Black, Mexican American and White audiences) and class shapes audiences' attitudes towards news, Williams and Lindsay

(1971) found that national or international news was largely consumed by college-educated, higher-income, predominantly White and male audiences, who cited newspapers as their main and most trustworthy source of news, consumed on a daily basis, followed by television and radio very rarely. Comparatively, local news or no news was consumed by lower-education and lower-income, predominantly Black and Mexican American female audiences who often relied on word-of-mouth as a source of news, deemed radio the most trustworthy, consumed newspapers ranging from every day to rarely, consuming more radio and television than the other group. The authors concluded, however, “that media habits and attitudes varied far more as a function of social stratification than of respondent ethnicity” (Williams and Lindsay 1971: 678). Beyond actual consumption, audiences mobilize their perceptions of other people’s news consumption practices to symbolically distance themselves from or ‘other’ those in higher- or lower-class groups (Lindell 2020). Middle-class audiences “deployed exclusionary boundary strategies” of ‘othering’ working-class audiences who they perceived to lack motivation, intellectual capability, and interest in consuming news, characterizing them as news avoiders (Lindell 2020: 6). Working-class audiences, conversely, ‘othered’ those lower than themselves in the social hierarchy, as well as the middle class whom they perceived as proper, pretentious and conformist to societal expectations, and they also ‘self-othered’ in perceiving themselves as lacking news knowledge and failing to live up to society’s normative expectations of legitimate news consumption culture (Lindell 2020: 9-11). Focusing specifically on education, Willnat and colleagues (2019) found that the more educated citizens are the less importance they place on (and the more sceptical they are of) all journalists’ roles. In a national survey study of US adults exploring audience motivations to consume news, Lee (2013) found that education was a strong predictor, with higher educated audiences more likely to consume news to gain information and opinion. However, level of income did not predict any motivation for news consumption, whether information and opinion or entertainment and social.

Language has also been used strategically by media to turn what was seen as a homogenous Spanish-speaking Hispanic audience into “one segmented by a language-based notion of class” (Rodriguez 1997: 306). In what Rodriguez (1997: 287) refers to as “a profit-maximizing abstraction of similarities,” US media rely on Spanish to target and reach lower-class audiences and English to reach higher-class audiences (Rodriguez 1997). In China, however, class division is linked to politics and greater mass-market competition. Metro newspapers more frequently rely on sensationalist reporting to attract liberal intellectuals and the urban middle class, while the party-organ media sector based on communist ideology appeals to ruling and social elites and party officials (Yuan 2013). In post-apartheid South

Africa, and since the 1994 democratic elections, the government has launched affirmative action policies. Consequently, a “consumer identity” has emerged which allows people “to express their identities by means of conspicuous consumption rather than through the old identity categories inherited from apartheid” (Wasserman 2010: 34). Recent entrants to the Black middle class are more likely to engage in visible consumption to signal membership (Burger et al. 2015). Historically, class stratification was expressed through consumption (Alexander et al. 2013) of items such as cell phones, cars and fashion (Mbembé et al. 2004).

In their study of class and news consumption, Lindell and Sartoretto (2018) grouped their audiences based on people’s access to economic and cultural capital, noting that those who had access to economic capital did not necessarily seek out cultural capital, and those in lower classes had expressed a wish to attend higher education (to build cultural capital) but did not have the financial means to do so (economic capital). Yaish and Katz-Gerro (2012) approach this interdependence by “disentangling” cultural capital into two concepts: taste and participation. They show that although taste is an outcome of socialization, participation is an outcome of both taste and economic resources. In other words, one might have been socialized to like classical music, but one’s ability to attend a classical music concert is dependent on access to income (Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012). On the other hand, participation may not always be a genuine expression of taste but rather a requirement of circumstance and therefore a performance: a person may need to engage in cultural activities out of obligation, and not necessarily because of that individual’s preference. This disentanglement is also evident among a generation of South Africans born after apartheid, commonly referred to as “Born Frees” (Malila et al. 2013), whose socialization pivots between home-life and parents whose identities are rooted in the struggles of apartheid and residual poverty, and school-life and peers where they may interact with children from different class and race groups. The latter space may expose them to and socialize their taste in a way that does not correspond to their ability to participate in or act on these tastes. For example, in their study of ‘distressed neighbourhoods’ in Cologne, Germany, Blasius and Friedrichs (2008) found that working-class groups could not sufficiently convert their cultural capital (education) into economic capital (income) and vice versa, to increase overall capital volume. The authors thus argue that the working class has a “taste of necessity” – “condemning ‘simple,’ ‘modest’ people to ‘simple,’ ‘modest’ tastes” (Bourdieu 1984: 379). Having the cultural capital (taste) but not necessarily the economic capital (money to participate or fulfil taste) speaks to the concept of aspiration.

Class and the aspirational lifestyles of audiences

Early aspirational observations were made by Simmel (1957) and Blumer (1969) who argued that fashion signifies class inclusion and exclusion. Like other class-distinguishing insignia, it reinvents itself to allow elite groups to distance themselves from lower-class groups who aspire to identify with it (Simmel 1957). Once adopted and popularized by the masses, goods previously unique become ‘taken-for-granted’ and stripped of their distinction, prompting the privileged classes to quickly relegate these with “new, rarer and more distinctive goods” (Bourdieu 1984: 247). Aspiration becomes particularly relevant as a concept in relation to lifestyle journalism, where fashion, beauty, food, home, and technology provide an orientation for how people manage their lives, perform their lifestyles, and articulate their identity (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). For Africans living in urban areas, popular media more broadly can reflect their commonly experienced concerns and everyday struggles “that integrate seeming contradictions such as hope and want, aspiration and desperation” (Schoon et al. 2020: 4). It is in this juxtaposition, the authors argue, that popular media allows Africans to conceptualize themselves as both “part of a global order but also as marginalized” (Schoon et al. 2020: 4).

Found in this orientation, performance, and articulation of everyday life are traces of a person’s ‘taste’ – a “symbolic struggle” among groups “for the exclusive appropriation of the distinctive ‘signs’ which make distinction appear ‘natural’” (Bourdieu 1984: 250). However, nothing about distinction is ‘natural’, but requires participating in a ‘game’ or the ‘illusio’ that maintains the belief in the absolute value of legitimate culture (Bourdieu 1984: 250). Distinction is preserved through ‘structures of opposition’, a relational power struggle between, for example, the ‘taste of necessity’ associated with practices and goods perceived as ‘vulgar’ and exemplified by those with low cultural and economic capital volume who resign themselves to fulfilling basic, practical or functional needs; and the ‘taste of luxury’ associated with ‘rarity’ and inaccessibility, freedom and distance or dissociation from necessity and urgency, belonging to those with higher volumes of capital (Bourdieu 1984: 175–177). Within lifestyle journalism, for example, but also more broadly, this might present in the opposition between the symbolic power associated with couture versus high-street fashion, or Michelin star cuisine versus fast food. This symbolic struggle reproduces and legitimizes the hierarchy between what is perceived as authentic or legitimate culture and that which has been imitated and popularized (Bourdieu 1984: 250).

There has also been significant scholarship on the concept of aspiration within social psychology, which suggests that aspiration reflects individuals’ innate motivation toward

psychological growth and fulfilment of basic needs (Ryan and Deci 2000). While ontologically different, there is value in engaging in some theoretical eclecticism, in the hopes of opening new analytical questions and perspectives (Karppinen et al. 2014) – for example, how the consumption of lifestyle journalism for aspiration may factor into audiences’ psychological needs and motivations.

Extrinsic aspiration and conspicuous consumption: Aspiration can be extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic aspirational goals seek external validation and include financial accomplishment, social recognition, and attractive appeal (Kasser and Ryan 1996). People of low socio-economic status, susceptibility to normative pressure (keeping up with others), and a need to regain agency within personal domains, can turn to materialism as a “coping response” (Chang and Arkin 2002: 393). At the same time, those motivated by extrinsic aspirations do not always engage in conspicuous consumption as a means of status-signalling, but also to pursue quality and pleasure (Truong 2010).

That extrinsic aspiration is driven by external validation suggests its connection to conspicuous consumption, a concept coined by Thorstein Veblen ([1899] 1994), who argued that social status shapes consumption practices (Trigg 2001). Conspicuous consumption entails “the purchase of goods that do not exhibit additional utility or functionality but offer status and reveal socio-economic position” (Currid-Halkett et al. 2019: 84). Bourdieu (1984: 31) refers to this as a form of “naïve exhibitionism [...] which seeks distinction in the crude display of ill-mastered luxury” by class factions with economic capital who seek exclusivity through material possession and the appropriation and commodification of objectified cultural goods (e.g. expensive art). In other words, goods become tools to visually position a person within an aspirational class. Among US consumers, Charles and colleagues (2009: 426) found that minority groups (in this case Blacks and Hispanics) more often re-allocate available economic capital to “readily observable” or conspicuous goods as a status-signal from other areas of life (e.g. health). Recent entrants to the emerging Black middle class in South Africa are more likely to engage in visible consumption to signal membership (Burger et al. 2015). While the culturally privileged are seen as the “distinguished possessors” of symbolic power and an unconscious “sense of distinction” for legitimate culture, the nouveau riche (so-called ‘new money’) are perceived as the “pretentious pretenders” who aspire to possess distinction through the “illusory form of bluff or imitation” (Bourdieu 1984: 251–252). That is, they buy their way into performing belonging to legitimate culture. This performative aspect of class echoes Goffman’s (1959) theatrical metaphor that in social interactions people control their behaviour and appearance to achieve a desired impression. To give a convincing ‘performance’ the

nouveau riche “constantly overshoots the mark for fear of falling short” in anticipation of “being by seeming” (Bourdieu 1984: 253).

Intrinsic aspiration and inconspicuous consumption: Intrinsic aspirational goals carry inherent value and include community closeness, health, and self-growth (Kasser and Ryan 1996) and relate to ‘inconspicuous consumption’ – an understated form of status-making through “subtle, luxury goods and services that are not overtly materialistic but that also act as social signifiers” (Currid-Halkett et al. 2019: 85). Contrary to the crude display of material goods, inconspicuous consumption reflects Bourdieu’s (1984: 227) discussion of symbolic goods, consumption and appreciation for pure pleasure (art as art, not a commodity). In other words, while the nouveau riche is seen to overdo it, the cultural elite performs “ostentatious discretion, sobriety and understatement, a refusal of everything which is ‘showy,’ ‘flashy,’ and pretentious” (Bourdieu 1984: 249). Consumption is a vital part of how people construct and perform their identity. As Fromm (1976: 15) asserted: “I am = what I have and what I consume.” The literature thus suggests that social class shapes an individual’s ‘habitus’ – their dispositions and taste for specific cultural goods, aspirational goals and consumption practices. These discussions relate to how social class shapes audiences’ expectations of lifestyle journalism and its producers, and lifestyle journalists’ role conceptions and perceptions of audiences.

2.4.2.2. Race

In his overview of journalism history scholarship, Nerone (2011) found that although the number of studies that focus on race was quite high, the frequency of the term ‘Black’ was almost three times as high as the term ‘White’ in these studies, implying the lack of focus on whiteness and invisibility of whiteness as a race in journalism scholarship. Aleman (2014: 74) has argued that “news is largely produced by White journalists who have grown up with a set of dominant White group norms and values, which tend to define an overall White perspective on news events.” Dyer (2000: 11) similarly has stressed that “the media politics, education are still in the hands of White people, still speak for Whites while claiming – and sometimes sincerely aiming – to speak for humanity.” Organisational research has also too often treated organisations as homogenous or race neutral. A major reason for this is the employment of theoretical approaches founded in the idea of “White males as the defining group for studying organisation” thus effectively ensuring whiteness becomes the invisible race-less norm, and blackness becomes the racial category of the ‘other’ (Nkomo 1992: 488-489). If journalistic

ideology is rooted in whiteness, how do journalists who have been socialized in non-White racial cultures balance potentially competing and contradictory identities?

For journalists in South Africa, race is not a “master-signifier” but “one of many floating-signifiers” in their journalistic identity, negotiated alongside professional values (Daniels 2016: 446-447). Racism continues to shape South African journalists’ experiences in the newsroom (Ndlovu 2015) and media institutions rely on various strategies to negate and deny these experiences and representations in news content, including: ‘splitting’ racial representations and practices into an “evil” apartheid-era type of racism and “benign” or inevitable/unintentional racism; by “dislocating” and situating racism outside the media by relying on passive language, metaphors of media mirroring a racist society, and reflection on and contrasting apartheid and post-apartheid society; and “deracializing” racism, by attributing racism to non-racial causes (Durrheim et al. 2005). The media is owned by White capital and serves in the interest of elites with slow transformation of the field (de Beer et al. 2016). In a study of African American reporters, Slay and Smith (2011) found that being a member of a “stigmatized cultural identity” shapes journalists’ vision of professional identities and “sets of possible selves” in several ways. The most important influence stemmed from early life experiences, and family and cultural values. In particular, journalists’ socio-economic status, and exposure to poverty and discrimination in early life, influenced them to pursue journalism as a profession that “helped the defenceless or exposed inequality” or allowed them to “fight against the racial stigma” (Slay and Smith 2011: 94). Their professional identity was also shaped by experiences of rejection, and feelings of isolation and being an outsider at work and among colleagues, with journalists saying, “White editors were not sensitive to what Black reporters were going through” and “Black journalists are not really viewed as part of the game” (Slay and Smith 2011: 95). This informed their view of “who they could *not* be” and the potential of upward career progression. While women have gained some advantage in recent decades in terms of being hired as journalists, race and ethnicity were found to negatively affect student’s hiring opportunities, especially in the initial four years after graduating (Becker et al. 1999). White audiences have also been found to perceive Black journalists as less credible and qualified (Balon et al. 1978).

Of key contention here is the objectivity norm. The professional identity of African American journalists was also shaped by actively challenging the objectivity norm which meant “advocating for causes and people who cannot speak for themselves” and reporting positive Black stories (Slay and Smith 2011: 96). Objectivity, Aleman argues, is an outcome of White identity – “purporting invisibility and neutrality when reporting events is tantamount

to the unmarked yet privileged vantage that whiteness occupies in society” (Aleman 2014: 74). News values and reporting standards such as a reliance on the objectivity norm reinforce “Enlightenment ideals steeped in White privilege” and have been “used as crutches for the status quo” allowing mainstream media to perpetuate stereotypical and racist narratives (Robinson and Culver 2019: 377). Which is to say that “objectivity and other hegemonic practices have reified a system, of White supremacy for a White community that traditional Western reporters are not only a part of, but reporting for and within” (Robinson and Culver 2019: 378). White journalists covering stories on race were found to stick to traditional objectivity norms of seeking out expert sources (‘of colour’), but also paid more attention to wording, and became aware of how their own background and whiteness might shape their story, some fearing they would say the wrong thing (Robinson and Culvert 2019). This largely reflected journalists’ existing conceptions of objectivity as a normative tool to be passive or distant to protect themselves from bias in covering such issues.

What makes news a product of whiteness is “an over reliance on White elites as sources, a disregard of ethnic groups and organizations, an inaccurate depiction of the menace of racial or ethnic groups, and a dismissal of stories about racism” (Aleman 2014: 74). However, even when an African American journalist might be better equipped to cover Black stories more sensitively, they have been found to reproduce narratives that reflect dominant White perspectives in their reporting (Parisi 1998; Aleman 2014). This is to say, increasing the number of Black journalists in newsrooms may increase their visibility in the media (Robinson and Culver 2019), but not necessarily change the narrative (Aleman 2014). Even in newsrooms with high racial diversity, “the hegemony of whiteness can persist” in the assignment of stories, where Black journalists are often asked to write about ‘minority issues’ while White journalists cover politics and business (Pritchard and Stoubely 2007). This raises another critical assumption and form of discrimination, which is that racial identity should dictate the types of stories, predominantly race issues, that one is pigeonholed into covering (Slay and Smith 2011), absolving White journalists from having to engage with similar issues (Robinson and Culvert 2019). On the one hand, Black journalists are pigeonholed into covering Black stories where their Black identity emerges more strongly, but on the other, their media outlet demands Black journalists suspend their Black identity in order to fit a (White) professional identity (Slay and Smith 2011), potentially causing role-identity conflict.

The socialization of journalists into ideological systems of whiteness and privilege begins in journalism schools where specific pedagogical strategies promote homogeneity. Journalism students judge newsworthiness and write stories based on ‘what they know’ or the

familiarity of existing experiences and relationships; ‘what they love’ or their passions, interests and tastes; and finally, the news values found in journalism textbooks (Aleman 2014). Therefore, in their coverage of ‘marginalized’ groups, the news media tend to reproduce and maintain stereotypes through subtle but equally insidious racist narratives and racist belief systems (Gillborn 2015). For example, news content reinforces narratives that stigmatize certain audiences, by emphasising their criminality in relation to the neighbourhoods they live in (Wenzel et al. 2018). Black athletes are often portrayed as having “superior physical skills [...] such as speed, jumping ability, and strength” while “White players are praised for mental skills such as hard work/teamwork, intelligence, and leadership capabilities” (Buffington and Fraley 2008: 293). Central to the construction of White identity are narratives that construct Black people (men in particular) as “inherently violent” by depicting the Black body as “hypersexual, animalistic, and savage” (Ferber 2007: 15) – representation also evident in the context of South Africa. Media coverage of the trial of Oscar Pistorius, a disabled, White, male, South African athlete convicted of murdering his girlfriend, White model Reeva Steenkamp, revealed that Pistorius’ legal defence was built around his fear of an imagined, absent perpetrator and intruder whom he believed was a Black man (Langa et al. 2020).

Literature on how race shapes audiences has tended to focus on media receptions and uses and gratifications frameworks, as well as media framing, coding and decoding, and media effects (see Mahtani 2008 for overview). Morley (2003 [1992]) argued that the socio-cultural experiences and practices of cultural groups shapes how they understand media messages. Racial identity can also be embedded in production symbols (talk elements, music, language) that the media rely on to communicate with their audiences, and at the same time, such cues can contribute to the construction of racial identity among its consumers (Bosch 2014). In a study of how racial identity shapes interpretations of news on discrimination within the housing market, Lind (1996) found that to African American audiences such stories reflected broader societal and systemic experiences of racism and inequality and thus interpreted the story beyond the specific characters and situations in the story. White audiences, however, did not engage with broader issues of discrimination as these were outside of their everyday experiences, and interpreted the story by focusing on the specific characters and situations in the story. Race (and gender and class) plays a role in how audiences perceive popular media, such as music videos, with differences in perceptions and interpretations of fundamental story elements. For example, while White female and male audiences thought Madonna’s song “Papa Don’t Preach” was about teenage pregnancy, Black female and male audiences noted the pregnancy but perceived the video to be about a father-daughter relationship. Brown and

Schulze (1990) argue that this differing interpretation comes down to cultural experiences attached to race and class as shaping very different perceptions of media.

When White audiences consume crime news where the perpetrator is Black they are more likely to express punitive and racist attitudes towards the crime and perpetrators and rely on stereotypes to make subsequent evaluations of that race group (Meyers 2013). Middle-aged White women were more likely to present fear after consuming news about violent crime, due to the ‘affinity’ rationale; White women fear that which they most often see in the news – themselves as victims, pointing to new media’s overemphasis on White victims and neglect of Black women’s experiences as victims of crime (Chiricos et al. 1997). Exploring audience comments on stories covering murders in New Orleans where victims were of different races, Campbell and colleagues (2011) found that audience comments expressed opinions, debates, insults and expressions of sympathy (only for White victims) that were racially charged and contributed to the polarization of audiences along racial lines. Much of this persistent representation of race in the media is “rooted in the dominant place of blackness in the White (or national) imagery” (Rhodes 2005: 34). African Americans are rarely accessed as sources, and tend to be portrayed as a problem, a threat, as dangerous and deviant members of society, which reinforces stereotypes, those groups’ marginalization and Whites’ racist attitudes towards those groups (Meyers 2013). Representations have focused on extreme binaries: the hero (athlete, celebrity) or villain (criminal), neglecting to investigate systemic racial bias (Robinson and Culver 2019). Buffington and Fraley (2008) found that Black athletes were portrayed by the media as having natural physical skill (e.g. speed) compared to White athletes who were associated with mental skills (e.g. intelligence). Such stereotypes are rooted in colonialist ideologies emphasising Black people’s “physicality over intellectual ability” (Collins 2004: 152) and distinctions where “White represents the mind and logic, perceiving natives as physical and illogical bodies requiring domination and control” (Alley-Young 2008: 309). Studies have even looked at how the race of movie actors affects White audiences’ interest in movies, finding that White audiences were disinterested in movies featuring a Black cast (Weaver 2011). Racialized immigrant audiences tend not to see themselves and their cultural diversity reflected in the media (Robinson and Culvert 2019; Mahtani 2008).

Race has also played a key role in shaping what audiences expect from journalists. While newsroom culture socializes journalists to suspend their Black identity when reporting, Black audiences expect journalists to foreground their identity. A shared history and perceptions of a common fate among the Black community shaped both how readers reacted to stories and how journalists reported on them (Slay and Smith 2011). ‘Communities of

colour' in the US expect White journalists to attend community events, cover positive stories, and develop a relationship with the community in order to build trust and improve coverage. In their study of how White reporters in the US cover issues dealing with race, Robinson and Culvert (2019) found that Black audiences wanted journalists to go beyond looking for conflict, facts, statistic and comments, to instead build trust with communities by attending events and developing relationships, to cover positive community stories, and generally to devote more attention to marginalized communities. Critically though, audiences felt their perspectives were largely absent from news media; not seeing themselves and their issues represented in the media made it harder to connect to the news or open up to journalists (Robinson and Culvert 2019). African American and Hispanic audiences, women, and those with less economic security and education expect journalists to offer solutions to community problems and to be a good neighbour, which includes caring about and understanding marginalized communities (Heider et al. 2005; Poindexter et al. 2006). Solutions journalism and specifically principles of peace journalism are deemed important in South Africa, where the media often rely on emotion and divisive "conflict narratives" in their coverage of political leaders (Hyde-Clarke 2011: 52). Wenzel and colleagues (2018: 659) found that African American and Latino audiences also expected news to propose solutions to problems, to be "in-depth and inclusive of community perspectives", and to go "beyond traditional objectivity to facilitate positive community change." Solutions journalism at its best was persistent, challenged stereotypical narratives, analysed structural and systemic problems to propose resolutions and accountability, and went beyond reporting positive stories as a "balm" or appeasing distraction (Wenzel et al. 2018: 660; citing Tuchman 1978, *no access to original*). In contrast, reinforcing negative stereotypes decreased audiences' trust, and had a "negative mental or psychological effect," prompting them to turn away from news (Wenzel et al. 2018: 658). Young Black, Coloured, and Indian audiences, also commonly referred to as 'Born Frees' for having been born in post-apartheid South Africa, also found news to be less relevant to them, and claimed journalists "focus too much on societal problems, without also seeing solutions to those problems" (Malila et al. 2013: 421). Among South Africa's White population and media, 'white talk' is a discursive strategy that allows 'safe' positive self-presentation through values of reconciliation, democracy, and freedom, while resisting transformation and seeking solutions to structural causes of inequality. These discursive repertoires are found in "*non-racialism and democratic principles, concern for poverty, and good blacks*" narratives (Steyn and Foster 2008; Chiumbu et al. 2016). An example of this would be a common reference to South Africa as a 'rainbow

nation'. Audiences in Rwanda expect journalists to be the voice of the voiceless, courageous, close to the public, ask tough questions, and to tell the truth (Frere 2014).

2.4.2.3. Gender

Historically, women in the journalism field were near absent, and when they were present, they were mostly portrayed in journalistic content occupying stereotypical roles, whether as victim, consumer, domestically oriented, someone dependent on and defined by their relationship to men, or as a sexual symbol. In this way the media engaged in the “symbolic annihilation” of women (Tuchman 2000 [1978]). Once women finally started entering newsrooms, male journalists and journalism educators worried that journalism would become a “pink-collar-ghetto” (Steiner 2020). It took several waves of the feminist movement and challenging the status quo to bring about incremental change.

Studies exploring gender differences in how journalists think of their professional roles in 18 different countries found no differences, indicating perhaps that women journalist have adopted journalism’s professional and normative structures (Hanitzsch and Hanusch 2012). National studies of journalists in Indonesia (Hanitzsch 2005) and Tanzania (Ramaprasad 2001) also found no differences in gender being a predictor of role conceptions. Cassidy (2008) found that although both women and men print journalists claimed that interpretive and disseminator roles were important, women perceived the disseminator role as significantly more important than did men, suggesting that women have adopted male-centric professional norms into their job performance. Ross and Carter (2011: 1150) have argued that journalism is made up of norms and values that “operate as a conformity mechanism that socializes all reporters, regardless of gender, to maintain the male-dominated power structure.” The above findings suggest that such “conformity to prevailing journalism standards appears to be important to all reporters” (Steiner 2020: 456). Van Zoonen (1998) has argued that female journalists are more likely to include female sources, explore the experiences, context and background of the subjects in their story, and to care about their audiences, in contrast to the masculine ideal of detachment and objectivity. However, Hanitzsch and Hanusch (2012) found no support for the assumption that women journalists have a greater orientation towards audiences, or that male journalists value objectivity more than female journalists. Women journalists may not always have the individual autonomy to make changes at the structural level and therefore accept the “unwritten rules and expectations of a male environment” (van Zoonen 1998: 33). The argument that increasing the number of female journalists in newsrooms and senior positions

could bring about a shift in journalism's culture (news agenda, work practices, norms/ideals, and representation of women) has been challenged (Ross 2001). Rather women have normalized male perspectives and values (Komter 1991) and their work continues to be evaluated and criticized against the benchmark of what is expected from men (Steiner 2020). It is not about shifting the quota, van Zoonen (1998) and Steiner (2020) argue, but about changing the news culture, which will lead to more women entering the profession and feeling accepted.

Women journalists in South Africa and India experience newsroom culture as masculine (Rao and Rodny-Gumede 2020), while in the UK they have been found to experience sexism and impeded opportunities in newsrooms defined by "cultural masculinity" (Topić and Bruegmann 2020). Or they experience a consistent feeling of being inadequate and having to prove themselves to earn recognition (Ross 2001). The beats women journalists cover have in the past been seen as an extension of the private, domestic sphere and associated responsibilities such as caring and nurturing (van Zoonen 1998). Historically, women journalists have been pigeonholed into covering stories with a woman's angle, unless they proved they could do their work like male journalists – essentially supporting "professional ghettoization" (Steiner 2020: 453). Women journalists are reluctant to focus on feminist issues in their reporting, and those in leadership roles often become even more macho than their male colleagues (Ross 2001). The process of newsroom socialization ensures that even when women journalists do experience discrimination, they blame themselves, and fellow women journalists often use their own success to argue there is no sexism (Gillwald 1993). Women journalists will often negate the presence of sexism by arguing that they are a journalist first and a woman second, and therefore seeing their occupational identity and not their gender as the target of discrimination (Ross 2001). Furthermore, when audiences believed an article had been written by a male journalist they perceived it as more credible, accurate and informative, versus perceiving it as more interesting when they believed a female journalist had written it (Steiner 2020).

Balancing the professional demands of being a journalist and the socially constructed demands of being a woman in a masculine news environment means that women journalists "have a much more fragmented and contradictory professional identity than men" (van Zoonen 1998: 38). This presents women journalists with three options: "women journalists can take on the role of the 'woman journalist' as defined by the dominant culture; adopt male culture by becoming one of the boys; or challenge the very 'doxa' of journalism by becoming one of the girls, making journalism more feminine" (Steiner 2020: 463). Underneath these discussions

lays the fundamental argument that gender has been central to defining the profession and that journalism is a masculine institution. Newsroom culture and, more broadly, journalism remains a “man-as-norm and woman-as-interloper structure” (Ross 2001: 535) which also has semantic implications. These arguments also reverberate specifically within lifestyle journalism, where women tend to self-select and are more readily welcomed due to the gendered, ‘soft’ nature of lifestyle journalism’s various genres which speak to the so-called ‘private’ spheres of everyday life (Hanusch 2019). As West and Zimmerman (1987: 129) have also argued, social positions are “gender marked, so that special qualifiers-such as “female doctor” or “male nurse” must be added to exceptions to the rule.” Male journalists are simply “journalists” while female journalists are “female journalists” (Steiner 2020: 456). While this dichotomous view of journalism as gendered is helpful in capturing where and how journalism is shaped by gendered norms, it also often essentializes gender as fixed rather than contextual and fluid, and likewise shaped by other intersecting categories of identity such as race or sexual orientation (Steiner 2020). Furthermore, a gendered lens does not acknowledge that women may not have the individual autonomy to bring about structural change, and ignores the fact that beyond their femininity, women journalists’ experiences are shaped simultaneously by ethnic or professional identities (van Zoonen 1998).

Journalism scholarship has quite extensively explored gender dynamics in news production and content, but less so how gender shapes news consumption (Toff and Palmer 2019). Women expect journalists to convey a positive image of political leaders, support government policy, foster dialogue among audiences, build a community, include audience comments, explain story selection criteria (Loosen et al. 2020) and perceive the adversarial role as less important (Willnat et al. 2019). Women are also more likely to avoid consuming political news, citing two key reasons: the gendered socialization of roles, and how these have also shaped structural inequalities (including time). That is, female audiences consume less political news because of: a) the perception that politics and political news is intended for male audiences and its content therefore has little appeal or relevance to female audiences; and b) the structural limitations and inequalities that befall women, such as the time-consuming and emotionally demanding labour of household and caretaking responsibilities (Toff and Palmer 2019). Men are seen as predisposed towards aggressiveness and having a greater taste for conflict in news, while traditionally politics has been dominated by male actors, socializing women to perceive politics as a masculine and inhospitable sphere (Verba et al. 1997). In a study of news avoiders in the US, UK, Spain and Denmark, both women and men cited similar reasons for news avoidance, however, women were more likely to do so because news upsets

or depresses them (Schröder 2016). That women are more likely to find news depressing may also be an outcome simply of the fact that women are socialized to express their feelings more readily and explicitly than men (Lively 2013). More generally, audiences avoid news because it affects their mood negatively, makes them depressed, hopeless and cynical, they lack time, experience news overload, are disinterested in content, do not trust news, and see media as driven by political and economic interests (McIntyre 2019; Newsman and Fletcher 2017; Kalogeropoulos 2017; Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; Poindexter et al. 2010).

Beyond socio-economic differences (education, income), women in the US were less likely to consume political news because of the cost-benefit considerations; consuming news costs time which unfairly disadvantages women who have the dual burden of holding a job and household responsibilities, and furthermore, do not perceive news as beneficial to enabling political participation (Benesch 2012). Whereas prior to the Internet age, no gender differences could be found among news avoiders, since the onset of online news, women (55%) were more likely than men (31%) to avoid consuming online news because of a lack of time (22%) or lack of interest (22%), compared to men who either lacked interests (28%) or had already read the news in the newspaper (25%) (Poindexter et al. 2010). Looking at the readership of text news (offline and online) across five European countries, men are more likely than women to read newspapers (print, online, mobile, free), that is, “print journalism still fails to attract women” (Fortunati et al. 2014: 135). More than men, women expect news to provide information that is useful and helpful for their everyday life, and to be enjoyable to read and entertaining (Poindexter et al. 2010). Issues that are of interest and relevance to women tend to be marginalized as less important than issues of interest to men (Ross and Carter 2011). The gender of audiences also shapes how they perceive journalistic content. Male audiences attribute more trust to stories written by male journalists, and the appearance of female journalists affects male audiences’ perceptions of professionalism, where less attractive women journalists were perceived as better equipped to cover typically masculine topics (Steiner 2020).

The above reviewed literature suggests that examining various identity categories and factors reveals nuances in journalists’ professional experiences as well as audience expectations. When we examine class, race and gender in relation to journalists, we see that journalism attracts into its field those with a middle-class and elite background and socialization and is defined by norms and values that reflect a White identity and culture of masculinity. Similarly, we see that working-class audiences feel excluded and othered by those who perceive themselves as belonging to a legitimate news consuming culture. African

American and Black, Coloured, Indian audiences in South Africa expect journalists to report on their communities in a positive light, to give them a voice, to challenge negative stereotypes, and to offer solutions to problems. Women more often avoid news, afford less importance to the adversarial role, and expect journalists to be more supportive of political leaders and government policy and foster a community and dialogue. This means that journalists and audiences who are not middle or upper class, White, and male, more often fall outside of journalism's traditional repertoire of acceptable norms and practices and thus find themselves at the periphery of journalism's dominant professional ideology.

However, many of these conceptual arguments and empirical studies focus on one social identity at a time. They employ different axes of identity as independent variables rather than account for identity as a composite intersection of categories, or how dynamics of oppression and/or power may shape experiences and expectations. This shortcoming has been highlighted by Steiner (2012) who argued that in essentializing and dichotomizing gender (femininity exists in relation to masculinity), for example, scholars have neglected to see how gender is constructed at its intersection with other social conditions. Intersectionality, Steiner (2012: 202) argues, offers "complex, multidimensional, and fluid notions of identity politics that acknowledge how people move in and out of roles, and disrupting assumptions that women and men necessarily produce distinctive – polar opposite – representations."

For example, that women audiences avoid news does not tell us how class or race (among other factors) may have socialized these women to avoid news for different reasons. This study argues that intersectionality theory offers a useful approach to expand and offer a more nuanced understanding of how journalists understand their roles and what audiences expect. Such an approach requires considering class, race, and gender not as independent variables, but as an intersection of various categories of social division, systems of inequality and discrimination, and modes of power/oppression that ensure that some journalists and audiences are consistently in/excluded and rendered (in)visible in journalism's core professional ideology. The following section thus presents key discussions around the theory of intersectionality and how it may offer a useful framework for exposing greater nuance to journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations.

2.4.3. An intersectional approach to studying journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations

An intersectional approach asks how various identity categories intersect to form axes of power and/or oppression. Intersecting categories (gender, class, race) across multiple dimensions (female, middle class, Black) expose inequalities that shape individuals' experiences of privilege/advantages and marginalization/disadvantages within society. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) coined the term 'intersectionality' to capture "the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's [...] experiences" (Crenshaw 1990: 1244) with institutional racism and antidiscrimination law, and within exclusionary feminist and anti-racist movements (Carbado et al. 2013). Patricia Hill Collins (2015: 3) has argued that intersectionality and an intersectional framework offers scholars "an analytical strategy" and "provides news angles of vision" on social problems and phenomena. Increasingly, intersectionality as a framework and analytical strategy "has come to occupy central spaces" in studies concerned with examining stratification across disciplines (Yuval-Davis 2006: 206). Intersectionality is often misunderstood as referring to a "mixture of all forms of identity" rather than to how the intersection of mutually constitutive identities experience "multilayered forms of discrimination" (Johnson and Joseph 2020: 835). As Guimarães Corrêa (2020: 825) writes: "discriminations constitute social positions which cannot be reduced to the simple addition of inequalities because these categories function together in complex dynamics, in an entanglement of challenges that an individual or group face in everyday life."

Intersectionality therefore rejects "single axis" frameworks which treat identity as disassembled rather than mutually constitutive of a person's sense of self and lived experiences (Crenshaw 1989). Intersectionality as a framework in studies across disciplines has highlighted the "inadequacy of analysing various social divisions, but especially race and gender, as separate internally homogenous, social categories" (Yuval-Davis 2006: 206). In essence, as Guimarães Corrêa (2020: 825) puts forward: "choosing one aspect as the only important axis of analysis is a limitation to any research." Intersectionality is underused in mass communications scholarship, where studies have focused on identity as "unitary" (Hancock 2007), "discrete categories" (Nielsen 2011: 7) or "discrete axes of social categorization" (Kitis et al. 2018: 152) where an identity category is seen as stable (Hancock 2007). Where multiple categories are included, these are often controlled for independently (Nielsen 2011) but are seen to matter equally and as having a stable relationship to one another (Hancock 2007). In an intersectional approach, categories also matter equally but they constitute each other and,

importantly, are fluid (Hancock 2007). For example, being both ‘Coloured’ and ‘middle-class’ Stuart Hall (2017) wrote was a key contradiction in his life and led him to reflect on the complexity of identity, stating “that identity is not a set of fixed attributes, the unchanging essence of the inner self, but a shifting process of positioning” (Guimarães Corrêa 2020: 824). Studies that ignore how intersecting aspects of identity shape representation, but also more broadly how we understand the impact of intersectionality on a person’s place in society, are “limited and limiting” (Meyers 2013: 2).

Media studies need to more readily rely on intersectional approaches in order to “decentralize and decolonize the investigation of social phenomena” and making of theory, critically by considering the lived experiences and perceptions of “non-hegemonic groups.” (Guimarães Corrêa 2020: 824). Scholars have stressed the importance of “accounting for intersections between overlapping forms of social distinction” to better understand how, for example, children and parents negotiate media use (Alper et al. 2016: 110). Where intersectionality has been incorporated into journalism research, studies have revealed discrimination. US news coverage of sexual violence against African American women “minimized the seriousness of the violence” (Meyers 2004), while crimes against White, affluent women drew significant news coverage (Liebler 2010). Media frame the ‘new’ South African Black middle class in both optimistic and condescending discourses, signalling a prosperous, racially equal, class-based society, that simultaneously embraces an immature and inadequately ‘Western’ lifestyle (Iqani 2017). By using the term ‘black diamond,’ media imply “ostentatious consumption or corruption” and “pejorative senses of materialism or immorality/corruption” (Kitis et al. 2018: 167). South African audiences marginalized at the intersection of class and race are often ignored by mainstream ‘quality’ media. Community protests are a key form of communication for marginalized audiences to express their frustrations about growing inequality; however, the mainstream media often portrays them as incompetent, disruptive, and theatrical, and in doing so routinely ignores the voices of the poor (Wasserman et al. 2018; Wasserman et al. 2016). Online, news coverage of the trial of Oscar Pistorius, accused of killing his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, “largely perpetuated existing hegemonic gender, race, class, sexuality and ability inequities” and “reasserted social hierarchies in ways that would resonate with its most enduring readers: middle-class, English-speaking Whites” (Geertsema-Sligh and Worthington 2020: 221).

An intersectional approach also requires challenging whiteness as a non-race and the normalization of the invisibility of White privilege in society and scholarship (Alley-Young 2008). In other words, race takes on meaning and becomes race once its performance is

different to the White norm (Alley-Young 2008). Challenging the dominant and often undisputed view of whiteness as an invisible category or a non-race entails rethinking the “assumptions, beliefs, and practices that place the interests and perspectives of White people at the centre of what is considered normal and everyday” (Gillborn 2015: 278).

Additionally, as Alper and colleagues (2016), in their work on young audiences argue, scholarship would benefit from deemphasising the disadvantages audiences face in accessing daily news and media (deficit-based approach) to instead consider their agency in overcoming challenges (asset-based approach) (Alper et al. 2016). Doing so departs from perceiving the values and experiences of “majority cultures” as desired norms against which all others are seen as “deviant or diminished” (Alper et al. 2016: 108).

That marginalized audiences do not see their expectations reflected in journalistic content and that their expectations often differ from journalists’ conceptions of their roles is thus shaped by the view that they are “deviants” outside of a field with a professional ideology shaped largely by said majority cultures. Employing intersectionality to understand audiences’ diverse expectations therefore tackles one part of the story. The other part involves simultaneously acknowledging that journalism itself is a classed, racialized and gendered field, as highlighted in the above literature review, whose dominant beliefs, rules, and visions may also help to explain why the expectations of specific audiences’ communities may end up in/excluded. Simultaneously, an intersectional approach allows the study to examine how journalists with “stigmatized cultural identities” (Slay and Smith 2011) negotiate their occupational identities.

Based on the review of literature and theoretical framework outlined above, this study will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: *What do political and lifestyle journalists understand to be their roles?*

RQ2: *How do political and lifestyle journalists imagine their audiences and their expectations?*

RQ3: *What do audiences expect of political and lifestyle journalists, and through which modes do they express their expectations?*

RQ4: *How do class, race, and gender shape journalists' role conceptions and audience expectations?*

RQ5: *To what extent do journalists' role conceptions, their imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations reflect one another?*

RQ6: *How are boundaries between political and lifestyle journalists implicitly and explicitly reinforced or challenged by journalists and audiences?*

3. METHODOLOGY

Although journalistic role conception research is well documented quantitatively and qualitatively there has been a greater reliance on quantitative methods – namely surveys – to test the extent to which journalists prescribe to specific normative role conceptions. Similarly, when audience expectations have been studied, this has been done through quantitative surveys, modelled on items extracted from previous journalistic role conception surveys, and often focusing on journalists based in the West (e.g. Weaver et al. 1986, 1996). These studies have provided critical insight into the roles journalists deem most and least important in various countries and the extent to which journalistic culture is similar and different around the globe. In many cases, role conception-expectations studies have also assessed direct levels of congruence, providing critical insight into the relationship between audiences and journalists. However, this arguably narrows the possibility to explore audiences’ expectations and perspectives on journalistic role conceptions outside of those already prescribed by the journalists themselves. By relying on pre-existing survey approaches to examine potentially divergent role conceptions and expectations, studies may have inadvertently limited the opportunity for alternative expectations to emerge freely, and “where role expectations can emerge free from the constraints of Western-centric typologies” (Tandoc and Duffy 2016: 3353). Journalists in Majority World Countries have also often been studied through quantitative surveys developed for studies in the West. Scholars have thus called for qualitative and grounded theory approaches to studying journalistic role conceptions (Ileri 2016) and audience expectations (Tandoc and Duffy 2016). Voltmer and Wasserman (2014) argue that such approaches are particularly important in transitional societies where consensus over journalistic norms is fluid, and individual interpretations of such concepts cannot adequately be captured by standardized methods. This call is echoed by scholars seeking to decolonize knowledge production from the Global South, where an overreliance on standardized, quantitative approaches risks flattening and homogenizing journalists’ and audiences’ unique experiences (Schoon et al. 2020).

To address the above limitations, this study uses qualitative and informed grounded theory approaches (Thornberg 2012) to explore journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations that may emerge as more nuanced and diverse when unprompted by pre-determined survey conceptions of journalistic roles. Specifically, the study conducts qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with journalists, and focus groups with audience communities in South Africa, where the intersections of class, race and gender are

argued to be salient in determining access to cultural, economic, social and symbolic resources (or capital), thus shaping audience expectations of journalists' roles in society, as well as journalists' role conceptions.

3.1. Fieldwork

The fieldwork phase for this study took place from 17th July to 12th October 2018, in two cities, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Conducting interviews and focus groups in both cities was crucial as both are major media hubs with diverse socio-demographic populations. Accessing journalists and audiences in both cities ensured that the sample was varied and representative of South Africa's ethnic diversity. During fieldwork, the researcher was hosted by two institutions. The first five weeks of fieldwork were spent with Media Monitoring Africa in Johannesburg, a non-Government Organisation (NGO) that promotes the development of a free, fair, ethical and critical media culture from a human rights-based perspective. From the end of August 2018, the researcher spent four weeks at the Centre for Film and Media Studies at the University of Cape Town, followed by another three weeks with Media Monitoring Africa, until the end of the fieldwork period. These two institutions were selected because of the researcher's past professional involvement with them,² and in particular, because of past experience conducting research in South Africa, the researcher was aware that gaining trust and access to research subjects could be challenging without local liaisons with connections to communities. Mentioning the researcher's prior work and involvement with these locally based institutions in the invitation letters sent to journalists and focus group participants made access easier and presumably increased the respondents' trust in the researcher and the project's intentions.

3.2. Ethical Statement and Declaration of Funding

Information gathered during an interview or focus groups should always emerge from a person who feels safe, comfortable and free to express themselves in what is otherwise an artificial setting, which means researchers have to constantly negotiate the pursuit of knowledge and maintaining the research subject's integrity (Kvale 2007). Prior to commencing fieldwork, the

² From June 2010 to August 2014, the researcher was employed by Media Monitoring Africa as a researcher. From September 2014 to April 2016, the researcher was employed as a research associate on an international project (mecodem.eu) with a consortium of several universities, one of which was the University of Cape Town.

research aims and methodological approaches of this study were reviewed and approved by the University of Vienna Ethics Commission. Although the risks of inflicting trauma on journalists through interviews is relatively low, it was necessary to consider the possibility that journalists may experience emotional and psychological discomfort in reflecting on their coverage of violent events. As will be highlighted in the findings section, this was indeed the case in several of the interviews where journalists talked about the trauma of being hijacked while reporting, of experiencing racism in the newsroom, and reporting on the Marikana massacre in 2012 during which 34 striking mineworkers at Marikana in the Northwest province of South Africa were killed by the police. Likewise, in discussing their expectations of journalism, audiences may refer back to their social identities and lived experiences, that for many include poverty, structural and everyday experiences of racism, and gender-based violence, topics that receive coverage by the news media.

To gain approval, the researcher had to submit answers to a series of questions, including a description of the research study, its goals and expectations, the scholarly and societal relevance of the study, descriptions of methods employed in the study as well as the sample and how participants would be identified and recruited, and importantly, what measures would be taken to protect the data: would participants be offered anonymity and how, would interviews and focus groups be audio/video recorded, and how and where would the data be stored. Whether the researcher intended to be transparent to the research subjects on the goals of the study also had to be stated, and potential psychological or physical risks to the participants, and envisioned solutions to any adverse effects, had to be identified (see Appendix for the ethical approval).

Further ethical approval was needed for the consent forms. All participants in the study, both journalists and audiences, were required to sign the consent form before any interview or focus groups could begin. The form outlined the purpose of the study, how the study would proceed, what the participants' involvement would be and how their participation would benefit the study, potential risks they might face in taking part in the study and how participation might affect them. The consent form also explained how the data would be recorded (audio/video) and how it would be used (thesis, publications), and reassured participants that their identity would be protected and anonymized at all times. The form also listed contact details for free counselling services available to participants and their right to discontinue participation at any point without any negative consequences should their involvement become emotionally or psychologically taxing (see Appendix for journalists' and audiences' consent forms). Once these assurances had been made clear and research

participants had no further concerns or questions, both the participant and the researcher signed the consent form, giving one copy to the participant.

Focus group participants were advised that they would receive a payment of ZAR150 (approx. €10) for taking part, while the consent forms administered to journalists stipulated that their participation was not paid, however, if an interview took part in a café the costs incurred would be covered by the researcher. Completion of this study's three-month long fieldwork in South Africa would not have been possible without the financial support of three different, competitive grants awarded by the University of Vienna, totalling €4,910:

- €1,100 from the *Förderungsstipendium* intended to cover the cost of flights, of which €997.90 was used to cover the cost of an international return flight from Vienna to Johannesburg, and a domestic return flight from Johannesburg to Cape Town.
- €3,060 from the *Kurzfristige wissenschaftliche Auslandsstipendien* (KWA) to cover the costs of in-country living (food, accommodation, transport) – this had to be supplemented with a personal contribution of €428 as costs were exceeded (total cost of stay was €3,488).
- €750 from the Department of Communication Research Award to support the costs associated with research methods, of which €580.51 was used to pay for supermarket vouchers in the value of ZAR150 (approx. €10) given to participants upon completing the focus group discussion, to pay for the food served to participants before or immediately after the focus group discussion, or to pay for a beverage when meeting a journalist at a café.

The researcher is grateful to have received the above financial assistance, and it is important to emphasise that without this support, the research would have yielded far less diverse and rich data, or it may not have happened at all in its current form.

The following sections detail the two key methodological approaches, sampling and data collection processes, including an intersectional approach and description of survey to measure forms of capital, data management and analysis for the interviews and focus groups, and the author's reflexive remarks on her positionality within this research project.

3.3. An Intersectional approach: Class, Race, Gender

In order to explore how a person's socio-economic background and their intersectionality shapes their perceptions and expectations of the role of journalists, it was crucial that interview respondents and focus group participants were people from diverse social classes, race groups,

and genders. Thus, eligibility criteria included self-identifying women and men or those who identified under another gender designation, those representing South Africa's major ethnic groups (Black, Coloured, Indian, Asian, White), and those with varied access to different forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986).

Using intersectionality as a “method and a disposition, a heuristic and analytic tool” (Carbado et al. 2013: 303) brings unique challenges “when the subject of analysis expands to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis” (McCall 2005: 1772). McCall (2005) identifies three approaches with varying complexity:

Anticategorical – developed by early feminist studies, rejects categories as reductionist and responsible for reproducing inequality;

Intercategorical – developed by “feminists of colour”, rejects essentialization and treats categories as shaping social reality; and

Intracategorical – approaches categories as ‘anchors’ to compare across groups.

This study draws on *intracategorical* and *intercategorical* approaches to not only analyse audiences’ responses across and within groups, but also importantly how respondents’ and participants’ lived realities shape their understanding of journalism (whether roles or expectations).

To assess the way in which the intersections of class, race and gender shape journalists’ role conceptions and audience expectations of journalists, all journalists and audiences who took part in this study were administered a survey to capture their demographic information and measure their access to various forms of capital: economic, cultural, symbolic and social (Bourdieu 1984). Specifically, journalists and audience members were asked their gender (Female, Male, Other ‘specify’), age, race (African/Black, Coloured,³ Indian/Asian, White, Other ‘specify’), and class (upper, middle, working class), following Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of capital as applied in recent studies of audiences and class (Lindell 2018; Lindell and Sartoretto 2018). While race is mostly understood as a social construct (Nkomo 1992) race is also an economic construct, as Bosch (2014) argues, particularly in relation to the contested racial category of ‘Coloured’ used broadly to refer to mixed-race descendants of slaves brought to South Africa by Dutch settlers in 1652 from East Africa, Madagascar, South India, and Indonesia. The above racial categories are therefore a simplification and obfuscation of the complex and layered racial and ethnic dynamics that define the different racial groups within

³ ‘Coloured’ is a racial category in South Africa representing multiracial ethnicities and cultures. Only broader race groups are differentiated, not to obscure or ignore intra-group and ethnic dynamics and diversity, but because of feasibility within the scope of this study.

South Africa's population. According to StatsSA (2021), the South African population currently comprises 79.3% African/Black, 8.9% Coloured, 2.5% Indian/Asian, and 8.9% White. Similarly, going beyond the female-male gender binary was not possible in this study, as this would have created a more granular intersectionality and thus generate information that was too vast for this project. However, future studies may find it useful to look at how queer identifying members of society perceive the role of journalism, especially accounting for journalism's reporting of violence against LGBTQI people. Finally, although Bourdieusian sociology of class differentiates across capital volume (cumulation of all capital) and capital composition (differences in volume of specific capital, e.g. cultural or economic), within the scope of this study, audiences are grouped into broader class groups based on capital volume: the upper, middle, and working class. This is a further simplification of a class structure that is far more nuanced in South Africa (Seeking and Natrass 2015) where the middle class can be divided into the established and vulnerable members, and the working class refers to those living in transient poverty, and not necessarily those in chronic poverty (Schotte et al. 2018; Burger et al. 2015). Across groups, embodied (transferred through socialization) and legitimate (attendance of cultural institutions) cultural capital is also evaluated together to locate a person within a 'broad' class group. A future study would account for all these nuances to arrive at a more granular understanding of how class shapes journalistic roles and audience expectations.

To capture social class, both the journalists and audiences were asked mostly identical questions, with some variation (see Appendix for full surveys administered to journalists and audiences). Surveys were largely modelled on the questionnaire administered in previous studies looking at the impact of class on news preferences and consumption patterns (Lindell and Sartoretto 2018; Lindell 2018) and the social class of journalists (Hovden 2008; Hovden 2012), with some adjustments to account for the South African context. To ascertain journalists' and audiences' *economic capital*, the survey asked whether they were employed (full-time, part-time or casual); what their monthly salary was after tax (to measure disposable income); whether they had other sources of income; owned or rented a home; owned a car; and how satisfied they were with their overall economic status. *Cultural capital (institutionalized and embodied)* was measured by asking what level of education they had completed; their mother's and father's level of education and occupation; how many books they had at home and how often they had a chance to finish reading a book; whether they bought or borrowed books; how often they had a chance to attend institutions/events tied to 'legitimate' culture (e.g. museum, theatre, opera) but also any other events the participants defined as cultural. While past studies have measured cultural capital vis-a-vis respondents' attendance of theatre,

museums and opera (Lindell and Sartoretto 2018), in this study respondents were also given the freedom to suggest events or experiences that they considered to be cultural. *Cosmopolitan capital* was measured with questions about which languages they spoke; whether they had ever lived abroad and for how long; and how many times they had travelled outside of South Africa in the last 12 months. To explore *symbolic capital* journalists were asked whether they had received any prizes for their journalistic work and whether they had been on a jury for a journalistic prize, the presence of which increases journalistic legitimacy and capital (Hovden 2008; Willig 2013); while *social capital* was measured by asking whether they were a member of any community group, organisation, union, and which one. As can be seen in Tables 5 and 6 (sample description and capital distribution of political and lifestyle journalists) and Table 7 (capital distribution of audiences), for some of the journalists and many of the audiences, social capital was characterized by participation in religious, political, and charity groups. While Bourdieu's social capital means belonging to social networks with those affluent in capital volume and who can elevate others in the social space, participation in community-level associations more accurately reflects Putnam's (2000) definition of social capital in the political sense. Here "associational networks facilitate the underlying conditions of interpersonal trust, tolerance, and cooperation" by promoting connection among members (Norris 2002: 3).

3.4. In-depth Interviews

Historically, interviews as a methodological approach were commonly used in clinical diagnosis and psychological testing, but their origins lie in an 1886 study by Charles Booth, of the economic and social conditions of London residents (Fontana and Frey 1998: 48). The interview as a data-collecting method has been used by scholars in sociology, anthropology, education, psychology and health sciences, and often, studies that rely on interviews are rooted in a symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective (Flick 2007).

An interview is a structured conversation with a purpose – "an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of common interest" (Kvale 2007: 5). It is a "construction site for knowledge" (Kvale 2007: 6) driven by the researcher's specific interests and goals, and one of the most powerful ways of gaining in-depth understanding of people (Fontana and Frey 1998: 47). Precisely because they are often understood as a conversation, interviews are mistakenly believed to be easy to organise and conduct. However, not only are they an asymmetrical conversation, Kvale (1996) stresses that the method requires a series of

qualities and criteria to be considered successful: for the researcher to be knowledgeable about the topic, gentle in allowing people to think and pause, sensitive in listening attentively and responding empathetically, open to being flexible, able to steer the conversation based on the purpose of the research, clear in their delivery of questions, able to remember what has been said and relate to ongoing discussion, critical in highlighting and challenging inconsistencies, and able to clarify interviewees' statements.

There are three widely recognised types of interviews. While structured interviews seek to test hypotheses, frequently used in studies that compare findings across different groups, explorative interviews (life history, oral history) are more open, have limited structure, and allow the researcher to introduce topics and explore new angles by building on the subject's answers (Kvale 2007; Bryman 2012). Semi-structured interviews allow for detailed exploration (Kvale 1996) with enough flexibility for inductive and deductive research (David and Sutton 2011). This study relies on semi-structured interviews, to allow some comparability across journalists and journalistic genres but also enough flexibility to discover unanticipated knowledge. To that end, it follows a somewhat flexible and continuous research design in that a semi-structured question guide was designed to be used during interviews (see Appendix for interview question guides for political and lifestyle journalists), however, questions were adapted and improved slightly as the research process unravelled, by adding new questions or editing existing ones to account for new themes that required further attention (Flick 2007). This approach is also well-suited to an 'informed grounded theory' (Thornberg 2012) approach, employed within this study, where the research is guided by some prior concepts and knowledge within the field, but remains grounded and open to inductive discovery (Bryman 2012: 473) (see Section 3.8 for further discussion).

Journalists were selected based on purposeful and maximum variation sampling strategies, to represent both specific criteria (being journalists) as well as varied "qualities, attributes and situations" (publication, genre, beat, race, gender) (Lindlof and Taylor 2002: 123). The latter sampling criteria was particularly critical to ensure as equal as possible a representation of journalists from 'quality' and tabloid news media, those working in political and lifestyle journalism beats, and importantly, across race and gender, considering the study's intersectional approach. Broadly speaking, the themes investigated in the interviews include: journalists' reflections on their identity as journalists and how they understand their purpose as journalists in South Africa, purposely avoiding the word 'role' as this might have invited internally well-scripted answers; and, how journalists imagine their audiences and what they believe they expect from them.

3.4.1. Sample description and data collection

Finding the contact details of journalists and tracking them down was more challenging than the researcher had anticipated in the lead up to fieldwork. As this study focuses primarily on journalists employed within traditional media institutions, it was expected that journalists' email addresses and/or Twitter handles would be listed under their by-lines in online content (as this is all that was accessible while still in Vienna). However, many of them had no public profile. As a starting point, the researcher relied heavily on MuckRack – a global profile-database of journalists and PR professionals (MuckRack.com). While access to full profiles required a paid subscription to MuckRack, it was nevertheless possible to see where the journalists located in South Africa are currently employed, and which social media platforms they use. Through this, the researcher began the extensive process of researching each individual journalist and contacting them through several platforms, most commonly LinkedIn, followed by Twitter, and occasionally Instagram. When they had their own website, which listed an email address, this was used first. Simultaneously, in a separate document, a record of the name and social media channel of each journalist contacted was kept.

When selecting a sample for interviews, a common question that arises is how many interviews are enough. Based on a study of female sex workers in West Africa, Guest and colleagues (2006) found that 92% of the key themes identified in the data, emerged by the 12th interview, while Morgan and colleagues (2002) found that 10 interviews were enough to identify 80-92% of key concepts. In studies that are cross-cultural, anywhere from 20 to 40 interviews may be needed to reveal meta-themes across different sites (Hagaman and Wutich 2017). While this thesis project is not comparative and focuses solely on South African journalists and audiences, it did set out to compare political and lifestyle journalists' role conceptions, and it was committed to including a sample of journalists with diverse race/gender intersections. For that reason, initially upwards of 30 interviews were planned for the fieldwork. Finally, a dataset of 48 interviews proved to be sufficient to detect theoretical saturation (as suggested by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 for purposes of grounded theory development), or “data saturation” as referred to in qualitative research more broadly (Guest et al. 2006: 65).

Ensuring that the journalists included in the sample were representative of South Africa's socio-economic diversity was critical to exploring this study's concern with how race, gender and class may shape how they understand their role in society. Journalists were selected based on purposeful and maximum variation sampling strategies, to represent both specific criteria (being journalists) as well as varied “qualities, attributes and situations” (class, race,

publication) (Lindlof and Taylor 2002: 123). A total of 22 lifestyle and 26 political journalists and editors working for diverse magazines and newspapers, including one blogger, were contacted via email, LinkedIn, and Twitter, and interviewed in person or over the phone (one via WhatsApp text messages), from July to October 2018, in South Africa. The 48 journalists interviewed work for a range of mainstream agenda-setting media outlets (with different medium, language, race/class/size of audiences) and across genres (political, economic, lifestyle etc.). To ensure diversity, media organisations were selected based on their circulation sizes, and the socio-economic (race and class) make-up of their predominant target audience, measured by the South African Audiences Research Foundation. This ensured that the sample consisted of media which spoke to audiences of different socio-economic groups, making it possible to observe in the analysis whether there are any differences in how journalists at these media institutions imagine their audiences.

Reflecting past research on the social class of journalists (Hovden 2008, 2012), the journalists interviewed in this study had on average moderate to high economic and cultural capital, where editors had exceptionally high economic capital in comparison to reporters. Journalists had moderate social capital in that about half were members of journalism associations and unions, but also community and church organisations which contribute to social capital through mutual trust and connection among members (Norris 2002) rather than acquisition of affluence (Bourdieu 1986) (see Tables 1 and 2 for ‘Sample descriptions and capital distribution of political and lifestyle journalists’).

Table 5: Sample Description and Capital Distribution of Political Journalists

Political Journalists 26 respondents 11 Female 10 Black, 3 Indian,	Economic capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 university degree (journalism studies, English literature, marketing, art history, anthropology), 3 apprentice, 2 high school • 24 employed full-time, 2 freelance/contract work • Monthly income: reporters earned ZAR10-30,000 (€550-1,660), 2 senior investigative journalists earned ZAR 40-50,000 (€2,210-2,760); editorial positions earned ZAR40-90,000 (€2,210-4,970) • Ownership: home (12), car (20) • Moderate income satisfaction
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2 Coloured, 11 White 23-56 years old 6 Editorial positions (incl. 2 online editors), 20 journalists	Cultural Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents' education: Mothers – university degree (12) high-school (4), primary (4), apprenticeship (4), no schooling. Fathers – university (7), high-school (8), primary school (3) apprenticeship (6), no schooling Parents' occupation: Mothers – engineer, secretary/receptionist, farmer, school principal, medical doctor, business, journalist, teacher, personal assistant, scientist, bank, corporate communications, nurse, cleaner, musician, unemployed; Fathers – business, electrician, journalist, farmer, education/government, medical doctor, teacher, accountant, advertising, paramedic, IT, journalist, company CEO, writer, military, jeweller, unemployed Avid book readers Moderate-frequent attendance of ‘legitimate culture’
	Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 belong to organisations / groups (trade/labour union, South African National Editors’ Forum, foreign correspondent association, church, community development volunteer)
	Symbolic capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 received journalism awards 2 served on juries for a journalistic prize

Table 6: Sample Description and Capital Distribution of Lifestyle Journalists

Lifestyle Journalists 22 respondents 12 Female	Economic capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 university degree (journalism studies, English literature, marketing, art history, anthropology) 18 employed full-time Monthly income: ZAR10-30,000 (€600-2,000) reporters, ZAR30-65,000 (€2,000-4,000) editorial positions Ownership: home (14), car (18) Moderate-high income satisfaction
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7 Black, 1 Coloured, 14 White 23-64 years old 12 Editorial positions, 10 journalists (also stylist, photographer, content creator)	Cultural Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' education: Mothers – university degree (11) high-school (7), primary (1), apprenticeship. Fathers – university (12), high-school (8), apprenticeship • Parents' occupation: Mothers – social work, investment, teacher, journalist, decorator, factory worker, nurse, interpreter; Fathers – engineer, banker, architect, factory owner, police detective, lawyer, academic, businessman • Avid book readers • Moderate-frequent attendance of 'legitimate culture'
	Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 belong to organisations / groups (church, authors' association, community organisation volunteer)
	Symbolic capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 received journalism awards • 7 served on juries for a journalistic prize

Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and over an hour (average 45 minutes). This is within the normal duration range of an interview, which can last anywhere between 20 minutes and an hour (Morgan et al. 2002). Whenever possible, interviews should take place in a space that is familiar to both the researcher and the interviewee, and is quiet and private (Bryman 2012). In most cases, interviews took place either at the media institution where the journalist worked, usually at the in-house cafeteria or in a public café. Neither of these locations were ideal, as they tended to be loud, and on occasion not private enough. Among the interviews conducted in cafeterias within media organisations, the researcher observed that interviewees sometimes spoke more quietly and occasionally looked over their shoulder concerned maybe that they could be overheard. Although the journalists had suggested this location for the interview, as this was more convenient and meant less time was taken from their work day, the location may not have always been as conducive to allowing journalists to express themselves without concern for being overheard. Where possible, the researcher always encouraged the journalist to take a seat where they had a view of the entire room. When interviews happened outside of

the newsroom, in a café, the journalists appeared more relaxed. In the findings chapter, all journalists have been assigned pseudonyms, and labelled according to their racial and gender identity. Class is not included in these labels as all journalists are categorized as a cultural and economic middle class (Hovden 2008).

3.5. Focus Groups

Since the 1940s and 50s, when Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton first introduced the use of focus groups as a method to explore audiences' perceptions of radio programmes, the focus group has been used to explore "consumer attitude and motivations and to reveal public discourses and interpretive communities" (Lunt and Livingstone 1996: 79). A focus group is a discussion "in which participants focus collectively upon a topic selected by the researcher," usually moderated through a set of questions, audio-visual, textual material, or different types of interactive 'games' (Wilkinson 1998: 182). The aim of using focus groups is to explore themes in a group dynamic where patterns of consensus and dissent offer an alternative understanding of a subject (Kitzinger 1995). Theoretically, the approach is often rooted in symbolic interactionism, precisely because the method is ideally suited not only to examining narrative construction in a group context but also how participants interact around a specific topic (Flick 2007: 85). This approach reflects the social constructivist epistemological framework where the researcher observes individuals "engage in the process of collective sense making: how views are constructed, expressed, defended and (sometimes) modified" (Wilkinson 1998: 186). However, focus groups can also be found within the essentialist framework where the researcher is thought to elicit individuals' pre-existing ideas, opinions and understandings (Wilkinson 1998). Considering this study's interest in exploring audiences' expectations of journalists in depth, and accounting for how intersectional differences and similarities might emerge to shape these, the study sees itself primarily located in the constructivist approach, whether the expectations that emerge are constructed within the context of the focus groups' interaction or prior, within the context of broader social interaction.

Focus groups have commonly been used in the business field as a market research tool, in health education and promotion, education, media and communication studies, sociology, feminist research and many others fields and disciplines (see Wilkinson 1998 for review). For several decades, during the positivist period, focus groups were used as "an addendum to the questionnaire or experimental study," to reveal new ideas and dimension to be confirmed with

quantitative methods, but have since then become a method in their own right (Lunt and Livingstone 1996: 81). Besides being an additional method within a multi-method approach (usually as an initial exploratory approach or as a follow-up to a large-scale study), focus groups can also be used as a primary method, or as a form of participatory action research (a way to empower the voiceless and foster social change) (Wilkinson 1998: 185). Within this study, the focus group is used as a primary method for the purposes of exploring audiences' expectations of journalists.

For this study, participants were approached through maximum variation sampling strategies to insure diversity across class, race and gender (Lindlof and Taylor 2002). Snowball sampling was also used, as identifying focus group participants from the broader population was difficult without relying on and liaising with existing contacts (discussed below). This sampling was followed up with a survey to establish their demographic characteristics as well as access to forms of capital (Lindell 2018). Themes explored in the focus groups included: (1) audiences' general perceptions and expectations of journalism and its role in South Africa; (2) audiences' expectations of journalists and their roles; and (3) how audiences believe journalists imagine them and their expectations. To focus on individual audience members would, according to Morley (2003 [1992]) be "flawed by a focus on individuals as social atoms divorced from their social context" (Morley 2003 [1992]: 90).

3.5.1. Sample description and data collection

Although focus groups have been widely used, existing literature rarely defines criteria that determines an acceptable number of focus groups and sample sizes. Guest and colleagues (2017) reviewed 62 methodology publications and found that 42 offered no guidance, six suggested that saturation should be a guiding determinant, and the rest suggested either various numbers of groups that must be met or a combination of numbers and saturation. For this study, eight focus groups, with a total of 57 participants, were conducted. Focus groups had six to nine participants, numbers that correspond to the consensus in literature that the ideal number of focus groups participants is anywhere between 6 and 12 (Lunt and Livingstone 1996). One focus group had four participants, as two cancelled at the last minute, illustrating one of the biggest challenges of conducting focus groups, and why over-recruitment is often encouraged (Wilkinson 1998) – although this was not possible in this case.

Organising the eight focus groups and ensuring that diverse audiences were accessed was the most challenging part of fieldwork, and here the availability of grant funding was of enormous help to incentivise and compensate the focus group participants. At the end of the

focus group discussions, each participant was compensated with a ZAR150 (approx. €10) supermarket voucher. In two cases, instead of a supermarket voucher, participants requested a coupon of the same value for the country club restaurant that they were members of. In four focus groups participants were given lunch (snacks and drinks) to further incentivise their participation.

Existing contacts and liaisons who provided access to or reached out to potential participants were also of critical help. Three focus groups consisted of residents of two different townships in Johannesburg and Cape Town who had low economic capital, moderate cultural capital, and high social capital. To reach the residents in Johannesburg, the researcher collaborated with a liaison (based at the researcher's host organisation, Media Monitoring Africa) to communicate this study's research goals to a local community member who then mobilized participants. The Cape Town residents were reached through a woman who lives in this community herself and is employed as a domestic worker by a friend of the researcher. Without the assistance of these liaisons, it would have been near-impossible to reach this population or gain their trust. Two more focus groups consisted of university students who had moderate economic capital, moderate cultural capital, and moderate social capital. The student groups were mobilised through two colleagues at the University of Cape Town who let the researcher present the goals of her study to the students in their seminars and extend an invitation to them. The last three focus groups consisted of residents of two different affluent neighbourhoods in Johannesburg and in Cape Town who had high economic capital, low cultural capital, and low to moderate social capital. These groups from affluent areas were reached by sending many emails to elite clubs (yacht, golf, wine etc.) and various associations responsible for residents of these suburbs, where an employee of one of these organisations eventually agreed to assist and mobilize participants. Table 7 describes the capital distribution of audiences, while Table 8 describes the audience sample across the eight focus groups.

Table 7: Capital Distribution of Audiences

Focus group	Economic capital	Cultural capital	Social capital
Distressed neighbourhoods – JHB & CPT (1-3) 21 participants 16 Female Black, 1 Coloured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-school education • High unemployment • Monthly earning less than or up to ZAR5,000 (€300) • None own a car • Renting home • Moderate satisfaction to high dissatisfaction with economic situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' education: primary or high-school (1 father, university) • Parents' occupation: Mother – unemployed, domestic worker; Father – unemployed, painter, gardener. • Moderate-avid book readers • Rarely-moderately attend 'legitimate culture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority belong to community groups (religious, political, art)
University students – CPT (4-5) 18 participants 9 Female, 1 'other' 4 Black, 7 Coloured, 1 Indian, 1 White, 4 'other'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving university education • Employed part-time • Earn or receive monthly allowance, ZAR5,000 (€300) • Renting student housing or live at home • High dissatisfaction with economic situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' education: university (3 mothers/3 fathers), apprenticeships, high-school • Parents' occupation: Mother – teacher, doctor, nurse, HR management, receptionist, retail; Father – CEO, businessman, HR, IT, teacher, spray-painter • Moderate book readers • Moderately attend 'legitimate culture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half belong to community groups (educational, religious)
Elite social club – JHB (6) 7 participants 5 female 1 Black, 6 White	Upper Class (6 White, male/female) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-school education, BA degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' education: high-school, 1 honours degree, 1 primary school • Parents' occupation: Mother – secretary, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority belong to community groups (religious, political)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed full-time or retired • Earn ZAR25-50,000 (€1,300-2,700) • All own a car • 5 own home, 1 rent • Moderate satisfaction with economic situation 	seamstress, pharmacist assistant, clerk, administration; Father – accountant, railway man, electrical engineer, policeman, police captain politician, carpenter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate book readers • Infrequently-moderately attend 'legitimate culture' 	
	Middle class (1 Black, 1 White) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-school education • Employed full time • Monthly earning: ZAR10-15,000 (€300-800) • Owns car, rents/owns home • High dissatisfaction with economic situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' education: No formal education, high school • Parents' occupation: Mother – unemployed; Father – gardener, teacher • Infrequent book reader • Infrequently attend 'legitimate culture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No belonging to community groups
Elite social Club – JHB (7) 8 participants 8 Female 3 Black, 1 Indian, 4 White	Upper class (2 White, 1 Indian, 1 Black) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-school education, apprenticeship, (1 university degree) • Employed full-time or retired • Monthly earning: ZAR15-50,000 (€800-2,700) • 4 own a car • 2 own home, 2 rent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' education: primary school, high-school, apprenticeship • Parents' occupation: Mother – accountant, administration, house helper, clerk; Father – police, florist business owner, taxi owner • Infrequent-moderate book readers • Infrequently-moderately attend 'legitimate culture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority belong to community groups (political)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate satisfaction with economic situation 		
	<p>Middle class (2 Black, 2 White)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-school education, apprenticeship Employed full-time or retired Monthly earning: ZAR5-15,000 (€300-800) 3 own a car 2 own home, 1 rent, 1 live with parents High-moderate dissatisfaction with economic situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents' education: high-school, primary school, some university Parents' occupation: Mother – domestic worker, cleaner; Father – general manager, teacher Infrequent-moderate book readers Infrequently attend 'legitimate culture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half belong to community groups (religious)
<p>Affluent suburb – CPT (8)</p> <p>4 participants 1 Female 5 White</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA, Honours, some university Employed full-time Monthly earning: ZAR20-85,000 (€1,000-4,600) All own a car and home High dissatisfaction with economic situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents' education: high-school, BA degree, honours degree Parents' occupation: Mother – farmer, unspecified; Father – management, farmer Infrequent-moderate book readers Frequently attend 'legitimate culture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half belong to community groups (suburban association)

This sampling strategy resulted in focus groups being homogenous along some identity categories, and heterogenous along others. Specifically, class ended up being the primary organising logic for identifying focus group participants and within an intersectional framework this presents a limitation. This was not the original intention of this study, but unfortunately the possibility of organising a greater number of focus groups along other

dimensions (e.g. race, gender) presented logistical and financial obstacles that could not be overcome. Given that during the apartheid regime in South Africa, economic and racial oppression was reinforced through residential segregation, and remnants of this logic remain visible today, the ‘neighbourhood’ was used as a sampling unit to identify participants from social spaces and suburbs where specific class groups are likely to reside (Blasius and Friedrich 2008). Designing homogenous (and potentially also heterogenous) focus groups along each intersectional axis and mode would have required conducting upwards of 24 focus groups, which the resources available for this project did not permit. Focus group participants were identified from pre-existing groups or “clusters of people who already knew each other through living, working or socializing together” (Kitzinger 1994: 105). This engenders interactions that reflect “ordinary social processes and everyday social interchange” (Wilkinson 1998: 120). Overall, the focus groups reflected the societal racial composition within class groups (see Table 8 for audience sample description).

Table 8: Audience Sample Description

Focus group	‘Neighbourhood’	Class	Race	Gender
1	Township-JHB	Working class	Black	2 F / 5 M
2	Township-CPT	Working class	Black 1 Coloured	7 F
3	Township-CPT	Working class	Black 1 Coloured	7 F
4	University-CPT	Middle class	4 Coloured 3 Black 2 ‘other’-Mixed	4 F / 4 M 1 ‘other’-not-specified
5	University-CPT	Middle class	3 Coloured 2 Black 1 Indian 1 White 2 ‘other’-Mixed	5 F / 4 M
6	Elite social club -JHB	Upper class / Middle class	6 White 1 Black	5 F / 2 M
7	Elite social club -JHB	Upper class / Middle class	3 Black 1 Indian 4 White	7 F
8	Affluent suburb-CPT	Upper-class	White	1 F / 3 M

While the mixed composition of the eight focus groups – homogenous and heterogenous along different intersectional categories – is a limitation of this study, there are advantages to both approaches. Heterogenous focus groups allow for an exploration of diverging views and tensions around sensitive issues among individuals with different intersectional axes within a group setting. However, homogenous focus groups are also conducive to exploring the social constructions of meaning among “naturally occurring groups of like-minded people” (Lunt and Livingstone 1996: 82), with shared cultural frameworks and identifications (Morley 2005: 74) and how these shape their collective beliefs about journalism. Particularly important here is that a strength-in-numbers approach of homogeneous groups allows participants to comfortably express synergies and disagreements around sensitive issues (Greenbaum 1999: Lunt and Livingstone 1996). Indeed, when focus groups are made up of participants who do not know each other, it is advisable that groups be relatively homogenous, especially along identity categories relating to “‘prestige’ or ‘status’” such as social class (Wilkinson 1998: 182). The researcher was mindful of this, especially in sampling marginalized audience groups. Focus groups were also designed to minimize the silencing of marginalized voices (e.g. working-class-Black-women) as so often occurs in heterogenous settings with members of diverging identities. Three focus groups were homogenous along class and race lines (working class, Black); two of these were also homogenous in terms of gender (women). Having focus group participants from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds can change the dynamics of the group’s discussion and can make focus groups spaces of silencing and domination (Mahtani 2008). For example, some silencing was detected in one group of all women, mixed-class-race participants, where upper-middle-class-White women often interrupted middle-class-Black-Indian women, and about 15 minutes into the discussion middle-class-Black-Indian women started to become increasingly quiet. While the researcher tried to moderate such interruptions, by consciously encouraging marginalized members to speak, the dynamic in the group had shifted and was difficult to restore. While in some group contexts, consideration about who speaks and who does not may seem trivial and reflective of participants’ personal characteristics (being shy or introverted), often the extent to which participants feel the freedom to express “consensus, diversity, or disagreement [...] will affect the conclusions to be drawn” (Lunt and Livingstone 1996: 83) along with the interpretation of data.

Such inequality and disparity within focus groups highlights the critical and delicate role of the researcher in moderating focus groups discussions but also their positionality (Adeagbo 2020), as openness and confidence among group participants is further facilitated

when the moderator shares a common social identity with them (Morgan 1995) (further discussed in Section 3.6).

The main research instrument used to moderate focus group discussions was a semi-structured question guide structured to explore key concepts (see Appendix for focus group question guides for audiences of political and lifestyle journalism). Since this study draws on grounded theory principles, as fieldwork progressed and new information was revealed with each focus group, some questions were rephrased, some newly added, some omitted, and generally speaking, focus group discussions progressively took on a more open and less structured format to allow for less constrained narrative-like explorations of issues. Across focus groups, participants were asked to discuss what news they consume and why, and what they expect from journalists and mainstream media. Audiences used the term ‘newspaper’ to refer to both print and online news sources interchangeably.

On average, focus groups lasted over an hour, with the shortest being 43 minutes and the longest 1 hour and 29 minutes, with a total of 8 hours and 50 minutes of focus group discussion. Seven of the group discussions were both audio and video recorded. One group, homogenous along race and class, was only audio recorded because participants expressed unease about being video recorded; simultaneous note taking during this focus group allowed different speakers to be accurately identified later during transcription. Audio recording was done using a digital recording device with high-quality sound capture, with options to record bi-directionally (ideal for interviews) and omni-directionally (ideal for focus groups). Even though groups were generally homogenous, the video recordings allowed the researcher to connect specific information shared in group discussions to a participant’s socio-economic background captured in the survey. However, this was to be used only in instances where a person’s specific demographic characteristic might help explain very specific experiences and views. In two cases, where groups were heterogenous, video recording made it possible to discern members of different socio-economic backgrounds. To video record, the researcher used her personal iPad, which was positioned a good distance away from the focus group seating arrangement, behind the participants’ backs or to their side to conceal their identity as much as possible and to avoid being intrusive. Because the iPad does not mimic the look of a traditional camera with the eye of the lens pointing at the group discussion, video recording was also less invasive and thus more quickly disregarded by participants.

In the findings, participants are cited with their intersectional categories, e.g. W (working class), M (middle class), U (upper class); BL (Black), CO (Coloured), IN (Indian), MX (Mixed), WH (White); F (female), M (male), O (other). Where findings apply to audiences

across intersectional categories they are collectively cited as such, however, where intersectional differences are detected, this is noted by citing their specific class-race-gender intersectionality using the outlined abbreviations (e.g. W-BL-F) or in full (e.g. working-class-Black-female).

3.6. Reflexivity and Positionality

To be reflexive involves the ability for a researcher “to turn back upon or to mirror itself” (Robertson 2002: 785) in order to address the “power relations” between themselves and the research and researched (Giwa 2015: 1). This requires acknowledging the effect the researcher’s presence and their particular identity may have on those they are studying, and in turn, how they may have an effect on the researcher. In qualitative research, researchers take on the position of being a research instrument in the process of data collection (Adeagbo 2020). An aspect of being reflexive is considering how a researcher’s specific intersectional identity positions or locates them within their research. As Temple and Edwards (2002: 5) argue, “researchers need to reflect on the ways in which they, as individuals with social identities and particular perspectives, have an impact on the interpersonal relations of fieldwork.” This concerns especially how their socio-economic, cultural, political and intellectual background affects the production of knowledge, in particular where experiences of structural inequality may both unite (e.g. along gender) and separate (e.g. along race) the researcher and the participants (Edwards 1990). It raises the question: “does the biography of the researcher – their race, class, gender, sexual identity and history – privilege or disqualify their knowledge claims?” (Griffiths 1998: 361). For this reason, scholars studying groups with identities different to their own are increasingly transparent in acknowledging their own situational identity and relative power (Dwyer and Buckle 2009).

The researcher of this study – from here on I/me – is a White, middle-class, female, scholar based at a European university. This alone imbues me with a relative amount of power, especially in my relationship to some of the participants in this study who are marginalized through class and race, and who have not had adequate economic capital to pursue education. For example, these dynamics of in-/out-grouping were evident in the acts of silencing that occurred in the focus groups mentioned in the previous section. Here, I shared with the participants their gender identity (all female) and class (all were middle or upper class), however once the White participants in the groups started to regularly interrupt the Black and Indian women, my identity as an outsider became more prominent. As Edwards (1990) argues,

race is not merely a variable but an identity category that becomes part of the research process itself, allowing both the researcher and the researched to position themselves and each other in the social structure, which ultimately affects their relationship. I felt this dynamic in particular when trying to encourage the Black and Indian women to express their thoughts while moderating focus groups. These invitations were not taken up, and while trying my best to moderate the interruptions, this is an area where on reflection, such efforts could have been made more effectively.

The above experience of inclusion and exclusion is captured by the concept of Insider/Outsider duality, discussed in positionality and reflexivity scholarship. These discussions debate and detail the benefits and downsides that a researcher's status and identity can bring to the research experience. Within Black feminist theory, Patricia Hill Collins (1986) also refers to the concept of the "outsiders within" – that is "a person who would have the disadvantage of not belonging to a group, but also a privileged position as a 'stranger' who would have the ability to see patterns, rules, behaviours that the insiders would not notice" (Guimarães Corrêa 2020: 827). The Insider doctrine depicts the researcher as a group member with shared identities (gender, class, race) and intimate understanding of their community and lived reality, while the Outsider lacks the intuition and empathy to understand the insiders and may struggle more with gaining access or being excluded (Giwa 2015; Kauffman 1994; Merton 1972; Griffith 1998). While the Outsider researcher is a detached observer, the Insider possesses knowledge based on intimate experience (Griffith 1998) and often gains the acceptance and openness of participants more quickly, allowing them access to more in-depth data (Dwyer and Buckle 2009). While an Outsider perspective comes with greater challenges in conducting research, scholars have also highlighted that Insider researchers face greater risk of bias and an inability to separate the researcher's personal experiences from those of the people being researched (Kauffman 1994). Merton (1972: 38) argued that concepts within the sociology of knowledge production, such as the traditional objectivist perspectives, "serve to exclude from the attention of the social scientist the intense feelings of pain and suffering that are the experience of some people caught up in the social patterns under examination. By screening out these profoundly human experiences, they become sociological euphemisms." Here feminist scholarship and methodology has been critical as it "has at its base a critique of objectivity, of the supposedly rational, detached, value free research as traditionally espoused" and instead makes experiences and narratives of the participants central to research (Edwards 1990: 479). The Insider/Outsider dichotomy is seen in further divisions, such as the Global North to Global South or the First World to Third World flow of knowledge production that

often undermines voices of those in the South (Giwa 2015). In response, indigenous research approaches urge scholars to decolonize research and centralize the narratives of participants by “paying attention to their voice, values, insights, wisdom, traditions, and actions” (Moloi 2013: 105). Ultimately, the extent to which a researcher can locate themselves as an Insider/Outsider shapes the knowledge they produce.

However, identity is not fixed, meaning that some intersectional sub-identities or categories become more salient depending on the context and the intersectional identities of the people we interact with. As such it is never one single identity category that can ever shape how a researcher engages with and responds to the specific context and research participants (Shields 2008). Scholars have therefore problematized the Insider/Outsider duality, arguing that there is an in-betweenness and fluidity to how researchers come to occupy a position both as an Insider and Outsider in relation to their research participants (Giwa 2015). Dwyer and Buckle (2009: 60) argue that even though positionality shapes knowledge, qualitative researchers also “have an appreciation for the fluidity and multilayered complexity of human experience” which is why “holding membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group. Likewise, not being a member of a group does not denote complete difference.” This concept of the space in between allowed me within this study to reconcile the different aspects of my own identity and how they position me as both an insider and an outsider depending on which group or individual research participant I was interacting with. It also alleviated some of the doubts I experienced when questioning my right as a White, middle-class, non-South African citizen to research people whose identities and socialization reflect the country’s history of racial and economic oppression. At the same time, I took comfort in the fact that I had lived and worked as a researcher in media and human rights for four years in South Africa, and that this experience gave me at least some local knowledge, based on which I could connect to those with vastly different intersectional identities. I also relied on the networks and connections I built during my time living and working in South Africa to gain access to difficult-to-reach communities, such as residents of townships with whom I conducted three focus groups.

As suggested by numerous positionality scholars, I spent a significant portion of those discussions sharing with the research participants “the underlying assumptions that occasion a set of questions” (Robertson 2002: 786). This involved not only explaining to them in a transparent way what the research is about, but also by answering their questions about who I am, where I am from, what I do, and why I do it, I showed them in small ways that I have some familiarity with South Africa’s unique history and how it has come to shape participants’ lives.

This approach was particularly important in the focus groups, and especially among members who were disadvantaged along class and race lines. They were curious about why I was researching this topic, why in South Africa, and what drew me to the country. Especially when asking audiences about how their lived experiences shape their expectations of the media (a question that is sensitive and was asked towards the end of the focus group discussions), I was deliberate in explaining to them that the reason I was asking this question was to acknowledge that particular groups in society are more disadvantaged or more powerful than others and that this may or may not shape how they perceive the news media.

The above outlined reflections guided my preparation for fieldwork and data collection but also served as reflexive frames of reference through which I interpreted the data. At the same time, I remain fully aware that despite my best intentions to represent the shared knowledge and lived experiences of those with less power than me in a sensitive and contextualized way, I have most likely introduced my own classist and racist biases.

3.7. Data management: Transcription of Interviews and Focus Groups

Despite the growing availability of digital data management tools, researchers maintain a key role in how they prepare and transcribe data, deciding which software they choose to analyse and later interpret the data with – considerations that ultimately shape their interpretation of data and the study's findings (McLellan et al. 2003). Transcribing is a time-consuming exercise and often considered a technicality in the research process; however, transcription-related decisions are a crucial research activity that impact all steps of data analysis that follow. Critical to keep in mind here is that “textual data will never fully encompass all that takes place during an interview” (McLellan et al. 2003: 65) in so far as the audio recording is considered to be a real representation of communication between a researcher and subject, while the transcript is a construction (Ashmore and Reed 2000). From the time a researcher is in the field collecting data to the point they are back in their office transcribing, the information collected has undergone a series of reductions. While audio and video recording captures conversations and interaction, data is reduced to something two-dimensional that captures only “a slice of ongoing life” (Emerson et al. 2011). Likewise, converting audio or video into a transcript is a further step in the reduction of data which involves decisions about what is and is not included, considering for example whether transcriptions should include non-verbal observation, be transcribed verbatim, include specific vernacular expressions, vocal intonation, or even moments of silence (Emerson et al. 2011). Conducting interviews and focus groups means

having a conversation, albeit an asymmetrical one (Kvale 2007). Conversation implies speaking and the pressure to keep participants speaking, which often comes at the expense of allowing silence to develop and rest, something which can be of significant meaning during data analysis and interpretation. To that end, Poland and Pederson (1998) discuss at length the importance of paying attention to silence not only in the course of interviews but also making a record of them in the transcriptions. What the researcher decides to exclude is as significant as what they decide to include (McLellan et al. 2003).

Following McLellan and colleagues' (2003) guidelines for transcription, all focus groups were transcribed entirely by the researcher, without using transcription software, which took several weeks to complete. This was done primarily to allow the researcher to re-familiarize herself with the information shared in the focus groups, especially because in doing this the researcher begins to note patterns and key themes emerging. Additionally, there was no available funding to hire a transcriber, and it has been shown that automated transcription software often struggles to recognize and effectively transcribe accents which deviate from American or British English, which ultimately ends up requiring longer data-cleaning processes thereafter and higher data transcription inaccuracy. Having spent several years living and working in South Africa prior to starting the thesis project, the researcher was also familiar with various accents and pronunciations of the research participants (for many, English is a second language) as well as unique expressions, for example 'yoh' to indicate surprise, 'haw' to express disbelief, or 'sies' to express disagreement. Although the researcher is the only one who had access to and worked with the transcripts, for confidentiality purposes, minimal information was included at the start of each transcript: location of meeting (city for interview, suburb/city for focus group), length of interview or focus group, and name (first only) of the interviewee, which is less than is recommended for transcripts used in studies with multiple researchers (McLellan et al. 2003).

Depending on the level of analysis needed to answer the research questions, not all data needs to be transcribed in its entirety. However, as this project seeks to identify "an in-depth description of the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs, or experiences" of journalists and audiences, it was necessary to transcribe all 48 interviews and eight focus groups in their entirety. "With this type of analysis," McLellan and colleagues (2003: 67) say, "researchers are not only interested in identifying patterns and salient themes [but] also want to demonstrate variations in how social phenomena are framed, articulated, and experienced as well as the relationships within and between particular elements of such phenomena." To enable this kind of analysis, the interviews and focus groups were transcribed 'verbatim' meaning exactly the

way it was said by journalists or audience members. Some non-verbal communication, such as expressions of audible emotion (laughter, sadness in their voice, nervous clicking of a pen or tapping nails on the table) was noted in parentheses. All care was taken to transcribe mispronounced words and word reductions (e.g. wanna see that, gotta do that etc.) as said by the respondent. As Weiss (1994: 199) notes, transcriptions are rarely perfect: “even the most proficient transcriber misses a word or two or transcribes some phrases that are slightly different from what was actually said.” Filler words such as ‘hmmmm’ or ‘yeah’ or ‘aha’, as well as word repetitions were also included. Short pauses were denoted using three ellipses in between words (e.g. um... I guess), while long pauses or delays were noted in parentheses (e.g. long pause). Every attempt was made to decipher all communication which was inaudible, segments of audio were rewound several times, following which if the audio was still indecipherable, ‘*inaudible*’ was written in parentheses for the duration of this speech section, or the researcher inserted in parentheses her best phonetic guess of what may have been said.

In an ideal research setting, two people should transcribe identical audio data and compare these to increase transcription accuracy, however due to time and financial constraints this was not possible in this study. While it is preferable, McLellan and colleagues (2003: 72) note this is a “luxury” that is rarely possible. Following LeCompte and Schensul’s (1999) guide on data management, all signed consent forms and surveys as well as audio and video recordings in this study were scanned immediately after each interview and focus group, transferred and saved digitally, while physical copies were safely stored. All documents and recordings were labelled using only the first name of the respondent or participant.

3.8. Data Analysis and Interpretation: “Informed” Grounded Theory

Approaches

Qualitative data can be analysed using diverse approaches depending on the objectives of the study, including grounded theory, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, applied ethnography and utilization evaluation, among others (Drisko 1997). A key limitation of both role conceptions and audience expectations scholarship is that they have overwhelmingly relied on quantitative approaches to explore these. This essentially leaves a lot of room for exploring these concepts in a grounded, constructivist way. At the same time, they are not an under-researched or newly emerging area of study that requires an absolute grounded theory approach. Here, an “informed” grounded theory (Thornberg 2012) approach becomes useful.

Grounded theory was developed during the 1960s, as a response to a period during which studies relied heavily on quantitative and deductive methods to test grand theories. The 1960s was also a time when scholarship started exploring journalistic role conceptions in large-scale, quantitative studies of journalists in the US (see for example, Johnson et al. 1975; Weaver 1986, 1996). Classic grounded theory argues that prior to fieldwork, literature reviews should be avoided so as not to contaminate the researcher's knowledge of the topic, so that induced theories remain truly grounded in the empirical data rather than fitted to existing concepts (Glaser and Strauss 1967). However, Thornberg (2012) problematizes grounded theory's principle of "pure induction" and argues that scholars should both engage with existing literature before going into the field but also remain grounded in the data, thus employing "informed grounded theory" (Thornberg 2012: 243). Informed grounded theory recognizes that scholars going into the field should strike a balance between going into the field open-minded and grounded in the data they are collecting, and existing scholarly work that precedes their own so as to avoid "naïve empiricism" or "naïve inductivism" or the belief that researchers can free themselves of preconceived ideas and theoretical influence, thus lacking reflective engagement with the data (Kelle 2007: 135). In this regard, the study adopts the analytical approach of constantly comparing existing concepts with emerging concepts, and to remain critical but sensitive "to subtle nuances in the data" (Thornberg 2012: 245), at the same time taking care not to allow this knowledge to block the discovery of new concepts grounded in the data. All focus groups and interview transcripts were systematically analysed using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA with open and axial coding to arrive at major categories and concepts, while engaging constantly with existing concepts in the literature.

Depending on the analytical approach, data may be analysed with very different levels of granularity, ranging on a spectrum from "lumping broadly" to "splitting narrowly" (Guest et al. 2017). Following the informed grounded theory approach, this study's analysis was relatively granular in being open to discovering alternative perspectives on existing concepts, while also relying on concepts to guide analysis. Granularity also varied depending on the discovery of new concepts, where greater attention was paid to capturing its nuances. Four separate MAXQDA 'projects' were used to analyse journalist and audience data. Iterative processes of close reading and open coding led to the generation of the following initial codes: 680 for political journalist, 1,093 for lifestyle journalists, 382 for audience focus groups discussing political journalists, and 506 for audience focus groups discussing lifestyle journalists. Using MAXQDA's 'MAXMaps' function, axial coding was carried out to group open codes into categories to arrive at more abstract concepts. The 'MAXMaps' tool allows

the researcher to drag and drop open codes into a blank space and map these based on how they relate to each other and to existing concepts.

Drisko (1997) outlines four criteria for assessing the interpretation of qualitative data. (1) *Credibility or believability*, whereby the researcher's interpretations must truthfully reflect what the study's participants have said, aided by complementing interpretations with examples of raw data (quotes). The findings of this study rely on quotes from journalists and conversational exchanges between audiences to illustrate the interpretation of data. (2) *Contextualizing meaning*, by connecting the interpretation of the data with the local context and perspective of the participant. Here the researcher employed interpretive principles of "thick description" (Geertz 1973) to explain specific cultural and societal meanings underpinning the data interpretation. For example, as will be shown in the findings chapter, where audiences have diverging expectations of journalists based on their intersectional identities, these divergences are also explained in relation to the lived experiences of audiences. (3) *Confirmability* can be achieved by corroborating the researcher's interpretations through feedback from the study's participants, or by making coding and analysis processes transparent to readers. Ideally, the research would have preferred to complete this stage of the data interpretation, however, due to limited resources, a lack of time and money available to return to South Africa and meet the participants again, this was unfortunately not possible. (4) *Completeness of saturation*, achieved by assessing whether the subject and experiences have been studied thoroughly, whether the descriptions are thick, and whether data collection has reached a point of repetition. Saturation also means pushing participants to elaborate even when it seems they have said everything and ensuring that the data that has been analysed and presented has examined all contradictions and alternative interpretations. Saturation of data was definitely reached in the interviews with journalists and editors, as insights and claims started to repeat approximately by the 12th interview for both the political and lifestyle journalists. In the case of focus groups, some saturation appeared after the 3rd group discussion, however, further discussions revealed additional intersectional differences within and across the groups and participants.

The following three chapters present the key findings and contributions of this study, focusing respectively on journalistic role conceptions, audience expectations, and boundaries between political and lifestyle journalists. Chapter 4 outlines the key journalistic role conceptions detected among political and lifestyle journalists. It also highlights both political and lifestyle journalists' perceptions and imaginations of their audiences and their expectations, which

allows for triangulation between journalistic role conceptions, journalists' perceptions of their audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations of both political and lifestyle journalists, which are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 reflects on the blurring role boundaries outlined in Chapter 4, but also highlights explicit boundary distinctions expressed by both the journalists and audiences through their expectations of political and lifestyle journalism. Throughout these chapters, key findings are situated and discussed in relation to existing conceptual and empirical scholarship, before highlighting key theoretical contributions to the field in the conclusion chapter (7).

4. ROLE CONCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL AND LIFESTYLE

JOURNALISTS: Findings

To study roles is to study characteristic behaviours that occupy a significant component of a position held by an individual or group of people (Biddle 1979). For the position of journalist, such roles have commonly included being a watchdog, disseminator and analyst, as well as advocate, change agent, or facilitator in contexts where greater societal change is required (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). We see this dichotomous division to some extent throughout journalistic role conception scholarship – a binary rooted in early studies of journalists who were found to be either neutral-gatekeepers or participant-advocates, that is, either distant observers or involved interpreters (Cohen 1963; Janowitz 1975; Johnstone et al. 1975; Christians et al. 2009). This binary or dichotomy has generated and been evident in other areas of journalistic role conceptions research. Firstly, this is seen in the division between journalists in so-called ‘Western’ established democracies where journalists’ key roles include being a critical watchdog and adversary to powerful actors in society in the name of defending and reporting in the public interest, and ‘beyond the West’ in emerging, fragile, or post-authoritarian/conflict societies where to act as an adversary is constantly negotiated against the role of supporting national and more broadly societal development (Wasserman and de Beer 2005; de Beer et al. 2016; Rodney-Gumede 2015). The same scholars, however, have also stressed that this binary is somewhat deceptive, as supporting ‘national’ development in acting as an advocate, change agent, or facilitator can indeed be in the service of the public, especially in contexts where that public is highly fragmented due to socio-economic inequality. As the findings in this study indicate, this binary is expressed in the negotiation of hybrid roles that come with tensions and evidence of role conflict among journalists. Secondly, journalism scholarship, including journalistic roles scholarship, has perpetuated a hierarchical binary between political journalism and so-called ‘softer’ forms of journalism, such as lifestyle journalism, where the former has been revered as making a greater contribution to democracy and citizenship than the latter’s support of everyday life (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2019). This dichotomy is rooted in Western-liberal ideals about what constitutes public and private spheres (Weintraub 1997; Pateman 1983) and is similarly seen in journalism through generated and ethno-centric binaries of quality-popular (i.e. political versus lifestyle, tabloid) journalism, soft-hard news, information-entertainment, fact-opinion, and objectivity-subjective involvement, to name a few (Costera Meijer 2001; Ross and Carter 2011). On the one hand, this study finds a blurred distinction or rather role-overlap between political and

lifestyle journalists, where lifestyle journalists express roles traditionally associated with political journalists. On the other hand, once the question of similarities-differences is evoked explicitly, both political and lifestyle journalists engage in gendered boundary making by asserting key characteristics or markers that reinforce hierarchical distinctions between the two. An almost identical pattern of boundary making but also normalization is found among audiences in relation to their expectations of political and lifestyle journalism.

Building on existing arguments that journalism is inherently masculine, White, and elite (Steiner 2020; van Zoonen 1998; Smith and Slay 2019; Robinson and Culvert 2019; Hovden 2008), this study makes two further key contributions. It takes an intersectional approach to examining how the class, race, and gender of journalists may shape their journalistic roles. Here findings indicate that although some of the journalists in this study do not have inherited economic and cultural capital or origins in the social elite (Hovden 2008) as a result of their upbringing under the economically and racially oppressive system of apartheid, they have accumulated cultural and economic capital, which is further nurtured by newsroom socialisation and its dominant vision of journalism (Willig 2012; Hovden 2008; Eldridge 2018). While this establishes little class deviation among journalists, findings do indicate that it is primarily Black lifestyle journalists who express traditionally political roles, and it is exclusively Black journalists who express the need to engage in the emotional labour of feeling empathy while enacting their role of being advocates and the voice of the voiceless. However, class appears to be the most dominant force shaping not only the way both political and lifestyle journalists approach their audiences, but also the way lifestyle journalists conceive of some of their key roles. Specifically, both political and lifestyle journalists in this study mainly target audiences who mirror the same (inherited or accumulated) economic and cultural capital, that is the middle or upper class (Coddington et al. 2021), while entirely neglecting to target or be able to imagine working-class audiences and their needs or interests (Friedman 2011). Especially lifestyle journalists' awareness of stark class inequalities in society shapes their role of being a mindful marketer or intermediary between consumers and cultural products, and providing aspiration to recent entrants to the middle class, or so-called 'new money' (Bourdieu 1984).

In the following sections the above outlined findings are elaborated on and illustrated in greater detail, and discussed against existing scholarship. Broadly, chapters 4 and 5 will address RQ5: *To what extent do journalists' role conceptions, their imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations reflect one another?*

More specifically, Chapter 4 answers the following questions:

RQ1: *What do political and lifestyle journalists understand to be their roles?*

RQ2: *How do political and lifestyle journalists imagine their audiences and their expectations?*

And the first part of:

RQ4: *How do class, race, and gender shape journalists' role conceptions and audience expectations?*

4.1. POLITICAL JOURNALISTS' ROLE CONCEPTIONS

Political journalists in South Africa and the way in which they understand their roles in society to a large extent reflect those detected in past research and fall into two distinct role orientations or “binary opposites” – the traditional-liberal and the developmental journalism orientation (de Beer et al. 2016). However, analysis also revealed some key nuances: first, there is evidence of racial differences in how journalists approach certain roles, specifically the need to engage in the emotional labour of being compassionate and empathetic in the role of being an advocate; and second, there is evidence that as a result of this binary role negotiation journalists experience relative role conflict between the pressure to be objective and provide fast news and be emotionally invested while providing in-depth, sustained coverage of key societal issues.

Journalists negotiated hybrid role conceptions by balancing both traditional (liberal, normative) journalistic values such as being an objective watchdog and disseminating news of importance, and roles found within the developmental orientation, which may entail reporting in the interest of national development, facilitating socio-economic transformation, and reporting in the interests of the public, especially marginalized communities (Kanyegirire 2006; Wasserman and de Beer 2005; Rodny-Gumede 2015). Journalists in this study saw their roles as a combination of informational-instructive, analytical-deliberative, and critical-monitorial roles on one side, and advocative-radical and developmental-educative roles on the other (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Across all roles, journalists espoused norms and values such as independence, accuracy, truthfulness and objectivity, as captured in these remarks: “we all strive for independence, it’s an ideal” (Tamir-CO-M) and we are “making sure that you are accurate with the work that you do” (Bongani-BL-M). Journalists sought to “tell the truth” (Brian-WH-M), although some quipped that “to tell the truth is impossible” (Robby-WH-M).

Similar relativity was expressed in their views on objectivity. While one journalist said, “it’s so important to be as objective as possible” (Mandy-WH-F), another questioned, “can journalists ever be objective?” (Arundhati-IN-F).

Overwhelmingly, political journalists expressed an orientation towards developmental and advocative roles, which among the most prominent roles included being the voice of the voiceless and the need to be emotionally invested and empathetic, to educate, be a change agent, provide advice and be a good neighbour, and provide solutions to problems. At the same time, journalists expressed what appeared to be cognitive dissonance in trying to balance traditional-liberal and developmental roles. When they oriented towards developmental roles, they rejected the objectivity and detachment norms, and when they emphasized their traditional-liberal orientation, they minimized the importance of advocacy roles and in particular any allusion to having an activist role. In many ways this tension reflects the ongoing debates about the ‘proper’ role of journalism in a postcolonial society and transitional democracy like South Africa, where journalists adopt hybrid roles (Votmer and Wasserman 2014). In this study, role hybridity also means not that journalists are exclusively oriented towards one or the other role dimensions, but rather that when one was evoked, they often felt inclined to critique the other, and in many cases, journalists within a single interview found themselves on both ends of the binary. As in previous studies, journalists negotiated both role orientations, thus challenging notions of a watchdog-developmental binary (de Beer et al. 2016; Wasserman and de Beer 2005; Rodny-Gumede 2015). These roles and tensions are illustrated and discussed in more detail below.

4.1.1. The traditional-liberal role orientation: Watchdog and disseminator

On the one side of this paradigm or opposition (de Beer et al. 2016) journalists’ roles belonged to the **informational-instructive** and mostly the **critical-monitorial dimensions** (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). At least in some ways, this orientation reflects the ‘neutral’ or ‘gatekeeper’ roles that defined early role conceptions scholarship, where journalists were seen as informers in the pursuit of objective information (Cohen 1963; Janowitz 1975). Reflecting past research (de Beer et al. 2016), the journalists in this study spoke of needing to be critical watchdogs, observers, and disseminators of information. Being a watchdog, one journalist said: “it’s about fighting injustice, it’s about speaking truth to power, it’s about exposing abusive power” (Stuart-WH-M). Another said it was particularly important to “hold power to account” in a country where “there is a history of anyone who is not educated, anyone who is not clued up, there is this thing of, ‘I’ll take advantage of you’” (Richard-BL-M). Being a watchdog here

was particularly about being a watchdog over what journalists claimed was a hard-earned and fought for democracy by reporting in the public interest (Wasserman and de Beer 2005).

Within this traditional-liberal orientation journalists emphasized that technological and commercial pressures have created an added layer of urgency to news dissemination within the *informational-instructive dimension* which sees journalists transmitting and disseminating information (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). These ‘new’ pressures were captured in the role of ‘*providing fast news*’ – an adapted behavioural norm that appeared more exaggerated than has previously been captured by the disseminator role ‘to report quickly’ (Johnstone et al. 1975; Weaver and Wilhoit 1986, 1996; Weaver et al. 2007). Here journalists talked about the need to be “prolific” – as this journalist said: “part of my strength is shooting out news quickly” (Adrian-WH-M), which also means rushing to publish content without doing adequate research. Another journalist added: “as a fast journalist, I am expected to write four fast stories a day [...] whatever flies across your screen on Twitter or on Facebook or whatever someone is outraged about, just make sure that you are writing four stories a day” (Alan-WH-M). Journalists felt that doing this kind of journalism was simply a consequence of increasing commercial pressures and journalism’s market orientation, which means that providing fast news was part and parcel of journalism’s new business model. This role forces them to produce content they believed was inconsequential to their audiences or society and many saw it as the demise of quality journalism that could have societal impact. At the same time, they stressed the growing need for investigative journalism that was hampered by inadequate resources (time, money). Besides being an outcome of technological influences and increasing economic pressures, the growing need to provide ‘fast news’ is also an indication of what might be termed the ‘masculinization’ of journalism. Fast news could be understood as a binary opposite to human interest, in-depth, issue-driven journalism that is also found within solutions journalism (Ross and Carter 2011; McIntyre and Lough 2019). As such, journalists here begin to show evidence of role conflict between the pressure to have a stronger fast-news orientation and their preferred orientation towards meaningful and impactful journalism, as becomes clear in their far stronger emphasis on roles found in the developmental-advocative orientation, outlined in the following section.

4.1.2. The Developmental-Advocative orientations: Advocate-Activist, Change Agent, Educator

Overwhelmingly, journalists interviewed for this study expressed roles found in the **advocative-radical** dimension, which included being an *advocate* or *voice of the voiceless or disenfranchised*, the **developmental-educative** dimension, which included being an *educator* and *change agent*, and finally, among the least talked about roles within this active orientation, journalists saw themselves as a mediator, found within the **analytical-deliberative dimension** (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). As mobilizers, journalists were politically assertive and interventionist in trying to engage and empower audiences in conversation and political participation. Here, journalists sought to mobilize the public around issues of political and social importance, by “informing people, driving conversation, driving debate, and helping people make informed decisions” (Bongani-BL-M), but also to provoke strong reactions in the public, that is, to “see the public outrage over something” (Alan-WH-M).

What is meant by ‘overwhelmingly’ above is not that more journalists spoke of this role orientation than of those outlined above, but that large portions of the interview discussions were dominated by journalists’ reflections on these roles. This orientation reflects the other side of the binary, or early notions of journalists being participants and advocates, representing the voices and interests of the public, especially excluded and marginalized groups (Cohen 1963; Janowitz 1975). The central focus of this orientation was the need for journalists to advocate for the most marginalized, underserved parts of the South African public, by critiquing the lack of and facilitating socio-economic transformation (Rodny-Gumede 2014).

4.1.2.1. Advocate-Activist: The voice of the voiceless and the good neighbour

Being an advocate was most evident in journalists saying that they want to be the voice of the voiceless, or a spokesperson for the socially disadvantaged (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) – a phrase so well engrained in journalists’ role conception vocabulary that almost all who talked about it used some variation of it. As one journalist said: “a possibly tried phrase, it would be to give voice to the voiceless. [...] That’s what I find meaningful in my work. To amplify the voices of those that are not listened to in our country” (Tania-WH-F). To be a voice of the voiceless meant to “tell the story of the ordinary, township, and the rural stories that other papers are ignoring” (Shaun-BL-M), and include “communities whose voices weren’t given priority during the previous regime” (Tamir-CO-M). The latter two quotes come from journalists working for two of South Africa’s largest tabloid newspapers, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Voice*, that have played a key role in speaking to audiences neglected by the mainstream press

(Steenveld and Strelitz 2010; Wasserman 2008) which largely reinforces a middle-class worldview and targets audiences in higher Living Standard Measure (LSM)⁴ groups (Friedman 2011). However, journalists from ‘quality’ newspapers such as the *Mail & Guardian* also argued that the voices of those most affected are not featured, reinforcing past findings that journalists are aware of the fragmentation of audiences and that mainstream media prioritize elite voices (Rodny-Gumede 2015).

As advocates, journalists were careful to distinguish advocacy from *activism* – a role that more closely reflects the missionary role or campaigning for a particular cause (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Journalists both distanced themselves from activism and embraced it: “activism, no I wouldn’t put as strong a label on it, but for sure, there is an advocacy element to it [my work], when it’s appropriate” (Tania-WH-F). Another confirmed: “like, I wouldn’t call myself an activist, but I have a strong social justice backbone, I take people’s struggles on in a way, so I get really involved in a story” (Chan-CO-M). To be an activist was seen by some journalists as venturing too far from the liberal detached watchdog role orientation and therefore uncomfortably far from journalism’s professionalism. At the same time, as one editor said, journalism’s purpose is to build a fairer, more peaceful world, and as such, she said, “for me, journalism *is* an act of activism” (Kamila-IN-F). A tabloid newspaper journalist saw themselves as a “people’s champion, activist” (Tamir-CO-M). Another journalist who claimed, “I’m an activist” argued that “the majority of activist journalists in this country don’t know they are activist journalists” (Thabisa-BL-F). These claims reflect both a reluctance to embrace the activist role seen as too far removed from traditional (professional) norms, and a rebellious commitment to the activist role as a necessity in light of social reality and inequalities. That there is this push-and-pull negotiation indicates that the political journalists in this study do not fully embrace the obsessive-activist role conceptions in the same way Israeli journalists do who integrated this role fully within their professional role repertoire and bridged their personal and professional activism fairly fluidly (Ginosar and Reich 2020). Beyond being a voice for the voiceless, journalists took a more active role of providing advice and guidance to communities who may not know who to contact about a problem they are facing, and in doing so, journalists were “the good neighbour” (Tamir-CO-M). To be a good neighbour is an audience expectation identified in past research on groups marginalized along class, race and gender lines, and referred to the need for journalists to care about and understand these communities and

⁴ A marketing tool that identifies audiences based on ownership capital.

highlight positive events and the people within them (Heider et al. 2005; Poindexter et al. 2006).

The emotional labour of advocating: Empathy among Black journalists

To embrace the advocate role entailed a certain level of *emotional labour* or management of emotions (Hopper and Huxford 2015) that in this study involved the need to help or even ‘rescue’ marginalized communities. This was evident in journalists’ expressions of *empathy*, a journalistic tool that helps journalists not only connect with and tell stories in a more authentic way (Glück 2016), but helps journalists humanize marginalized communities in their reporting (Varna 2020). In this study, journalists felt a great deal of empathy towards the most marginalized, namely, poor, working-class, Black and Coloured communities. Importantly, this type of emotional investment was expressed exclusively by **Black journalists, both male and female**, who recognized aspects of their personal habitus – sense of self and lived experiences (Bourdieu 1984) – in the lives of those they were reporting on. Debates about the role of journalists in South Africa are shaped by the “apartheid legacies of race, class, and gender inequalities” visible in how journalists’ intersectional identities shape their role conceptions (Zirugo 2021: 5). Early life experiences of poverty and discrimination among Black journalists can be a source of motivation to expose inequality, help the defenceless, and fight stigma (Slay and Smith 2011). Black journalists in this study saw themselves as a part or an extension of marginalized audience groups, referring collectively to “the struggles of *our* people as they try to emancipate themselves” (Msizi-BL-M). Journalists talked about feeling sad and even healing themselves by telling the stories of marginalized groups: “when you are sad it’s like, ‘what would I have done if I was in this person’s shoes?’ At the end of the day, I’m human first, before I’m a journalist” (Khulekani-BL-F). Another reflected the same sentiment: “I realized that maybe telling people’s stories is sort of my way of healing [...] you are moved somehow” (Sibongile-BL-F). Journalists often said it ‘pains them’ to not be able to help the people they report on: “being Black and living in a country where the majority are Black people, and seeing that the majority of those Black people live in poverty, it just pains your heart [...] I hate seeing the same people I love suffering” (Richard-BL-M). Another said: “it pains me [...] Like I can’t give you a bed, I can’t build a new shack for you, I’m just gonna get your story out there” (Sindisiwe-BL-F). In past studies, White journalists covering stories on race have tended to stick to objectivity norms (Robinson and Culvert 2019) while Black journalists actively challenge the objectivity norm by advocating for the underheard (Slay and Smith 2011). Unlike in past research (Hopper and Huxford 2015), the journalists cited above

did not explicitly express any conflict between empathy and the ideological demands of detachment or the need to suppress their emotions. However, the journalists did on occasion contradict themselves when also espousing objectivity norms at other stages of the interview. This resonates with Daniels' (2016) argument that for journalists in South Africa race is one of many floating identity signifiers negotiated alongside their professional roles. Some of these tensions were detected more explicitly in journalists' negotiations of the neutral-objective and advocate-interventionist roles, discussed further below.

4.1.2.2. Change Agents and Educators: Importance of solutions journalism

Within the developmental-advocative orientation, journalists also sought to affect change and educate. As *educators or teachers*, journalists sought to enlighten people with information and knowledge about a problem (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). For journalists in this study, educating was about raising awareness and teaching people about issues concerning financial management, and different forms of injustices – issues they felt characterised key societal concerns. As these journalists said: “there is such an opportunity to educate people through journalism and especially in financial matters [...] most people have no idea about money” (Heather-WH-F). Another said he wanted to “to educate and inform the readers, about the injustice that happens in South Africa” (Msizi-BL-M). Educating was also about exposing the privileged and elite segments of the population to the injustices and lived experiences of the large portions of the public living in poverty, as one journalist remarked: “I am also writing for the people who are high up there who actually don't know what's happening on the ground, people who can't relate to issues of poverty, people who don't understand” (Khulekani-BL-F).

As *change agents*, journalists in this study advocated for social change and social reform by seeking justice and empowering people with knowledge – a role that is particularly important for journalist in transitional societies (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Journalists spoke of “affecting some change in some way or another” (Arundhati-IN-F), and the need to “change the mind of someone” (Chan-CO-M), to “have a big impact and change the country” (Alan-WH-M) and “to make the world a better place” (Sibongile-BL-F). In many ways journalists in South Africa aspire to act as change agents in similar ways to journalists in other transitional democracies, where journalists have sought to be a force for social good by examining government policy and encouraging reform (Ramaprasad and Hamdy 2006; Pintak and Ginges 2008; Hanitzsch 2007). At times, trying to bring about change felt to journalists like an uphill battle that seemed to breed disillusionment and hopelessness about whether change is achievable. Journalists stressed the lack of improvement to the lives of the majority Black and

Coloured communities in post-apartheid South Africa and the need to be critical of government policies that do not advocate for or benefit Black people and perpetuate poverty: “the people who are benefiting from that development are White people who were benefiting from apartheid, but it means that for the Black people, you’ll find that their unemployment rate is rising” (Msizi-BL-M). Another said she wanted “to empower people with knowledge, that will help them to make good decisions” (Heather-WH-F), to ensure their audiences were “enlightened and empowered to stand up to bullies” (Philisiwe-BL-F). To be a change agent, however, was most strongly captured in journalists’ need to provide solutions to problem (McIntyre 2019), although as will become evident among audience expectations of journalists’ roles, this remains an anticipated but unfulfilled role expectation.

Providing solutions to problems

Being a change agent was also about *providing solutions to problems*, a role that fits into the *developmental-educative* dimension of journalistic roles (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Providing solutions to problems is an especially important role in developing democracies where coverage of emotionally charged conflicts can have a particularly divisive effect on the public (Hyde-Clarke 2011) and where journalists in particular feel they need to provide audiences with comprehensive and tangible solutions to problems, reporting on societal challenges in an ongoing and persistent manner (McIntyre and Lough 2019). The journalists in this study sought to provide solutions to problems through sustained coverage, and follow-up reporting on a single issue, which they hope provides audiences with a sense of hope. As one journalist said: “it’s not enough to just report that someone has been raped and leave it there [...] the way we report on these issues is very linear, it’s very unengaging, it’s not challenging people or rather pointing them in the right direction” (Philisiwe-BL-F). Referring to a story of a 6-year-old girl who had been raped in public toilets and was trending in the media during the time of research, this particular journalist critiqued the media’s inattention to providing audiences with information that would empower people to act different and intervene in similar future incidents. Another journalist said: “it’s the difference between being critical and being critical by offering solutions [...] it could be a completely negative ‘oh this country is going to the dogs’ kind of story, or it could be ‘this is the problem that we are facing and these are the solutions that we can offer’” (Tamir-CO-M). It was about telling “stories that will inspire people” (Wandile-BL-F) “or give them hope” (Shaun-BL-M) and offer a positive perspective on an issue.

However, multiple journalists stressed that achieving this was not possible in journalism's current business model and trajectory. Frustrated by the pressure to produce fast news and the lack of time and resources to do follow-up stories on a single issue, one journalist said:

We are not addressing any of the societal issues [...] I feel that you need to make a difference, otherwise why are you doing it. If you are not, if your reporting doesn't have any impact then you are just making money off tragedy [...] and in that way it's a perverse incentive because you are relying on there to be systemic failure for you to make news (Alan-WH-M).

Another journalist said: "journalism isn't only about selling papers or getting the most clicks or getting the most web traffic or advertising revenue, it's a powerful instrument for change" (Tamir-CO-M). Tensions between journalists' normative and cognitive roles (goals and aspirations) towards speaking to and empowering underprivileged audiences and having an impact on society, and their perceived ability to practice or enact these against mounting economic pressures, came up frequently. Past studies that have examined the gap between role conception and performance by evaluating the extent to which journalists' discursive role claims are visible in the news they produce, have detected discrepancies (Mellado et al. 2016; Mellado and van Dalen 2013; Carpenter et al. 2016). However, in their articulation of role conceptions, journalists in this study actively reflected on the obstacles they face in being able to perform (enact) these roles (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017) thus creating a conceptual bridge between two distinct role conceptualizations – orientations and performance.

4.1.3. To be adversarial-objective or advocate-participant

Reflecting existing scholarship that has argued that the objectivity norm is a strategic ritual (Tuchman 1972) rooted in Enlightenment ideals of rationality and whiteness (Robinson and Culvert 2019; Aleman 2014), journalists in this study argued that objectivity was an impossible and flawed ideal, and rejected objectivity as something that dehumanizes journalism and journalists. Besides questioning "can journalists every truly be objective?" (Arundhati-IN-F), journalists also claimed the objectivity norm was a reflection of journalism's patriarchal culture, asking journalists to shut off their emotional side. As one journalist observed, being thorough and examining their own biases was important, "but asking journalists to shut down their humanity fundamentally deadens journalism, and it deadens journalists" (Chan-CO-M). He went on to say that in sticking rigidly to the objectivity norm, "we've blown softness completely out of the game, and most people think that's okay. [...] I think that there needs to

be a fundamental overhaul of journalism” (Chan-CO-M). In many ways claims such as these reflect a process that van Zoonen (1998) labelled the ‘feminization of journalism’ which, among other things, involves greater emotional involvement and emphasis on the human interest in storytelling, as well as caring about audiences’ needs and wants. The journalists’ negative assessments of emotional detachment also echo past critiques of objectivity as a strategic ritual journalists use to espouse rationality and reason (Tuchman 1972; Aleman 2014) – a norm that is rooted in Enlightenment’s ideals and White privilege (Robinson and Culvert 2019). That these critiques among the interviewed journalists were expressed vis-à-vis their commitment to advocate-participant roles also reflects past findings that journalists reporting on underserved and marginalized communities and identity groups were expected to engage in persistent, in-depth, and inclusive reporting while building trusting relationships with their audiences (Wenzel et al. 2018; Robinson and Culvert 2019).

At the other end of the spectrum, journalists rejected the idea of being advocates (or activists) as something which makes them potentially biased and involved rather than neutral observers whose roles are to inform and uncover. As one journalist observed: “everybody thinks they are on a cause and sometimes we are not [...] advocacy means you are involved in these stories, you are more than a journalist, so I don’t want to end up being... I want to always be the observer” (Khulekani-BL-F). Another said: “I’m very nervous of activist journalism, where there is a specific end goal. I think that is sort of fatal to the integrity of journalism” (Samuel-WH-M). And yet another stressed that “journalists think that they are some kind of freedom fighters” which gives them a sense of purpose in a profession with low prestige, low economic security, no benefits and an uncertain future, however, she added, “at the end of the day we are just telling the news, really” (Kamila-IN-F). What we see here is that some of the same journalists who had talked about feeling empathy and a sense of activism in their role conceptions, also reject these very orientations, pointing to evidence of role-dissonance or role conflict (Biddle 1979).

Journalists stressed the importance of balancing their *adversarial* and *change agent* roles, on the one hand critically reporting on political powers and those responsible for bringing about societal change and on the other hand reporting in a way that supports social development (Kanyegirire 2006; Wasserman and de Beer 2005). While journalists did not speak of ‘national development’ specifically, they spoke of a need to be driven by a moral purpose:

I think every journalist needs to, or has a moral... has to answer a moral question ‘what is your purpose as a journalist’ – are you one of the good guys, are you here to build up and develop and do you care about your country, your city, your community, or are you

just here to break down, destroy, criticize, and I think if all journalists were really interested in development of their communities and their people and their country, that they would change their approach to how they work (Tamir-CO-M).

In many ways, the above comment speaks to journalists' role of going beyond criticising and reporting on tragedy by providing solutions while reporting on progress (McIntyre and Lough 2019). The opposing views outlined here reflect the neutral-participant binary identified by Cohen (1963) and discussed by Janowitz (1975) as a tension between the gatekeeper and advocate roles, where the former is associated with the pursuit of objectivity and social order (consensus) and a sign of professionalism, while the latter entails interpreting social issues and advocating for the interests of marginalized groups, and was associated with conflict, irrationality and seen as problematic to journalism's professionalisation. More specifically, this tension reflects ongoing debates among South African journalism scholars on the hybrid role of journalists in South Africa (Wasserman and de Beer 2005; Rodny-Gumede 2015).

4.1.4. Entertainment and accessibility: Feminization of political journalism

Building on the idea that a strict adherence to the traditional-liberal ideal of objectivity deadens journalism, political journalists in this study also raised another important function that deviates from traditional political roles and challenges some of its other ideals rooted in rationality and whiteness (Robinson and Culvert 2019; Aleman 2014). Namely, that increasingly journalists see the need to entertain audiences, not only in a way that is *engaging, surprising and attention arresting*, but also by writing in a way that is *accessible*. To write in an accessible way was to use simple language to break down and convey complex ideas, to audiences with various levels of literacy and knowledge of politics and economics. A journalist who writes feature pieces on foreign policy and politics remarked that his role was to “surprise the reader along the way” and make sure his audiences are “transported into a different world. It's sort of an extension of travel... take people to different places, and that's just about entertaining” (Samuel-WH-M). That he felt the need to *integrate the excitement and entertainment* of travel writing into his otherwise ‘serious’ coverage of foreign affairs speaks to an integration of roles otherwise associated with lifestyle journalism, such as providing entertainment and relaxation, into political reporting (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). The same journalist goes on to argue at length about just how frustrating it can be to be confronted regularly with the idea held by more senior journalists that:

if your audiences, if your story is really interesting to read then it cannot be a serious story, like it needs to be a little bit dense, hard to read to really have the gravitas, and I

could not disagree more with that. I think that really good journalism is really entertaining journalism at the same time, and all stories should be beautifully written and simply written [...] and if we don't do that properly we actually do a disservice to the news itself because we are minimizing the chances of more people reading it (Samuel-WH-M).

It is not clear whether this shift towards political news needing to be entertaining, beautifully and simply written is an outcome of greater economic pressures to attract audiences or an internalized role negotiation, but it does imply somewhat of a blurring of boundaries between 'entertainment' and 'infotainment' or soft and hard news approaches (Costera Meijer 2001; Loosen 2015). That we see within political journalism an acknowledgement of emotionality and the importance of storytelling as valuable tools for evoking interest and engagement among audiences with political news speaks to a 'feminization of journalism,' which van Zoonen (1998) has argued is an outcome of journalism's growing market orientation and struggle to maintain audiences.

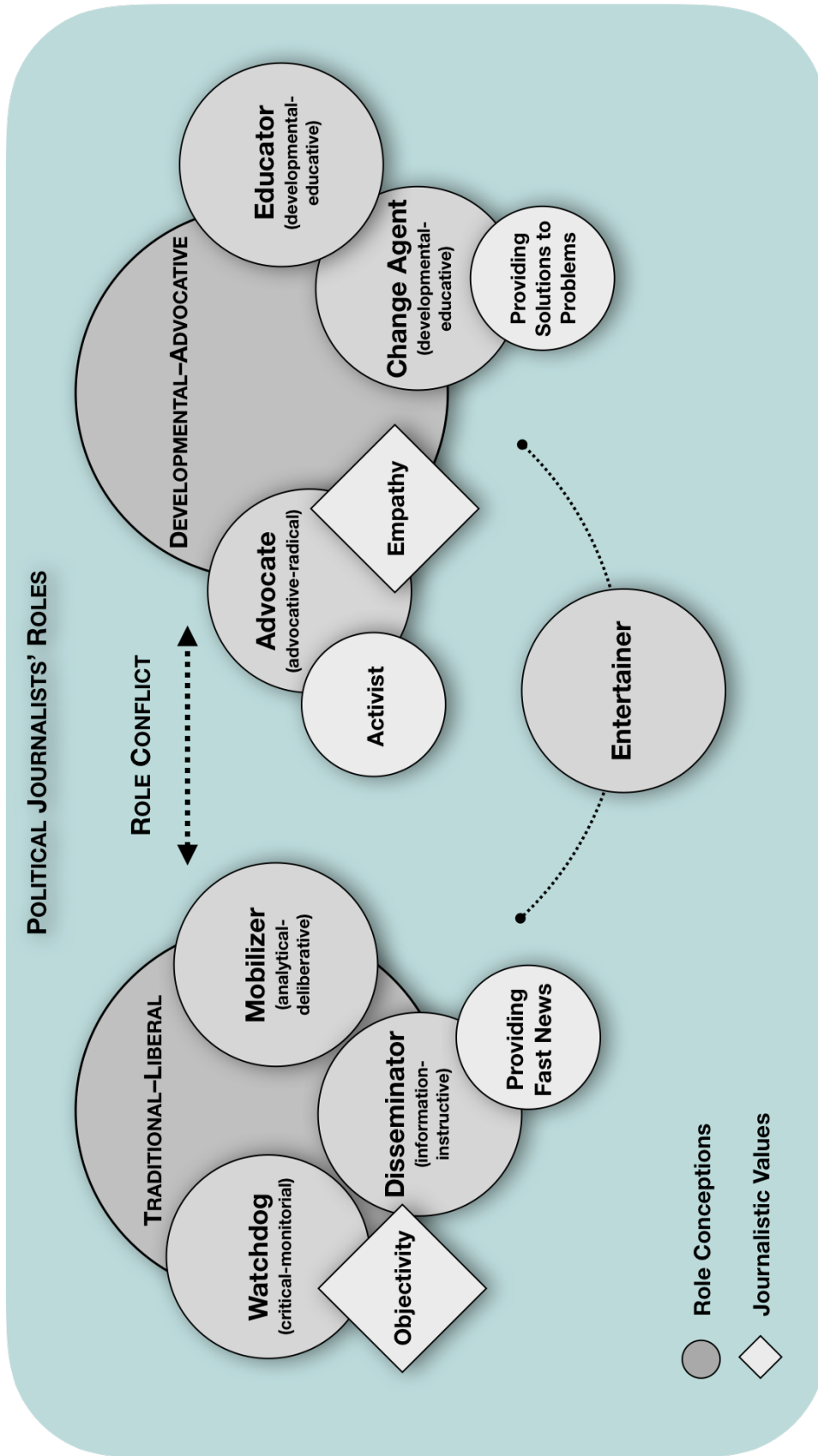
Breaking away from some of the rationality ideals is the argument political journalists in this study made for *writing accessibly* – simple as opposed to dense – and furthermore, explicitly acknowledging different levels of literacy and knowledge of complex political and business jargon and topics across their audiences. As one journalist stressed, journalists tend to operate with the elite assumption that bigger, more complex words convey intellect, running away from simple "pedestrian" language, and purposely forgetting that they are speaking not to themselves but to the public. As she says:

you are socialized to believe that sophisticated writing in big English words is sexier, they are more impressive, they illustrate your intelligence as a writer [...] the unfortunate thing that has happened with sort of the classism that pervades South African society is that if you don't get to interact with everyday South Africans anymore [...] you don't get to interact enough with people who may not necessarily be in your class for you to understand what language they would understand (Thabisa-BL-F).

Another journalist said "I always try to write in a way that an ordinary person can understand," even if that means others see it as "dumbing down" complex ideas (Bongani-BL-M). This move towards the entertainment and simplification of political news was seen as both a strategic move to reach broader audiences at a time when journalism is confronting an economic crisis, and a 'social/human rights' commitment to reaching audiences across various levels of education and literacy. This brings to attention the idea that political journalism, at

least in contrast to popular journalism (tabloid, lifestyle), is then seen as a conveyor of exclusive, specialist knowledge intended for a ‘smaller’ educated, in-the-know audience. Within the field of cultural production, political journalists are therefore associated with “‘pure’, ‘abstract’ and ‘esoteric’ works which are more or less unintelligible outside the subfield” (Hovden 2008: 41, citing Bourdieu [1983] 1993: 115). However, the political journalists in this study appear to be reflecting on and challenging this myth of inaccessibility, once again, either for economic or social reasons, or both (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Political journalists' role conceptions



ROLE CONFLICT: In narrating their (cognitive/normative) role ideals journalists actively reflect on their (in)ability to enact (practice) them. Performing *advocate/change agent* roles (incl. being *activists* and *solution-providers*) is hindered by pressure to *disseminate/provide fast news*. Liberal demands of objectivity hinder empathetic engagement.

4.2. LIFESTYLE JOURNALISTS' ROLE CONCEPTIONS

The lifestyle journalists interviewed for this study named a range of roles identified by previous research (for example, Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013) although their interpretations reflected the local context in terms of the goals they sought to achieve or issues they sought to alleviate. However, analysis also revealed two important differences. First, journalists were very aware of social class and race divisions among their audiences, which highlighted their crucial position as '*responsible*' cultural intermediaries (Hovden 2008), evident in their role as *mindful marketer*, and their role of *providing aspiration* – roles that had previously received less attention in scholarship, and specifically not in consideration of social class inequalities (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). Second, lifestyle journalists expressed strong support for a set of roles traditionally associated with political journalists to a greater degree than has been considered in existing scholarship (Hanusch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2019). Some of the lifestyle roles found in existing research are briefly illustrated below, before moving on to the two key findings.

4.2.1. Providing a service, escapism, therapy, attention-arresting content

Reflecting roles identified in past research (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), the lifestyle journalists in this study saw themselves broadly as providing audiences with exemplars of desired lifestyles, guidance or orientation for daily life, as well as being a *service provider* offering advice and news-you-can-use especially in terms of ideas for best products, services, and how to use these to better express themselves and their individual identities (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Eide and Knight 1999). For example, the lifestyle journalists in this study wanted to offer audiences “rose-pruning tips” (Maria-WH-F), as well “advice on how to spend their money” (Rekopile-BL-F), and “to save people time and money” (Clive-WH-M) by researching the quality of products and services and offering guidance. Journalists also sought to provide entertainment and relaxation by portraying an “idyllic world” and to promote a positive attitude towards life by offering content that is uplifting and offsets some of the negativity of political news (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). The last two roles in particular in many ways relate to journalists seeking to offer their audiences emotional and psychological support and guidance, in their role to *provide escapism*, and the role to *be a therapist* – roles similar to those of ‘mood manager’ and ‘friend’ that speak to two key dimensions of everyday life: emotion and identity. Here, lifestyle journalists seek to stimulate and regulate emotional well-being as well as provide orientation for audiences to develop their

sense of identity and belonging (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2019). In the case of this study's journalists, they wanted to expose audiences to ideas and images that are beautiful, seductive or aesthetically pleasing to look at, make people feel good, facilitate daydreaming and fantasy, and allow them to escape the negativity of hard news and the volatility of the outside world by making their home feel beautiful and safe. As one journalist said:

...things are quite uncertain outside of your home. People have got walls, they've got security companies, it's not always safe to drive places, certainly not safe to walk places at night. I think you want to make your home as beautiful as possible, and it's something that you can control. You know what I mean? The wall is not going to change colour if you go out for the day. It's gonna stay the colour and the rug is gonna stay where you put it, and the chairs are gonna stay there. So, I think, people... I think you need to come home and just feel good (Maria-WH-F).

In many ways, the above comment begins to illustrate how lifestyle journalists speak primarily to middle-upper-class audiences who live in the suburbs (Friedman 2011). As a therapist (or friend), journalists wanted to make people feel heard and not alone by offering "psychological and emotional" support, whether in relation to "suicide" or "violence against women" (Sara-WH-F) or to encourage people to "to stop feeling guilty about [...] the food we eat" (Kassy-WH-F).

Lifestyle journalists also wanted to *arrest their audience's attention* by providing information that is salacious, has viral potential, offers gratification through content that promises instant feel-good results, and that incites shock, awe, and offers an element of surprise through content that audiences would not anticipate. They sought to do this primarily by offering content that is broadly understood as entertaining, by "making somebody sit up and say, 'oh wow, that's cool'" (Kassy-WH-F), offering them a "benefit that's very clearly delineated to the consumer... it's basically a hedonistic benefit" (Rick-WH-M), or as another journalist said: "it's nice to be reading and to get something that you weren't expecting" (Chloe-WH-F). While entertaining is a function that is well understood by lifestyle journalists (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Hanusch 2011), among the journalists in this study, entertainment seemed to serve a key purpose of attracting and captivating their audiences' attention in a content-saturated media landscape.

What becomes clear across all the roles named by lifestyle journalists in South Africa is that in many ways they speak to local realities. That they seek to provide financial advice in their role as service providers speaks to the fact that at least 75% of the population lives either in chronic, transient poverty or belongs to the vulnerable middle class (Southern Africa Labour

and Development Research Unit 2021; see also Burger et al. 2015) and as will become evident in findings on audience expectations, working-class audiences especially expect lifestyle journalists to offer financial advice. That lifestyle journalists seek to offer emotional support and guidance to women who may have been or are at risk of violence speaks to the fact that gender-based violence is extremely high (Institute for Security Studies 2019).

Finally, what emerged as a key difference to past findings, is that lifestyle journalists in this study showed an awareness of persistent socio-economic inequalities and fragmented audiences based on their varied levels of affordability, most evident in their roles as mindful marketer and role of providing aspiration, discussed in the following sections.

4.2.2. Lifestyle journalists as cultural intermediaries: Negotiating roles amidst class inequality

Lifestyle journalists in this study were highly aware of social class divisions among their audiences, which particularly highlights their position as cultural intermediaries between the cultural production of lifestyles and the public's cultivated tastes and economic capital shaping their desires and access to portrayed lifestyles (Hovden 2008; Bourdieu 1984). As some journalists said: "I understand that in South Africa, my audiences will have less disposable income" (Clive-WH-M), because they live in "a very stratified space" (Kabelo-BL-M). This gave some journalists a "feeling of disjointedness" (Clive-WH-M) and "disconnect" (Chloe-WH-F), making cultural mediation all the more complex and fragmented.

Conscious of social class stratification, journalists and editors saw themselves as having the role of a *mindful marketer*, which presented them with conflicting orientations. On the one hand, this role involved marketing and branding by "showing pieces of furniture that we want to get them to buy" (Julia-WH-F), treating content as a profit-generator, offering audiences value for money, and considering advertisers' needs: "we are compelled by sales to feature them otherwise they are going to cut their massive ad spend with us" (Patrick-WH-M). Here journalists aim to expose the economic middle class and elite to opportunities for conspicuous consumption (Currid-Halkett et al. 2019) and the acquisition of material goods (Bourdieu 1984). In doing so, journalists shape and match their audiences' specific tastes with goods (Smith Maguire 2014). Several editors expressed surprise at just how important the business aspect of their position would be, emphasising that "a huge part of my job is commercial because I'm responsible for the revenue generation program" (Heidi-WH-F), and as another journalist said: "I feel that marketing and particularly branding comes into my job more than I thought it would" (Rachel-WH-F). To be clear, the role of marketing here is more explicitly

about promoting lifestyle products and services, and therefore different to how the ‘marketing’ role has been conceptualized by political journalists as promoting news stories to audiences on social media (Tandoc and Vos 2016). While one might expect marketing to be a key role among lifestyle editors and journalists given that consumption is a key dimension of lifestyle journalism (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013) the journalists in this study seem to suggest that this aspect of their work receives even more attention than expected.

On the other hand, lifestyle journalists were wary of promoting conspicuous consumption and claimed it was their role to encourage mindful consumerism. As one editor said: “people will overspend on technology as long as people can see it and they can use it as a social status symbol [...] and we are trying to discourage that kind of practice” (Gary-CO-M). Another added that they would not promote the ‘debt is good’ message: “I don’t want to be selling people shit they don’t need” (Rachel-WH-F). Moderating conspicuous consumption reveals journalists’ position as ‘*responsible*’ cultural intermediaries (Hovden 2008), concerned with both manipulating the economy of cultural wants and needs (Smith Maguire 2014) but also actively discouraging it, which diverges from past research. Journalists also seemed wary of promoting extrinsic aspiration and conspicuous consumption (Currid-Halkett et al. 2019) for their potentially negative effects on people’s well-being (Kasser and Ryan 1996). This is particularly prevalent in societies with high levels of uncertainty and among people from low socio-economic backgrounds, who may turn to materialism to keep up with normative pressures and regain some control over their personal domains of life (Chang and Arkin 2002), such as in South Africa, where poverty and unemployment are high, over half the population lives in chronic or transient poverty, and recent entrants to the middle class may feel particularly vulnerable (Burger et al. 2015). This tension between the pressure to promote and discourage aspirational consumption in a socio-economically volatile society led journalists to feel a sense of role conflict. Their dilemma also suggests that on the one hand, driven by commercial imperatives journalists have bought into the ‘*illusio*’ of exposing audiences with a ‘taste of luxury’ to goods that allow them to perform legitimate culture, but on the other hand they also actively challenge the ‘*game*’ by discouraging such consumption (Bourdieu 1984).

4.2.3. Providing aspiration

In an important divergence from journalists in more prosperous economies, lifestyle journalists in this study identified a role which has thus far received much less attention in scholarship. Journalists overwhelmingly spoke of the need to provide aspiration through stories and consumer goods that audiences could aspire toward. While this role is similar to “providing

audiences with exemplars of desired lifestyles” (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), it was explicitly connected to journalists’ awareness of social class distinctions among audiences, and was among the most dominant role conceptions: “you need to be able to always have aspirational audiences” (James-WH-M). Another journalist said: “magazines are all about selling the dream, so it’s kind of how we differentiate the different markets” (Khanyisile-BL-F). While class was a key defining factor in how lifestyle journalists conceived of their roles, class inevitably intersects with race. South Africa’s class inequality is deeply rooted in its history of economic and racial oppression under apartheid (Seeking 2008), as one journalist observed, “our country, it’s very racially divided, because the economic gap is still very... predominantly White South Africans are higher LSMs just because of the years and years of inequality” (Kassy-WH-F).

Journalists’ function as cultural intermediaries across the class spectrum became most evident in this role. Although journalists wanted to expose a broad spectrum of audiences to products and services that range in affordability, this was nevertheless confined to those with access to economic capital. Thus, confirming this study’s assumptions, journalists targeted inspiration and aspiration to specific class groups, which again inevitably intersects with race. The Oxford Dictionary defines *inspiration* as the stimulation to engage in something new or creative, while *aspiration* refers to the desire or hope of engaging in or accomplishing something (Oxford Dictionary 2021). Echoing this distinction, for lifestyle journalists in this study, inspiration was about “provid[ing] affluent South Africans with ideas to go away for the weekend or for holiday” (Jake-WH-M), while aspiration was targeted at people “who aren’t necessarily rich [...] not in the luxury market, but [...] are working and they still have things that they want to acquire, but they are not kind of low LSM where they can’t afford certain things” (Thembile-BL-F). Inspiration was for the elite who had sufficient capital volume to consume lifestyle products and services for pure pleasure rather than crude display (Bourdieu 1984). Aspiration was targeted at the emerging and established economic middle class (Burger et al. 2015) or the ‘nouveau riche’ – audiences with relative economic capital to spend on performing their lifestyle tastes (Bourdieu 1984). However, “people from fully disadvantaged backgrounds whose key purpose is to put food on the table” (Sibongile-BL-F), meaning, the working class who have a “taste of necessity” (Bourdieu 1984) were not targeted. In fact, as findings discussed further below (in Section 4.3) reveal, lifestyle (but also political) journalists not only struggled to imagine audiences marginalized at the intersection of class and race (i.e. low LSM, working-class audiences, Black, Coloured), but they also struggled to imagine how these audiences could find any relevance in lifestyle journalism.

A further key finding is that journalists sought to provide aspiration in two distinct ways: (1) through consumerism and acknowledging gradations of affordability, which relates to lifestyle journalism's domains of consumption and identity; and (2) through psychological and emotional motivation and hope, which relates to the domain of emotion (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). However, both reflect Bourdieu's sociology of social class and social psychology's approach to aspiration as the pursuit of psychological growth (Ryan and Deci 2000). They are interconnected – consumption, identity and emotion feed into each other – but can be delineated.

4.2.3.1. Aspiration through consumer 'imitation'

Here aspiration was about “gear-porn” and “showing products that are really aspirational, but out of most people's reach” (Gary-CO-M). Respondents said that South Africans had a “dreaming mentality [...] we are spending on shoes that we can't afford” (Kassy-WH-F) and spoke of “people in the townships who probably have a better phone than I have [...] things like that allow them the visual status” (Rick-WH-M). An editor problematized this phenomenon: “everybody aspires to a level of dignity and recognition in society [...] I think South Africans in general are struggling to maintain their sense of dignity and self-respect for that matter, and often these physical things are a manifestation of that” (Gary-CO-M). Aspiration here serves as a bridge between consumption and identity (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Extrinsic aspirational goals that seek external validation (Kasser and Ryan 1996) fulfilled through conspicuous consumption allows individuals to perform a desired identity (Goffman 1959) and visually position themselves within a desired social class (Bourdieu 1984). Aware of gradations of affordability, journalists expose audiences to luxury goods that are affordable to some and aspirational to others. To the ‘nouveau riche’ they extend goods that allow them to “fake the quality in the sense that the wallpaper is still as beautiful but it's only 500 Rand [or ZAR, South Africa's currency] a meter” (Rachel-WH-F) and thus encourage this class faction to engage in what Bourdieu (1984: 31) describes as “naïve exhibitionism” through the “illusory form of bluff or imitation” (Bourdieu 1984: 251).

4.2.3.2. Aspiration through motivation and hope

This type of aspiration involved allowing audiences “to see people like them who have achieved stuff, people who come from the same kind of neighbourhoods they come from, the same kind of circumstances they come from, and have accomplished or reached certain stages of their life's journey and their work journey” (Kabelo-BL-M). Here, the focus is placed on the

psychological and emotional domain of lifestyle journalism (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) which relates to intrinsic aspirational goals such as self-growth (Kasser and Ryan 1996). Aspiration was about projecting a hopeful, desirable future, however, again it was about projecting onto the middle-class factions and not those with a “taste of necessity” (Bourdieu 1984). Another journalist said, “they [working-class audiences] might get inspired because everyone I’ve ever written about started from the bottom, but their bottom isn’t the same bottom as the fully disadvantaged group” (Sibongile-BL-F). This comment highlights South Africa’s nuanced class structure (Seeking and Nattrass 2015), where the working-class spectrum may range from the ‘fluid’ middle-class (Melber 2017) including recent entrants to those who have almost no economic capital (‘the fully disadvantaged’) (Burger et al. 2015). So too, aspiration has a racial dimension. One respondent said their magazine was “definitely not aimed at a Black readership, because the view is always that the Black readership aspires to be like the White upper class” (Patrick-WH-M). This view is echoed in past literature suggesting that in South Africa, the media target race and class groups strategically (Schieferdecker 2017).

The above discussion highlights two things. First, the capital composition and volume of participant lifestyle journalists and editors confirms they are a cultural (and economic) middle class (albeit accumulated not inherited) and have a critical function as ‘responsible’ and somewhat conflicted cultural intermediaries (Hovden 2008). Second, mediating the worlds of luxury and inequality suggests that journalists, although elites, relate to disadvantaged audiences with compassion and empathy, and privileged audiences as a ‘distant mass’ to have pure pleasure imparted on (Hovden 2008; see also Bourdieu 1984). This divide is particularly evident in their roles, such as the mindful marketer and providing aspiration, but also in their orientation toward political roles, discussed in the next section.

4.2.4. The political in lifestyle journalism: Blurring role boundaries

The lifestyle journalists interviewed for this study named several roles traditionally associated with political journalists in journalism scholarship that also reflect roles identified by the political journalists. Specifically, journalists spoke of the need to be an advocate, change agent, educator and mediator – roles located within the advocative-radical and developmental-educative dimensions (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) where the political journalists in this study also identified many of their key role conceptions. This is a critical finding as, historically, journalism scholarship has tended to neglect exploring the value of softer forms of journalism such as lifestyle journalism which speaks to the domain of everyday life, while simultaneously prioritizing political journalism as having a key function in society and the domain of

citizenship. This has resulted not only in an imbalance between role conceptions research between political and lifestyle journalists, but also in an artificial separation of political and everyday life (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2019; Fürsich 2012). The separation between everyday and political life is also visible in the hierarchical binary between political and lifestyle journalism perpetuated not only among journalists themselves (which become clearer in Chapter 6), but also among journalism scholars (van Zoonen 1998; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). However, as the findings of this study indicate, lifestyle journalists' role conceptions challenge these boundaries by highlighting lifestyle journalism's political utility and public value, the fourth and under-researched strand of lifestyle journalism and everyday life, alongside consumption, identity, and emotion (Hanusch 2019).

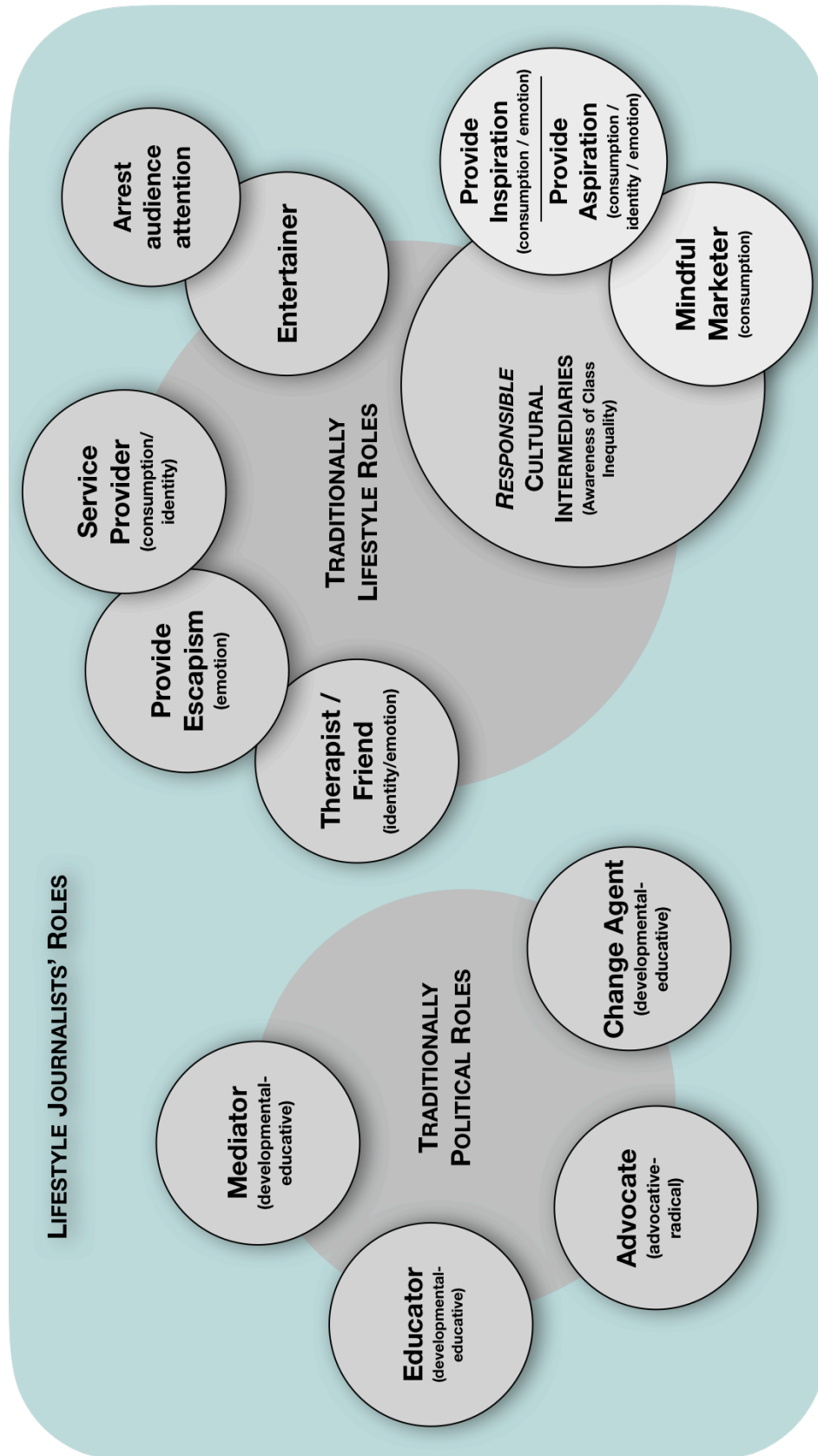
One recurring theme among the lifestyle journalists was a need to celebrate and acknowledge Black culture, by promoting a “strong Black narrative” and telling “authentic African stories” (Thembile-BL-F) which speak to the **advocate** role. Here respondents also wanted to celebrate local and national identity through stories on innovation and design, by bringing “international attention to the country” (Clive-WH-M), “getting African designers out there” (Khanyisile-BL-F), and encouraging audiences to “champion local flavours” and food (Kassy-WH-F). Closely related, in their role as **change agent**, journalists actively sought to challenge stereotypical narratives of Black culture as defined by the traditionally White-dominated media. There was also a desire to empower women by helping “dismantle the patriarchy” (Heidi-WH-F), making “South African women feel proud and safe” (Sara-WH-F), addressing the “socio-political connotations of fashion” (Chloe-WH-F), “disrupt[ing] beauty standards” and raising “awareness around Black transgender women” (Heidi-WH-F). As **mediators**, journalists hoped to bridge class differences by creating a “sense that women, no matter where they are from are dealing with the same stuff” (Sara-WH-F). Journalists also sought to **educate** people by raising their awareness of “the sustainability of chocolate” (Kassy-WH-F) and the “drought in the cape” (Maria-WH-F). South Africa's context as an emerging democracy confronting societal challenges may explain the strong presence of political roles, or the critical dimension of lifestyle journalism that contributes to public quality (Fürsich 2012; Hanusch 2019) or the bridging of the ‘popular’ and ‘quality’ binary (Costera Meijer 2001). In many ways the findings of this study reflect some evidence from past studies that lifestyle journalists seek to advocate and scrutinize lifestyle industries (Hanusch 2019), report critically on the detrimental effects of travel on the environment (McGaurr 2012), promote cross-cultural knowledge exchange and mediation through travel (Hanusch 2011), contribute to nation

building through food journalism (Duffy and Yang 2012), as well as mobilize audiences to advocate for change in the field of health (Hinnant et al. 2016).

In South Africa, a country where overcoming racial tensions and economic inequality is on the political and public agenda, it makes sense that lifestyle journalists also express development journalism values (Kanyegirire 2006; de Beer et al. 2016; Wasserman and de Beer 2005; Rodny-Gumede 2015) in seeking to empower marginalized groups, advocate for their needs, and bridge societal divisions. Above all, these results point to an integration of journalism's otherwise oppositional relationship with political and everyday life and the need to rethink it in future scholarship on journalistic roles. As the findings presented here illustrate, continuing to separate lifestyle and political journalism in studying journalists' role conceptions has become conceptually and empirically difficult to justify. Rather than seeing the two as separate, as suggested in past theorizations (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), it appears they are somewhat intricately interwoven – the personal is political and vice versa (see Figure 2).

This argument, of course, is drawn based on how lifestyle journalists reflect on their roles in isolation or independently, without explicitly situating themselves and their roles in society vis-à-vis those of political journalists. Once this dimension is added to the self-reflection, somewhat different views emerge that both reinforce and challenge the hierarchy between lifestyle and political journalists (illustrated and discussed in Chapter 6).

Figure 2: Lifestyle Journalists' Role Conceptions



ROLE CONFLICT and ROLE-BOUNDARY BLURRING: Lifestyle journalists experience some role conflict in their role as *mindful marketer* in having to both promote and discourage or moderate the (excessive) consumption of lifestyle products and services. Lifestyle journalists also expressed several role conceptions traditionally associated with political journalists.

4.3. POLITICAL AND LIFESTYLE JOURNALISTS' IMAGINATIONS OF THEIR AUDIENCES AND THEIR EXPECTATIONS

Scholarship has primarily explored journalistic role conceptions (Hanitzsch et al. 2011; Weaver and Willnat 2012) and audience expectations (Costera Meijer 2007, 2010) and, more recently, both at the same time (Loosen et al. 2020; Schmidt and Loosen 2015; Tsfaty et al. 2006). However, studies have rarely examined what journalists believe their audiences expect, especially in light of journalists' access to various social media and metric feedback mechanisms through which audiences can express their expectations (e.g. reader comments, web analytics data) (Tandoc 2014; Ferrucci and Wolfgang 2021). That journalists have such insights nowadays suggests that their perceptions of audiences' expectations will reflect audiences' actual expectations fairly accurately, and, as this study shows, to a large extent this is true. Triangulating various perceptions provides a richer understanding of the audience-journalist relationship and greater insight into how journalists imagine their audiences, beyond journalists' vague imaginations, fantasies or abstractions (Gans 2004; Heinonen 2011; Pool and Shulman 1959) that saw audiences stereotypically as disinterested, unintelligent, and sensation-seeking (Donsbach 1981). The political and lifestyle journalists in this study targeted primarily middle-upper-class audiences, across race lines, with a skew towards men (political journalism) and women (lifestyle journalism), and routinely neglected to target or speak to working-class, poor audiences with limited economic capital. Political journalists believed that audiences experience journalism as negative and therefore expected journalists to provide more positive news and integrate the human-interest element to a greater extent. They also believed audiences had very low trust in news media, perceiving it as sensationalist and excessively market-oriented, partisan and polarized, advancing White interests and ideals, and failing to support democratic change and societal improvement. Lifestyle journalists believed audiences expected many of the role conceptions they themselves held, such as inspiration, escapism and advice. However, they also expressed beliefs about their audiences' expectations that reflect technological and economic changes facing journalism, specifically the expectation for advertorial transparency and respect for audience time and attention. These findings are illustrated below and discussed in relation to existing scholarship.

4.3.1. Targeting the aspirational middle and upper class, neglecting the working class

Asked what informs their perceptions of their audiences' expectations, political journalists mentioned their family and friends as providing valuable insight, as well as digital technology

and social media feedback mechanisms, such as reader comments (whether on Facebook or Twitter) and analytics data (Ferrucci and Wolfgang 2021; Graham and Wright 2015; Tandoc 2014) that most of the journalists in this study relied on to a lesser or greater extent. This points to the increasing importance of web analytics data to guide journalists' knowledge about their audiences and expectations, not so much as vague, distorted, or imagined assumptions and stereotypes (Gans 2004; Heinonen 2011; Donsbach 1981) but as “statistically aggregated commodities” (Lewis and Westlund 2015). That family and friends were a key source of journalists' imaginations of their audiences is of particular relevance here as it suggests they are more likely to see them as homophilous or as an extension of their own social worlds (Coddington et al. 2021). Indeed, this was the case, especially in terms of social class.

Both political and lifestyle journalists targeted almost identical audiences and held similar perceptions of them, noting that different media outlets or organisations target different social class groups or LSMs. Besides the journalists and editors working for the two tabloid newspapers included in this study, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Voice*, political and lifestyle journalists largely targeted **middle-class or aspirant, and elite audiences**. That is, journalists spoke to and thus reflected the worldview of South Africa's ‘suburban’ middle-upper-class audiences (Friedman 2011). That journalists target these class groups reflects the argument that journalists themselves are members of the cultural bourgeois with an elite-class habitus, and as such can more effectively act as cultural intermediaries between the space of cultural production (news) and a public that reflects a similar elite-class habitus (Hovden 2008; Bourdieu 1984). The political journalists in this study claimed that they spoke to “higher up audiences” (Bongani-BL-M), “middle-class Africans” (Samuel-WH-M), and “the higher LSMs in the country” (Tania-WH-F). The middle-class audiences' habitus was defined by being urban, and “quite well-read [...] wealthy, intelligent” (Mandy-WH-F), “literate, critical thinking, demanding high quality, well-researched, first-rate journalism” (Stuart-WH-M) and “well-educated, plugged in, kind of more affluent” (Tania-WH-F). In other words, targeted audiences had both high cultural capital (literacy, critical thinking, education/intelligence) and also (aspirant) economic capital (wealth, affluence), which predisposed them to seeking a certain type of ‘quality’ cultural product (Bourdieu 1984, 1986). Political journalists also noted changes over the past couple of decades in the gender and racial make-up of their target audiences, often referring to the emerging Black middle class (Burger et al. 2015). As one political journalist said, their audiences “used to be a White male, 50, and now it's shifted and it's probably a 45-year-old Black male” (Adrian-WH-M). They were now targeting a “much larger Black middle class” (Stuart-WH-M), and a younger more “aspirant” (Sibusiso-BL-M)

or “up-and-coming middle class” (Arundhati-IN-F) readership, however, they still had a limited female readership, which reflects past studies that women tend to avoid news because they perceive it to be a masculine domain and thus irrelevant (Toff and Palmer 2020).

Lifestyle journalists likewise targeted an audience with varying but significant access to cultural but more importantly economic capital or disposable income to expend on lifestyle services and products. Lifestyle journalism seeks to, among other things, portray and market to audiences a range of lifestyles (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013) that are inspirational and aspirational for different class groups. To be effective, lifestyle journalists target audiences who possess not only the adequate cultural capital (ability to recognize, appropriate and claim exclusive and distinctive symbols of a desired or occupied class) to appreciate the symbolic value of these lifestyles, but perhaps more importantly, possess adequate economic capital to pursue and enact them. That is, arguably, audiences may have the taste for the portrayed lifestyles but not the means to participate in them, and vice versa (Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012). However, journalism’s economic survival rests on audiences’ economic participation, not cognitively-held tastes. As one journalist said: “I’m thinking of people who are probably earning 20,000 Rand a month and upwards” (Maria-WH-F), which they say targets those in LSM groups 7-10, because anyone below that level does not have adequate disposable income. According to the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), a single person who earns this much is in the top 1% of the population’s income distribution. An editor echoed this view in saying, “the truth is, that most people in LSM 5 don’t have disposable income to buy magazines at all, so we end up more in the LSM 7 bracket, up to 10” (Gary-CO-M). Other journalists said they were targeting “entrepreneurs and professionals” (Kabelo-BL-M), men and women “who are in the beginning stages of leading or who aspire to lead successful lives and enjoy nice things in life” (Sibongile-BL-F). As is the case among political journalists, lifestyle journalists also targeted audiences with adequate cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1986), whether established or aspirational. In many ways these descriptions reflect well-established arguments within South African journalism studies that the mainstream media speaks primarily to the suburban middle-class audience and reflects a middle-class worldview (Friedman 2011). Like political journalists, lifestyle journalists too are members of the cultural bourgeois, reflecting to their audiences their own habitus and the dominant cultural vision of the field (Hovden 2008). As one lifestyle journalist said: “the people who put together the titles are probably almost like a microcosm of their target market anyway” (Zanele-BL-F). In terms of race and gender, lifestyle journalists also sought to target “a young, aspirational, Black community” (Zanele-BL-F), the emergence of which was perceived by journalists as a

racial equalizer across people with the same economic capital, education and lifestyle interests. As this journalist observed, her magazine targets a “higher percentage of a Black readership but they are on the same LSM as the White readership [...] so I don’t think it becomes a colour thing at all, it becomes an LSM thing” (Andrea-WH-F). This perception, however, neglects the impact of intersectional identity and contradicts findings that have shown the South African media portray the Black middle class, on the one hand, positively – signalling a racially-equal, class-based society (implied by this journalist’s comment) – but also negatively – referring to members of the Black middle class as ‘black diamonds’ to imply heightened materialism, conspicuous consumption, and pretentious imitation of Western lifestyles (Iqani 2017; Kitis et al. 2018). What this suggests is that lifestyle journalism arguably targets the Black middle class instrumentally in order to reach a broader, economically capable audience able to expend on lifestyles, however, their racial identity might simultaneously be used to question their belonging to the middle class.

The intersection of class-race-gender becomes particularly visible in the claim that certain lifestyle publications primarily target White, wealthy women, because of the assumption that all lower classes, and all other races aspire towards whiteness and wealth. High-end luxury magazines – with the holidays, hotels, and interior designs they pitch – however, were perceived by journalists as “just too elitist, too White, too exclusive” (Jake-WH-M) and with “a White middle-class skew” (Donna-WH-F). Some of these magazines in particular envisioned and targeted a wealthy, older woman (in their 50s and 60s), who lives in a “super affluent area” (Patrick-WH-M), and “has a wealthy husband and she lives in a nice house and doesn’t have to worry about anything and is probably still stuck in quite a traditional way” (Julia-WH-F). As noted earlier, magazines also cater to White audiences. For journalists, this view stems not only from pedagogical strategies in journalism education, but also journalism ideology and newsroom socialization, which reinforces beliefs and value systems rooted in whiteness and privilege, so that newsworthiness and news-interest is judged on what is familiar to the (White) journalists (what they know) and their predispositions or tastes (what they love) (Aleman 2014; Bourdieu 1984). Black journalists whose habitus (taste and familiarity) may be different are nevertheless socialized into adopting the dominant ideology of the newsroom (Parisi 1998; Aleman 2014). This means that, if a house with a white picket fence on a large property were the lived experiences of a White journalists’ habitus, then this reality is projected onto and assumed to be desirable to their audiences, including those with a marginalized habitus. This may well be the type of lifestyle audiences across race and class aspire to, however, lifestyle journalism neglects to question its own White-elite bias and

examine alternative lifestyles or counter-cultures that may exist among and be revered by marginalized audiences. Exploring these areas was beyond the scope of this study, but the findings highlighted here call for further research in the future, particularly because lifestyle journalists routinely excluded marginalized audiences and struggled to imagine how lifestyle journalism might even begin to speak to them.

4.3.1.1. The exclusion of working-class, poor audiences

Except for journalists working for tabloid newspapers, neither political nor lifestyle journalists spoke of working-class audiences as their key target audience and furthermore, they struggled to imagine how these audiences may relate to the journalism they produce. Such views echo to some extent past findings that journalists recognize journalism's elitist logic and their need to better address the needs and concerns of marginalized audiences (Rodny-Gumede 2015; Corcoran 2004). The journalists in this study recognized similar critiques, and some noted that they should be more empathetic and sympathetic to the needs of the poor and working-class audiences; however, they cited several obstacles to doing so, that they felt were beyond their control, many retorting that this is simply the way it is. Specifically for political journalists, the unaffordability of newspapers, lack of access to affordable Internet data, and language, were a hindrance to the inclusion of working-class audiences. That is, most working-class audiences were seen as having insufficient economic capital to expend on 'quality' newspapers – such as the *Mail & Guardian*, which costs 39 ZAR (€2.30) for a weekly print edition or 99 ZAR (€5.80) for a monthly digital subscription; had insufficient economic capital to expend on costly Internet data to consume news online; and were linguistically excluded by the majority of newspapers that publish in English or Afrikaans to audiences who otherwise speak as their mother tongue one of nine other official languages (i.e. isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga, Siswati, Tshivenda, isiNdebele). As journalists said: “we have to be real about the fact, who is spending 40 Rand a week on a newspaper” (Kamila-IN-F). Another digital political journalist said that quality newspapers are seen as a luxury “that doesn't always make economic sense” and went on to say she doesn't write for the “low LSMs [...] because they don't have the Internet” (Khulekani-BL-F). Another journalist claimed: “each time we talk about news and journalism, we are focusing on the elite, newspapers in English, the best broadcasting organisations broadcast in English” (Philisiwe-BL-F). Beyond the language of use itself, journalists believed audiences with lower education levels may find quality news “really hard to read” and therefore inaccessible or may not even know the newspaper exists to begin with (Samuel-WH-M).

Lifestyle journalists had similar assumptions, believing that working-class audiences do not consume lifestyle journalism because it portrays lifestyles that in no way reflect the lived reality of their marginalized audiences. Furthermore, journalists expressed stereotypes about how their audiences might feel and react to such lifestyle journalism content. As some journalists observed, “most of them [audiences] would feel complete anger and jealousy if anything” (Rachel-WH-F) or ask themselves, “why does that exist but I don’t have anything and I’m not a part of that” (Julia-WH-F). Editors believed that working-class audiences would see “nothing, pretty pictures [that] could do harm” (Jake-WH-M) and said they would “be surprised if she even picked the magazine up” (Patrick-WH-M). Here, the issue was not just the affordability of the magazine or the lifestyles it portrays but also the ability of marginalized audiences to comprehend, relate to, or aspire towards such lifestyles. In other words, marginalized audiences and their habitus were perceived to be so far removed from dominant culture that they had no capacity to imagine their way out of it. As one journalist said: “can they really relate to the fashion? Probably not” (Thembile-BL-F). Working-class audiences might “immediately assume that it’s not really possible for them to reach because like I said, their goal is to put food on the table” (Sibongile-BL-F). As findings on audience expectations of lifestyle journalists outlined below will show, many of these assumptions and beliefs were also held by middle- and upper-class audiences, which makes sense as they comprise the dominant target group and possess the dominant cultural and economic capital of those who produce lifestyle journalism (Hovden 2008). However, as will also become apparent below, these beliefs inaccurately reflect those held by working-class audiences who are, in fact, more than able to relate to lifestyle journalism content, and derive value and varied forms of aspiration from it.

Both political and lifestyle journalists accepted this as a consequence of the media system, social inequality, and the economic pressures facing journalism, saying these issues are much larger than them and they have little control over them. As these journalists said: “it’s not our target market so I can’t really stress about it... it sounds awful” (Rachel-WH-F), and “it’s not intentional, it is what it is... yes, it’s quite sad” (Donna-WH-F). Although some lifestyle journalists saw the hypothetical value in exposing working-class audiences to lifestyle content, they felt that the economic pressures of journalism did not allow for this. As these editors said, this comes down to a conflict “between the social imperative and the business imperative” (Kabelo-BL-M) where the latter outweighs the former, because the magazines’ advertising and marketing teams focus on audiences with the cultural and economic capital for whom “the lifestyle that’s being sold to them is easily accessible” (Zanele-BL-F). In addition,

they said, the editors' performance is measured from a business perspective and not the social impact they have on their readers. Very few lifestyle journalists believed that working-class audiences might also find inspiration and aspiration in lifestyle journalism, both in terms of consumption and emotional and psychological motivation and hope. As these journalists remarked: "you are still writing it for the high LSM, but you have a surprisingly large number of people from lower LSM buying it" (Rick-WH-M), and "we tell positive Black stories. Some of the people come from a very impoverished background, and so if you are reading with that kind of mentality then yes there is definitely value" (Thembile-BL-F). Another editor said working-class audiences might find value in stories "where the focus is on celebrating literally any kind of Black woman who is trying to do the best with the little that they have, so maybe to that extent, yes" (Zanele-BL-F). These atypical and somewhat uncertain reflections among lifestyle journalists more accurately begin to reflect the expectations that working-class audiences had about lifestyle journalism, as illustrated in Section 5.2.2.

In many ways, the findings outlined here echo the argument that journalists as the cultural elite perceive their middle-class audiences with detachment, as a distant mass, in the same way that they might relate to cultural products they perceive as pure, pleasurable, discrete and understated, with neutral distance (Bourdieu 1984; Hovden 2008). In doing so, they illustrate an assuredness and conviction that the equally elite audiences they speak to will possess the same innate appreciation for understated cultural symbolism (news quality, portrayed lifestyles), that the journalists themselves possess and convey. As the cultural elite, political and lifestyle journalists do not possess the 'barbaric taste' or empathy towards the working-class necessary to understand their needs and interests (Bourdieu 1984; Hovden 2008), illustrated in journalists' inability to imagine what value working-class audiences might find in 'quality' news or lifestyle journalism.

4.3.2. What political journalists imagine audiences expect from them

In this section and the following (4.3.3) journalists' imaginations of their audiences' expectations as examined. When political journalists were asked what they believed audiences expect of them, they cited multiple well-established journalistic norms and values, such as accuracy and truth (Hanitzsch et al. 2013), as well as roles such as to inform, to disseminate quality news that is relevant to their audiences, and to provide analysis and alternative perspectives on an issue (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Weaver and Wilhoit 1986, 1996; Weaver et al. 2007), but also to speak to them in a language they understand and not to speak down to them or treat them in a condescending way. However, above all, political journalists

overwhelmingly believed that audiences perceived the media to be too negative and expected them to *provide positive news and a greater focus on the human-interest element*. Political journalists believed audiences thought “the media is very negative, that they only see bad news in the media” (Tamir-CO-M) and that they “don’t want to read about death, they don’t want to read about trauma” (Arundhati-IN-F). This belief to some extent accurately reflects past studies that have shown audiences experience news as negative (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; Poindexter et al. 2010; McIntyre 2019; Kalogeropoulos 2017) and find news to be more relevant and easier to connect to when it is dramatic and vivid, promotes a sense of community, and includes humour, empathy, and the human-interest element in events (Costera Meijer 2012; Bird 1998). However, journalists also dismissed this expectation as inconsistent, arguing that audiences may claim this but in reality, they seek out negative news, especially about death and other people’s struggles, which journalists believed shocks, saddens, and forces audiences to reflect on their own lives. Journalists pointed to analytics data as evidence of this contradiction. Web analytics have indeed provided journalists with detailed, real-time, aggregate data on audiences’ behaviour with stories (clicks, time spent), which in turn informs journalists’ editorial decision-making processes (Hanusch 2016; Tandoc 2015; Lewis and Westlund 2015), including how newsworthy they believe a story to be and whether/how they consequently position it on their website (Lamot and Van Aelst 2020). Another journalist pointed to an experiment conducted at their newspaper, where only positive news stories were published, but, as he said, “no one read them. Audiences think they want good news stories. They don’t want good news stories. They click on the bad news stories” (Samuel-WH-M). The belief here was that negative news is what makes people reflect on their own suffering and feel connected to others’ suffering by, for instance, reading about “the difficulties of another community” (Richard-BL-M). Here journalists believed that audiences expected and would benefit from stories that were positive in the sense that they emphasized the human-interest angle. Audiences want to know, “how is the crime really affecting the people on the ground, what do these people have to go through, what are their lived experience, because there is always a human side to everything” (Arundhati-IN-F). Such expectations have particularly been detected among marginalized audiences in past studies (Wenzel et al. 2018; Varma 2020) and reflect a more ‘feminine’ or ‘feminized’ approach to journalism where the human interest and greater emotional involvement in storytelling is emphasized (van Zoonen 1998; Ross and Carter 2011). However, these findings also begin to point to a paradox between journalists arguing that audiences seek out negative news and audiences who claim political journalism is too negative, which prompts news avoidance, as will become evident in Chapter 5.

In addition to more positive news and the human-interest element, journalists also believed audiences' expectations were connected to *very low trust in news media*. On several occasions, journalists used the term 'suspicious' to describe how they believed audiences perceived them, claiming also that they are aware people dislike journalists, and that younger journalists entering the profession may be confronted by intense loathing. As these journalists said: "I don't think journalists are particularly trusted" (Robby-WH-M) and "I imagine that there would be a lot of suspicion about who journalists are and why they chose the stories they do and why they ignore a lot of stories that are relevant to specific communities" (Samuel-WH-M). Trust in mainstream news media, especially in light of the fake news crisis, has been declining the world over (Engelhofer and Lecheler 2019), however, scholars have argued that trust in news is moderated not only by the expectation that journalist will tell the truth but also by the agreement between journalists and audiences about what constitutes news (Coleman 2012). The political journalists in this study highlighted several perceptions or reasons for why this agreement may be misaligned, contributing to declining trust.

1) Political journalists are *sensationalists driven by commercial imperatives*: journalists believed that audiences saw them as motivated primarily by the need to sell news even if it meant fabricating stories and deceiving audiences. As one journalist said, "often people don't see journalists as anything other than wanting to sell the news" (Arundhati-IN-F). Others believed audiences thought journalists "fabricate stories" (Sindisiwe-BL-F), "cook stories" (Msizi-BL-M), "are making things up" (Shaun-BL-M), and are "trying to stir chaos" (Wandile-BL-F).

2) Political journalists are *partisan, polarized and partial*: journalists felt that they have been used by political factions to further agendas and publish misinformation, and in doing so have contributed to polarization, partisanship, and the impression of a lack of impartiality; something they believed audiences are very much aware of. As one journalist said: "you literally insert yourself in ANC internal dynamics, you insert yourself in DA party political dynamics, so, people see through all of that [...] they are attacking us because they know what they are talking about" (Thabisa-BL-F). Another said: "there is massive polarization, there has been misinformation that has led to very divisive, damaging events [...] so there is a very fractured relationship between journalism and its public" (Stuart-WH-M).

3) Political journalists are *advancing White monopoly interests*: journalists claimed that mainstream media that are White-owned and with boards and management teams dominated by White people, are "seen as White monopoly capital, as literally only advancing the interest of White business [and] audiences see us for what we are" (Thabisa-BL-F). Another

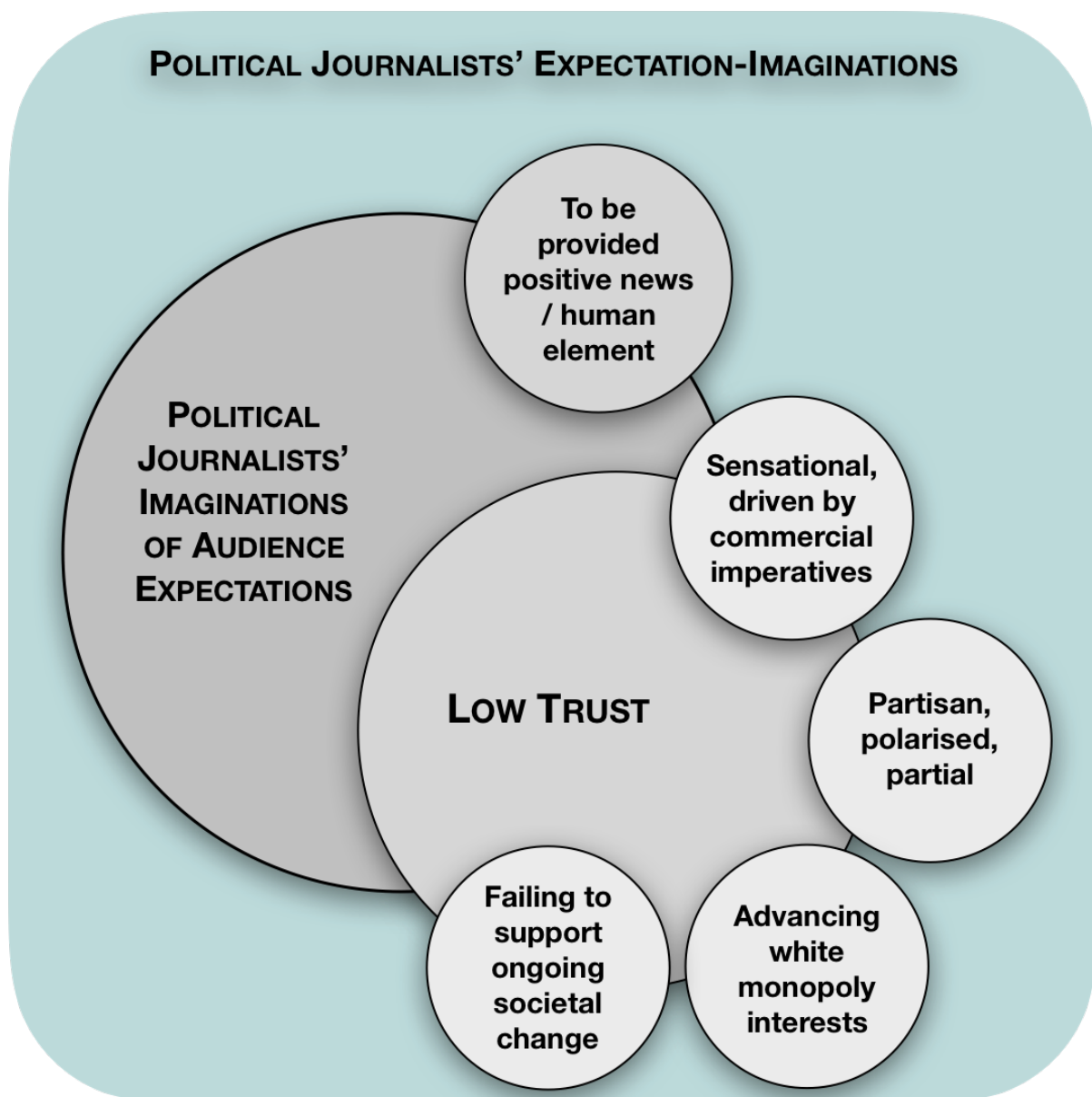
journalist working for a major news organisation believed audiences perceived her as “a condoner of colonialism” (Wandile-BL-F).

4) Political journalists in post-apartheid South Africa have *not fulfilled their role of supporting ongoing societal change*: journalists stressed that certain parts of the media played an important role in bringing down apartheid, and that audiences believe journalism has failed to continue to challenge the racial and economic inequalities that persist and to improve society. As one journalist said: “there is a growing impatience in South Africa with the fact that very little has changed on a systemic level and we are part of that, because it is presumed that we will be able to bring change” (Nora-WH-F). At the same time, the apartheid regime used media “to back up their oppressive bullshit” (Chan-CO-M) – this journalist believes audiences still view the media as allies of the powerful (see Figure 3).

The above outlined beliefs reflect ongoing debates in South African journalism studies and mainstream media that revolve around two key issues: the role of the media in nurturing an emerging democracy by supporting national development versus acting as an adversarial watchdog which purports to report critically in the public interest (Wasserman and de Beer 2005; de Beer et al. 2016; Rodny-Gumede 2015); and about the media’s inherent racism, perpetuation of stereotypes, advancing of White ideals, and being a voice for the middle class while neglecting the voices of the poor (Friedman 2011; Durrheim et al. 2005; Wasserman et al. 2018). The journalists in this study also countered that many of these perceived beliefs were unfounded and an outcome of *audiences not understanding the mechanisms of news work* and how journalism functions, and specifically what journalistic work practices entail, which gives audience the perception that journalists purposely skew or misrepresent their stories. Journalists emphasised that audiences had little awareness of the influences that impact their work and the many hands their stories pass through before the final product reaches the public. This is “why they sometimes criticize us so heavily, because they maybe don’t understand the entire value chain of how news is put together” (Sibusiso-BL-M) said one journalist. Another journalist who received a lot of Twitter criticism over a “very misogynistic headline” said: “my readers don’t know that I don’t write headlines. My readers don’t know that my story goes through six other hands after I have put it in” (Thabisa-BL-F). Journalists also claimed this made speaking to citizens more difficult because audiences “have an expectation of what the journalists will do with that information” (Samuel-WH-M) and when it does not reflect those expectations, audiences – especially working-class audiences – feel exploited and become distrustful, and therefore more suspicious of engaging with the media. Journalists stressed that economic constraints make it all the more difficult to devote sustained time and attention to

underheard communities, which, as past studies indicate, can strengthen their relationship with audiences and increase trust (Garman and Malila 2017; Wenzel et al. 2018). As will become evident in Chapter 5, this presumed lack of awareness of journalistic processes on the part of audiences is challenged, as audiences in this study show they are well aware of the editorial pressures that journalists are confronted with on a daily basis. Likewise, political journalists' perceptions or imaginations of their audiences' expectations, to a large extent reflect the expectations audiences express about political journalists.

Figure 3: Political Journalists' Expectation-Imaginations



POLITICAL JOURNALISTS' EXPECTATION-IMAGINATIONS: Journalists imagine their audiences hold five distinct expectations, four of which they believe are connected to audiences' low trust in news media.

4.3.3. What lifestyle journalists imagine audiences expect from them

The way lifestyle journalists imagined their audiences' expectations was in many ways an extension of how they understood their own role conceptions. Broadly, lifestyle journalists believed their audiences expected aspiration and inspiration, escapism and positive experiences, advice, friendship, and learning (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) but also transparency regarding editorial/advertorial boundaries, and to have their time respected. As will become evident in Section 5.2, many of these beliefs also accurately reflect the expectations audiences had of lifestyle journalists.

To be provided with *aspirational and inspirational content* was an expectation that journalists believed was among the more important among their audiences. Here, as also outlined in relation to journalistic role conceptions, inspiration and aspiration had a class aspect. To gain inspiration, journalists believed, audiences wanted to discover and expand their experiences through new products: "people would constantly be looking to us for new products" (Julia-WH-F), but they also believed that audiences look for new ways to appreciate a product or service already known to them. Another said: "my readers love those twists; those are the recipes that go viral [...] they look for those forms of inspiration" (Kassy-WH-F). However, journalists also believed audiences expected to be exposed to lifestyles they could aspire to, and this was something they believed emerging middle-class audiences expected in particular. As one journalist said, consumer culture is influenced by Western and specifically American consumer culture and brands, saying there is a "big aspirational market in South Africa" and that "they [audiences] are certainly interested in the outputs of Western consumerism" (Rick-WH-M).

Lifestyle journalists also believed their audiences expected *to be entertained and provided with a positive experience*. This entailed offering them content that could amuse, relax, surprise, and humour them; content that was fun and easy to digest; and content that promoted distraction and escape from negative influences. Similar to political journalists' perceptions, lifestyle journalists believed that their audiences experience political news too negatively. As one journalist said: "I'm sure you are familiar with that expression, compassion fatigue, and I really think that people run such a risk of becoming fatigued and then the consequences of that are terrible" (Sara-WH-F). Another journalist said audiences expect "escapism [...] from life, from work, from everything, from hard news and the bad stories" (Donna-WH-F).

Lifestyle journalists also believed audiences expected to be *provided with advice and tips*, whether on gardening, cooking, or career and finances, and "tips for how they can be

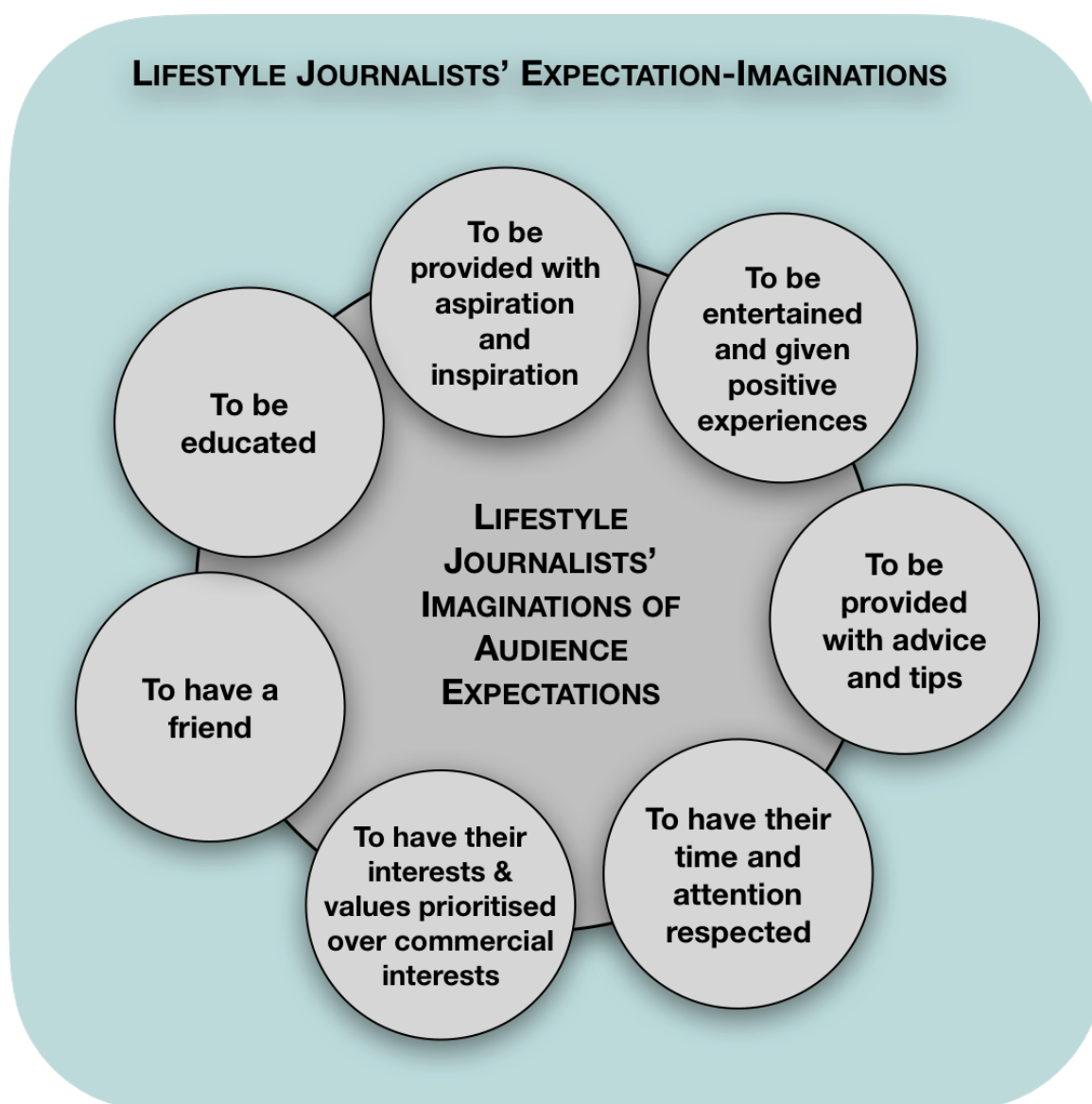
better bakers” (Kassy-WH-F). They also believed audiences expected *journalists to be a friend*, as these editors said: “I think they want to be understood and they want to be helped” (Sara-WH-F) and “to find like-minded people” (James-WH-M). They also believed audiences expect journalists to problematize issues and *educate* them, whether on “sustainability issues” (Rachel-WH-F) or “animals or the ecology or conservation” (James-WH-M).

However, journalists also spoke of audience expectations that have received less attention in past research, namely, that audiences may be becoming more aware of the blurring boundaries between advertorial and editorial content, and that audiences’ attention spans and expendable time becomes increasingly scarce and needs to be respected. To that end, lifestyle journalists believed audiences expected to be placed at the centre of the universe and to have their *interests and values considered over those of advertising and commercial interests*. As one editor said: “if the interest of the brands in a lifestyle magazine outweighs the interests of the reader, the reader notices and starts to realize that they are not the centre of the universe anymore, you are not catering to them” (James-WH-M). However, journalists had mixed beliefs about whether their audiences had the media literacy to discern editorial from advertorial content, especially with native advertising. An editor believed his audiences may not be aware of tactics used by magazines to bypass featuring or highlighting negative aspects of a bad product that is also produced by one of the magazine’s advertisers. While one journalist said, “I don’t know how much the average reader is picking up on that though and I think it comes down to layout quite a lot.” (Chloe-WH-F), others believed “audiences are not as stupid as we all think they are” (Julia-WH-F) and “I think audiences are smart enough to see what is essentially native advertising” (Patrick-WH-M). It is against these perceptions that lifestyle journalists believed audiences expected to be placed above and beyond a publication’s commercial interests. As will become clear in Chapter 5, audiences are not only aware of advertising tactics, but also demand greater transparency to offset the impression of being manipulated through advertising.

Finally, journalists believed audiences expected to *have their time and attention respected*, by providing them with concise and quickly consumable information in a predictable magazine layout and format. As one journalist said: “I think they expect me not to waste their time” (Clive-WH-M). Much of this perceived expectation has to do with the belief that audiences not only have little time to relax, but also have shorter attention spans: “it’s becoming more and more about soundbites and little bits of information [...] people are reading less, attention spans are narrowing down” (Jake-WH-M) (see Figure 4).

These perceived changes in audiences' expectations are concurrent with technological and economic changes in journalism, where journalism is confronted with increasing pressure to economically sustain itself and faces greater competition to capture audiences' scarce and scattered attention in a diverse media landscape (Anderson 2011). An awareness of such expectations is thus more likely to reinforce journalists' market-orientation and perception of audiences as consumers (Hanitzsch 2007; Hanusch and Tandoc 2019). Similar to political journalists, lifestyle journalists believed that audiences do not understand the mechanics and the amount of work, time and money that goes into producing a single magazine edition and therefore lack the appreciation for what is a shrinking industry with a precarious economic future. Among both political and lifestyle journalists, several did not know or could not speculate what their audiences might expect from them, while others simply did not think about their audience's expectations, claiming they just wanted to create journalism. Another highlighted a distinction in audiences' normative and cathectic expectations, saying: "I don't know what they would expect, but I know what they enjoy" (Khulekani-BL-F), once again pointing to the growing importance of web analytics in shaping journalists' editorial decisions (Tandoc 2014).

Figure 4: Lifestyle Journalists' Expectation-Imaginations



LIFESTYLE JOURNALISTS' EXPECTATION-IMAGINATIONS: Journalists imagine their audiences hold seven distinct expectations, six of which relate to roles broadly associated with lifestyle journalism, and one with political journalism (i.e. to be educated).

4.4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The political journalists in this study expressed roles associated with both traditional-liberal dimensions of journalism and those associated with development journalism, specifically, being a watchdog, mobilizer, and disseminator with the pressure to provide fast news, and being an educator and change agent who provides solutions to problems, and an advocate who

feels empathy towards marginalized audiences, and engages, perhaps reluctantly, in activist journalism. While journalists appear to juggle these relatively opposing role-orientations fairly fluidly, they also conveyed some role conflict between the two. Specifically, the push and pull between liberal-market forces and norms such as objectivity and the provision of fast news, and values enshrined in development journalism such as a need for greater involvement by being empathetic, providing solutions to problems, and practicing activist journalism (the implications of such role disruptions are further discussed in the conclusion chapter).

The lifestyle journalists in this study sought to provide their audiences with a service (advice and tips), enable escapism, and to be a friend or even a therapist – roles commonly associated with lifestyle journalism. However, they also conveyed some role conflict, especially regarding their awareness of class inequality, and they expressed roles commonly associated with political journalism. Suggesting some role-boundary blurring (elaborated further in Chapter 6), lifestyle journalists expressed roles such as being a mediator bridging class/race differences, an educator raising awareness of environmental sustainability, an advocate celebrating and acknowledging Black culture and local identity, and a change agent challenging and dismantling racial and gender stereotypes. While the content or substance of these roles differs to how political journalists might convey them, they nevertheless point to similar characteristic role behaviour.

Among both political and lifestyle journalists can be seen instances where their intersectional identities shape their role conceptions. Specifically, only Black political journalists talked about the need to be empathetic towards audiences marginalized at the intersection of class and race, because they arguably saw their own personal habitus reflected in that of their audiences. Likewise, only Black lifestyle journalists talked about the need to be advocates for Black culture and change agents dismantling stereotypes about Black culture. The intersection of their personal habitus with their occupational habitus, however, was also a source of role-identity conflict, in negotiating their desire to pursue these roles, and to enact those more firmly rooted in liberal models. Especially for Black political journalists, this tension can be seen in objectivity-empathy/humanness narratives.

More so than political journalists, lifestyle journalists showed an awareness of class inequalities among the audiences, which shaped their roles of providing aspiration/inspiration, and being a mindful marketer. Especially in their role as mindful marketer, journalists talked about being conflicted between the pressure to market lifestyle services and products and encourage consumption, and the moral pressure to discourage economically precarious audiences from engaging in conspicuous consumption. An awareness of class differences also

meant that lifestyle journalists, as ‘*responsible* cultural intermediaries,’ targeted inspiration at audiences with higher economic and cultural capital, and targeted aspiration at those with lower and relative amounts of economic and cultural capital, or the so-called aspirational middle class. However, the findings also point to how, in their perceptions of audiences and their expectations, both political and lifestyle journalists routinely neglected to address or target audiences they perceived to have low economic and cultural capital; specifically they neglected the working class, seen as either having no interest in or understanding of ‘quality’ political journalism or lifestyle journalism, and as primarily addressed by the tabloid newspaper, *Daily Sun*. As will become apparent in Chapter 5, some of these dynamics of exclusion and othering emerge also among audiences with various intersectional identities.

More specifically, political journalists imagined their audiences to expect to be provided with positive news and for news to feature more of a human element. They also imagined that their audiences have low trust in the news media, evident in the belief that audiences expect journalists to be sensational and driven by commercial imperatives, politically captured (partisan, polarised, and partial), advancing White monopoly interests, and failing to support ongoing societal change. Lifestyle journalists imagined their audiences to expect to be provided with aspiration and inspiration, advice and tips, to be entertained and educated, to have their interests prioritized over commercial ones, to act as a friend and have their time respected.

What these findings begin to suggest is varying levels of congruence or role consensus between role conception and expectation imaginations, when comparing political and lifestyle journalists. Lifestyle journalists’ role conceptions are fairly if not entirely congruent with the expectations they imagine their audiences have of them, whereas political journalists’ imaginations of their audiences’ expectations appear to be strikingly different to their role conceptions. It will become clear in the next chapter that this lack of role consensus continues in the same fashion. Audiences’ actual expectations of political journalists accurately reflect political journalists’ anticipated or imagined expectations rather than their idealized role conceptions. Audiences’ actual expectations of lifestyle journalists accurately reflect lifestyle journalists’ imagined expectations and their role conceptions. The theoretical implications of these findings are unpacked in the conclusion chapter (7).

5. AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS OF POLITICAL AND LIFESTYLE JOURNALISTS: Findings

Scholars argue expectations not only inform internal standards of behaviour (e.g. how expectations of the self shape journalists' role behaviour) but also shape others' behaviours (Biddle 1979). The question of how audience expectations might shape journalists' roles is examined here by triangulating audience expectations of journalists with journalists' role conceptions, as well as what journalists believe audiences expect from them. The last component is key, as it provides comparative insight into how well journalists can imagine their audiences' expectations (outlined in the previous chapter), based on their consumption of various feedback mechanisms (e.g. web analytics, reader comments) (Lewis and Westlund 2015; Hanusch and Tandoc 2016). The question further addressed in this chapter is: To what extent do audiences' actual expectations of journalists reflect journalists' imaginations of their audience expectations as well as journalists' role conceptions? Here findings indicate that there is greater role consensus (Biddle 1979) or congruence across the role conceptions, expectation imaginations, and audiences' actual expectations within lifestyle journalism than political journalism.

Building on existing literature on audience expectations (Loosen et al. 2020; Schmidt and Loosen 2015; Vos et al. 2019), this study also makes key theoretical contributions in considering how expectations are expressed through various modes or mental functions – not only norms (prescriptive expectations), but also beliefs (descriptive expectations), and preferences (cathectic expectations) (Biddle 1979). This study shows that more often than not, audiences' expectations are expressed as a set of beliefs and preferences rather than norms, calling into question how we examine expectations in the future. Specifically, audiences believe political journalists are excessively market-orientated, politically and economically captured by powerful institutions and therefore biased, and too negative. In light of these beliefs (or descriptive expectations) audiences expect journalists to provide solutions to problems that look very different across intersectional identities. When it comes to lifestyle journalists, audiences' expectations reflect the journalists' role conceptions to a large extent – to provide escapism, advice and entertainment, as well as inspiration and aspiration with a strong awareness of classed differences.

Finally, building on key literature that has shown class, race and gender as independent identity categories shaping audiences' news consumption practices and preferences (Lindell and Sartoretto 2018; Bosch 2014; Toff and Palmer 2019) this chapter illustrates how audiences'

intersectional identities can shape their diverse expectations but also allow them to engage in various forms of symbolic ‘othering’ (Spivak 1985). In expressing their expectations of what constitutes quality political journalism, audiences evoked racist and classist narratives of intelligence to symbolically distinguish themselves (consumers of quality news) from others (consumers of tabloid/entertainment news). Audiences also evoked classist and racist narratives to distinguish those who consume political journalism (rational engagement/intelligence) and lifestyle journalism (mindlessness/absence of intelligence).

Therefore, this chapter outlines key findings on audiences’ expectations of political and lifestyle journalists, examining: 1) audiences’ diverse modes of expectations; 2) how audiences’ intersectional identities shape their expectations; and 3) illustrating the extent to which audience expectations are (in)congruent with journalists’ role conceptions and journalists’ imaginations of audiences’ expectations. These findings are illustrated in more detail below and discussed in relation to existing scholarship. More specifically, Chapter 5, answers:

RQ3: *What do audiences expect of political and lifestyle journalists, and through which modes do they express their expectations?*

And the second part of:

RQ4: *How do class, race, and gender shape journalists’ role conceptions and audience expectations?*

5.1. AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS OF POLITICAL JOURNALISTS

Audiences expected of political journalists many of the well-established and discursively cemented norms (Deuze 2005; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), including objectivity, neutrality, impartiality, transparency, truthfulness, and credibility. For example, audiences expected “impartiality and honesty” (U-WH-M), and argued that journalists “should just be objective [...] if they are reporting on something they should just state what they know, and not take sides” (M-BL-M). Another participant said, “a good journalist is someone who tells the story the way it is” (W-BL-M). They expected a journalist to be “someone who is transparent enough and ethical in how they write” (M-MX-F). Audiences also spoke about how important it was for journalists to conduct in-depth research, cite multiple sources, report on facts and information correctly, and pose tough questions to those in power. While these work practices

are important, more interesting to consider is that they were discussed in relation to much broader beliefs about journalists (descriptive expectations) and feelings that audiences had about journalists and the news they consume (cathectic expectations) (Biddle 1979) that paint a more nuanced picture of expectations beyond journalism's dominant professional norms. For example, when audiences spoke about values such as objectivity, impartiality, and credibility, it was in relation to their beliefs that journalists have become partial, biased, opaque, and superficial in their reporting due to political capture and market pressures, which led to a deterioration of journalistic credibility. This suggests that audiences' beliefs (descriptive expectations) about journalism shaped their norms (prescriptive expectations), which begins to show that although different modes of expectations can be delineated, they are also complex, interconnected, and shape one another. These expectations are illustrated in greater detail below.

Several of the expectations detected among audiences featured differences across intersectional identities to varying extents. Commonly expressed expectations among audiences included negative beliefs about journalism's economic and political capture that to a large extent reflect political journalists' imaginations of their audiences' expectations (as outlined in Section 4.3.2). Here, audiences believed that: 1) political journalists were increasingly market-oriented, competitive, serving advertisers' needs over audiences', and concerned with capturing audiences' attention over providing quality journalism; and 2) political journalists were captured by political powers who manipulate newsrooms/content. In relation to the second belief, some intersectional differences emerged across audiences who believed that media organisations were partisan and driven by racial ideology, in supporting either the historically Black/liberation, ruling African National Congress (ANC) party or the White/opposition Democratic Alliance (DA party). Audiences across intersectional identities felt that 3) political journalism was extremely negative and driven by problems without providing solutions, and consuming it had a negative psychological and emotional impact on audiences. In response, audiences expected journalists to provide solutions to problems (see Figure 5). However, this is where the broader similarities among audiences appeared to end, and more distinct intersectional differences emerged, predominantly in the types of solutions they sought, their perceptions of journalism's affordability/accessibility, beliefs about what constitutes quality news, and the classist and racist narratives they drew upon to reinforce us-them distinctions. These audience expectations – both those shared across intersectional identities and those unique to specific intersectional identities – are elaborated on in the sections below.

5.1.1. Journalism's Market Orientation: Journalists as greedy vultures

Overwhelmingly, audiences across intersectional identities expressed the descriptive expectation or belief (Biddle 1979) that political journalism was *market oriented, preoccupied with 'selling' and capturing audiences' attention*, which audiences claimed led to deceptive clickbait headlines and sensational, viral, error-filled reporting. The perception among audiences was that the more viral and sensational the content, the more likely journalists were to report on it in the news. This was seen by audiences as a journalistic strategy to compete for audience's dispersed attention in a diverse media landscape. While audiences did not believe that journalists outright lied or invented stories, they felt journalists exaggerated news to capture and monetize their attention, which somewhat echoes journalists' belief that audiences perceived them to fabricate stories (as outlined in Section 4.3.2). As these audiences said:

M-BL-F: I think they are just adding a bit of salt...

M-CO-M: ...like I feel like in general we live in a society today that's trying to grab attention.

This preoccupation with commercial pressures, audiences said, leads to hasty, and often error-filled reporting, which audiences felt "cheapens news" (M-MX-F)). Once reported, audiences stressed "they [journalists] won't spend as much time reporting on the retraction or correcting the error" (M-BL-M), in other words, "the damage is done" (M-CO-M). In response, audiences expected journalists to focus less on fast news and chasing stories to generate content and revenue and to focus instead on fewer stories but getting them right. The argument here is that audiences held the descriptive expectation (belief, observation, behavioural assumption) that journalists were excessively market-oriented. However, from this we can also infer or suggest that audiences hold the prescriptive expectation (normative encouragement or request) that journalists should slow down and focus on fewer stories (Biddle 1979).

For working-class audiences, a sensational skew meant that newspapers misrepresented their voices and the events that occurred in their communities, making them less inclined to trust journalists or speak to them as witnesses or sources – as before, these audience expectations were accurately imagined by political journalist (Section 4.3.2). On multiple occasions during focus group discussions, audiences said that the "newspapers, they overstate things, they exaggerate" (W-BL-F) in order to sell units and generate profit. They argued that "things that have happened in our community and we were there to witness that, when you read in the newspaper it sounds like something that didn't happen there" (W-BL-M). Because of these beliefs, working-class audiences were more inclined to find local community newspapers, such as *Vugani*, more trustworthy. The argument among the audience was, firstly,

that such newspapers depended on the community as sources and any misrepresentation would lead to a boycott, and secondly, these newspapers did not depend on sales revenue, and therefore had less incentive to exaggerate.

The above expectation that journalists are market oriented refers to an assessment of “abstract or context-general” beliefs about journalists as holders of a professional, occupational position, and therefore to ‘*positional expectations*’ (Biddle 1979: 124). However, audiences, increasingly expressed what appear to be ‘*personal expectations*’ which in theory are based on “concrete and context-specific” experiences and refer to the position-holder as an individual (Biddle 1979: 124). Such expectations were evident in audiences referring not only to beliefs about journalists’ professional norms, but also social values and moral norms that saw profit motivations as detrimental to a journalism that should be a calling, driven by passion, quality, creed, and truth. Similar evaluations were identified by Craft and colleagues (2017) among audience comments criticizing journalists for being “judgemental,” “lazy or sloppy,” “sanctimonious or pompous” and “dehumanizing.” In this study audiences described ***journalists as deceptive, selfish, and interested in self-gain***; as “vultures, always waiting for that big story” (W-BL-M), “greedy, because they think for themselves” and a “puppet-master” who manipulates their audiences (W-BL-M). This prompted audiences to picture the ideal that “a good journalist is a broke journalist [...] like a struggling artist” and someone for whom journalism was “a labour of love [...] it’s a calling [...] you are not doing this for the money” (U-WH-F).

At the same time, audiences showed awareness of their perhaps lofty expectations against the contradictory challenges that journalists face on a daily basis: on the one hand, the precarity of fulfilling the expectations of their organisations so as not to lose their jobs, and on the other hand, the journalists’ professional roles of reporting truthfully and in the public interest. As one focus group participant said:

we don’t really appreciate what they go through and to create an ideal journalist is almost impossible because if it’s not bad news it doesn’t sell, if it’s not honest the people get angry... there is constant pressures from every side on journalists that we sometimes forget, and we do need to be a bit more understanding of that (M-WH-F).

Again, such comments illustrate audiences’ critical reflection on the challenges journalists face in fulfilling their roles, and contradict journalists’ perceptions of audiences as unaware of these challenges (as highlighted in Section 4.3.2).

5.1.2. Media Capture and Political Bias and Partisanship

Audiences expressed another descriptive expectation (Biddle 1979), believing that journalists and editors were *captured and manipulated by political power*. As one participant observed: “politicians or those in power are using the media for their own gain, not to tell the truth” (W-BL-M). They believed media owners were connected with political power, which allowed politicians to manipulate news, to either invite positive coverage or censor coverage of negative or problematic issues, such as corruption. Participants said that journalism is “screwed financially [and] not getting backing from the readership” (U-WH-M), thus it is funded by those “who have the money and desire the power” (U-WH-M); “It’s all about money [...] that gives the story credibility, it’s money” (U-WH-F). In turn they also believed the media – not so much the journalists, but the editors and owners – uses knowledge of corruption to bribe politicians by threatening to report on their corrupt dealings. Media’s lack of autonomy from political power meant audiences felt the media could not report on political failure and issues affecting citizens, especially the poor, in an independent, unbiased way that was primarily in the interest of the wider public, not just the elite. Audiences believed political powers had hidden agendas and an interest in driving particular narratives within society, and here some intersectional differences emerged.

Media were perceived as partisan and racially biased in their coverage of political parties and leaders. On the one hand, working-class-Black-Coloured audiences believed news media generally neglected to cover political corruption that was affecting their communities. On the other hand, they also claimed that mainstream media focus exclusively on exposing corruption within the historically Black/liberation, ruling African National Congress (ANC) party, omitting negative coverage of the historically White, opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) party. As one person said:

the *Mail & Guardian* will focus more on digging up dirt on the ANC and they won’t print a story where a DA official has been found or accused of corruption, but if it’s an ANC member then that story will get a front page and the truth will be kind of twisted (W-BL-M).

Middle-upper-class-White audiences believed some media were more likely to portray the ruling party and former president Jacob Zuma in a positive light, and thus obscuring accusations of corruption. These views echo past findings of mainstream ‘quality’ media being concerned with “expressing the perceptions of middle-class (mainly White) suburbanites who feel threatened by a Black-led government” (Friedman 2011: 109). Audiences claimed this bias was visible in the different footage, commentary, and time devoted to political parties and

actors by various broadcast news media, which also speak to distinct ethnic and language groups. Audiences said: “if you compare ETV and SABC1, the time thing... let’s say [former president] Jacob Zuma, it’s two minutes, but on SABC1 it’s only seven seconds, because they don’t want to tell the whole story” (W-BL-F). Others said, during the ‘Gupta leaks’ scandal, which showed the financial entanglements of the South African state and a prominent and economically powerful family, that broadcast news would use the “same footage [...] but different commentary” (U-WH-M), depending on whether the media was owned by the Gupta family, “so it was basically, ‘Zuma is great, there is no problem, everything is cool’ and then other channels are like ‘he is a thief’” (U-WH-M). Here Friedman (2011) suggests, bias is found more readily in what the media ignores than in what it writes.

In the editorial chain of influences, audiences again highlighted the separation between journalism as an institution with journalists as position holders within the system, and journalists as more or less helpless pawns with precarious working conditions, controlled by their editors, media owners and “the media house and what agenda they have to sell” (W-BL-M). Audiences believed journalists write but have no ownership of their stories and are either manipulated into framing their stories to match the media organisation’s agenda, or have their stories edited to reflect this agenda: “they [editors] change their story according to their understanding, not according to what happened” (W-BL-F). As a result of this perception, audiences expressed some compassion towards journalists who they believed were increasingly fearful and have faced growing threats, control, pressure, and retrenchment as a result of journalism’s political and economic capture.

5.1.3. News avoidance: News is too negative

Audiences across intersectional identities also felt that news was too negative – an issue that drew most heated and emotionally-charged discussions among audience members. Here audiences expressed both descriptive expectations in expressing their belief or observation of news being too negative, but also a cathectic expectation or emotional reaction to negative news in saying they disliked it and thus avoided it because it made them feel depressed (Biddle 1979). Audiences avoided news because it’s “so bloody negative” (U-WH-M) and makes you feel like “everything is bad” (W-BL-F) – reactions that are increasingly associated with news avoidance (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; McIntyre 2019). They felt that news was overly preoccupied with pointing out problems such as rape, death, crime, corruption, and gangsterism, and devoted too little attention to providing solutions to these problems – this despite the fact that the journalists in this study felt providing solutions was a key element of

their role of being a change agent (as outlined in Section 4.1.2.2). Audiences said they were careful to monitor (if not completely avoid) their consumption of news, thus engaging in “measured avoidance” (Groot Kormelink 2020: 872) to manage their emotional and psychological health, especially against depression. One participant said, “as a mother I’m very careful to not get into a negative mode [...] because you don’t want all of that negativity to flow through to your children” (U-WH-F). At the same time, audiences reflected the same belief held by journalists, that audiences may claim they want positive news but are inherently attracted to negative news as evidenced by web analytics data. Participants pointed to the fact that people seem to be attracted to bad news and understood that that is why journalists rarely reported on positive or good news, because good news does not sell.

5.1.4. Solutions journalism

While not an expectation per se, news avoidance emerged among audiences arguably as a reaction to journalism’s failure to meet audiences’ expectations for solutions-driven journalism, as highlighted in past studies of young South African audiences across race and class (Malila et al. 2013). Here audiences spoke of the need for solutions journalism as a normative demand – something that should happen to offset the negativity of news (Biddle 1979). Solutions journalism provides “rigorous reporting on responses to social problems,” which may lead to a more positive relationship with news (McIntyre 2019: 29). Furthermore, solutions journalism is particularly important to marginalized communities because it is inclusive of underheard voices, persistent and issue-driven, committed to challenging stereotypical narratives and analysing structural problems, and importantly it proposes tangible and enduring solutions to systemic issues and mobilizes people to contribute to solutions (Wenzel et al. 2018; McIntyre and Lough 2019). As the findings of this study reveal, the types of solutions audiences expect reveal key intersectional differences across class-race-gender.

5.1.4.1. Solutions through empathy and empowering stories

In stratified societies, solutions journalism may be particularly important to stigmatized audience communities whose voices tend to be ignored (Wenzel et al. 2018). For working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences, solutions journalism entailed addressing societal problems at a systemic level through sustained reporting on issues affecting their community, especially children. Referring to news reports about a child that had been raped in public toilets, working-class-Black-Coloured-female participants said: “there was no solution on what to do!” (W-BL-F), and: “there must also be some sort of suggestions [...] that there

are also measures being taken, so that you can at least be at ease and have hope” (W-BL-F). News media’s overemphasis on crime in Black and poor communities left these audiences feeling hopeless, fearful, and discouraged, as stressed by this working-class-Black-male:

you know, the stories of these Black boys killing people in the community [...] there are no resolved issues, no further steps taken... they are trying to make us live in fear every day, trying to show us that there is no hope for us, that’s what the newspapers are selling (W-BL-M).

As such, coverage of socioeconomic inequality affecting marginalized communities fails to address “structural causes of inequality and poverty” (Chiumbu et al. 2016: 14). For working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences, solutions journalism involved in-depth reporting and, importantly, journalists having a sense of sympathy, empathy, and care for the people and stories they report on so “people can relate to that” (W-BL-F); “We are exposed to a lot of bad things and we need to take a step back and go back to humanity and to expose people to the goodness of our country as well” (W-BL-F). For working-class-Black-Coloured audiences, “humanity” and “goodness” meant exposing them and especially younger generations to alternative visions of their lived reality and perspectives that could instil a sense of hope and choice for the future. We begin to see here some resonance between these audiences’ expectations of empathy and humanity and remarks made by Black and Coloured political journalists on the need to engage with their audiences empathetically and challenge the emotional deadening and the dehumanizing impact of objectivity on journalism (as discussed in Sections 4.1.2.1 and 4.1.3). As this working-class-Black-male participant said:

the community where we are, we have a lot of people doing good things, but you never have those stories covered [...] We want to hear stories that can encourage us, that can change our lives (W-BL-M).

Finally, the parents among these audiences stressed that solutions journalism could empower news-consuming children to develop a resilience to problems and optimism about the future. However, they observed that such stories are more likely to be found in ‘quality’ media such as the *Sunday Times*, targeted at middle-class audiences and inaccessible to them (Friedman 2011).

5.1.4.2. Solutions through accountability, societal change, and positive news

A need for solutions journalism was also voiced by female upper-class-White participants who wanted journalists to report on positive outcomes to problems:

U-WH-F: ...to be honest, the positivity, even if it is a negative situation, show or illustrate the positive outcome, say that we are getting somewhere, because we all feel like we are stuck in a rut, because there is no...

U-WH-F: ...light at the end of the tunnel.

U-WH-F: ...no, like, discussions about how we are going to fix it... If there is any light to be shown it should be shed, that would make me read the news again...

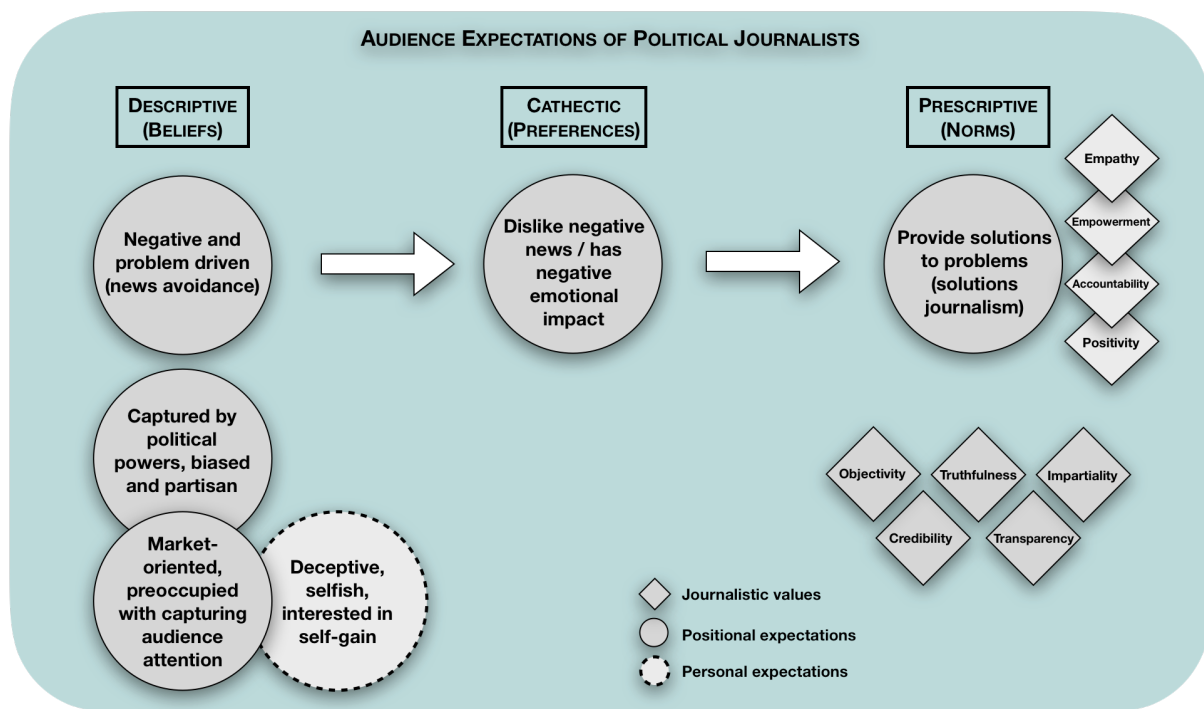
For these audiences, ‘positivity’ could be achieved through stories that offered “tips” (U-WH-F) on how to prevent crime, “accountability for the things that were going wrong” (U-WH-F), and “feel-good stories” (U-WH-F) that showed unity and societal change.

When journalists have to “report that bad news”, referring to the rape of a child in public toilets, it is preferred that they at least “give little bits of tips on how to prevent it” (U-WH-F). Upper-class-White audiences also demanded accountability in response to perceived lawlessness in the country, ranging from political corruption to daily frustrations about taxi drivers ignoring rules and endangering passengers. Said one participant: “if there was accountability for the things that were going wrong [...] if people were actually held accountable for the wrongs they have done, then I would have faith in the news” (U-WH-F). These discussions highlighted intra-racial differences between Whites with British passports able to ‘escape’, and those who felt left behind. These audiences expected journalists to bridge racial divisions, focusing more on “situations where the ‘rainbow nation’ gets together and unites” to show “we live in a country where people care about each other” (U-WH-F). A good journalist should “get down to the people that it’s really affecting [...] I mean we are the ‘rainbow nation’; we are a beautiful country with a lot of diversity” (U-WH-F). Lastly, they expected news to address actions taken to improve society. Examples included news stories about violence against teachers and a school social worker in the Eastern Cape who was able to increase students’ pass rates and reduce violence. One participant said: “there was a positivity that came out of that and that’s so rewarding” (U-WH-F).

Diverging types of solutions outlined here reflect the very different lived experiences of audiences with specific intersectional identities. Although both audiences across class-race groups expected journalists to contribute to ‘societal change’ broadly, working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences expected sustained, in-depth, empathetic journalism that empowers them, similarly to stigmatized communities in the US (Wenzel et al. 2018), while upper-class-White-female audiences expected accountability, and stories of the ‘rainbow nation’. While reference to the ‘rainbow nation’ have a positive connotation of unity, when expressed by White South Africans, these references are what Steyn and Foster (2008) describe

as ‘white talk’ – a discursive strategy that allows ‘safe’ positive self-presentation through “*non-racialism and democratic principles, concern for poverty, and good blacks*” narratives, while resisting transformation. Lastly, solutions journalism was an expectation shared by both women and men of Black-Coloured-working-class identity but was not raised by upper-class-White men. Although middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed-female-male audiences claimed political journalism was negative, they did not talk about solutions journalism.

Figure 5: Audience Expectations of Political Journalists



SIMPLE AND COMPLEX EXPECTATIONS: Audiences expressed predominantly simple, descriptive expectations of political journalists, except in the case of negative news. Audience believed journalists were preoccupied with reporting on negative news; audiences disliked this and avoided consuming negative news, and claimed journalists should provide more positive, solutions-driven news.

5.1.5. Classist and racist narratives around news quality: Intelligence, education, and violence

Intersectional differences were also found in how audiences evaluate ‘quality’ and popular (tabloid and lifestyle) journalism (Costera Meijer 2001; Ross and Carter 2011), including how these valuations are used to distinguish themselves and their expectations of journalism from the ‘Other,’ using classist and racist narratives (Spivak 1985). These discussions revealed

frustrations about journalism's unaffordability, and how inaccessibility to diverse types of news reinforced class inequality. At the intersection of class and race, audiences' perceptions of news quality also revealed racist stereotypes, pivoting around narratives of intelligence, education, and violence. These views were found primarily at the intersection of descriptive expectations or stereotypical assumptions and prescriptive expectations or normative (dis)approval of what constitutes (non-)quality news and those who consume it (Biddle 1979). These are discussed below.

5.1.5.1. *The unaffordability of journalism*

News unaffordability and inaccessibility most acutely affected working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences with limited economic capital to spend on news: "I don't have money to buy the newspaper" (W-BL-F). In discussing the tabloid *Daily Sun* and 'quality' *Mail & Guardian*, these audiences reflect an awareness of a stratified news media landscape:

W-BL-F: It's all about levels. Levels, that's it.

RESEARCHER: Levels?

W-BL-F: Yeah, levels.

W-BL-M: Like around here [the township], everyone can afford the *Daily Sun*. So, like I'm telling you... the *Daily Sun* is feeding us stories of witchcraft only, and you check someone who can afford the *Mail & Guardian*, maybe they are based in town [...] so it's levels... the one who can pay is the one who can get relevant news.

This exchange centres around a frustration with the tabloid's focus on witchcraft stories, however audiences did not dismiss the newspaper's value in their lives. As one of South Africa's most read newspapers (online and in print), the *Daily Sun* plays an important role for a population largely ignored by other news media (Steenveld and Strelitz 2010). Rather, audiences stressed that this was their *only* available media, and critiqued their lack of access to more diverse news.

These participants also had agency and spoke matter-of-factly about creative ways of overcoming this limitation (Alper et al. 2016). Working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences consumed radio or free township newspapers, went to a local clinic where "they give it to you for free" (W-BL-F), or read the "*Mail & Guardian*, sometimes when you get an old one from someone who used it last week" (W-BL-M). While accessing old news is not (and should not) be a permanent response to news access inequality, these solutions illustrate marginalized audiences' alternative and creative ways of accessing news.

Journalism's unaffordability/inaccessibility was also problematized by middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed-female-male audiences, as captured in the following exchange:

M-MX-F: I think that different papers aim at different classes [...] like the *Daily Sun* is more for lower-income-classes, and the *Sunday Independent* is for the upper class [...] so I think that also shows agenda and how they will frame certain things for certain people, and I also think that affects the quality of what you are reading... Like, *Daily Sun* is not the best newspaper....

M-BL-F: I've read some crazy headlines... like about a cat killing a man, and I'm like...

[...]

M-MX-F: But that's kind of problematic...

M-BL-M: It is problematic.

M-MX-F: ...the economic classes are different [...] and now you wanna give lower-income-classes lower news quality because it's more accessible...

M-MX-F: Shitty news...

In the above exchanges, working-middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed-female-male audiences reveal frustrations about unequal access to news, but also normative beliefs about what constitutes 'quality' versus "shitty news" about "witchcraft" or "a cat killing a man" and who consumes what. In their view, class inequality reinforced unequal access and distinctions between the haves (quality news consumers) and the have-nots (tabloid consumers). This resonates with past research showing audiences reinforce class distinctions through news preferences and consumption (Lindell and Sartoretto 2018; Lindell 2020; Schieferdecker 2017), however as the following sections illustrate, these valuations also intersect with race, where narratives around intelligence and education are used to reinforce both classist and racist distinctions.

5.1.5.2. Education and Intellect

The consumption of quality versus tabloid journalism was attributed to the presence or absence of education and intelligence, respectively. Middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed audiences across gender believed that different journalists and media had prejudiced perceptions of their audiences' levels of intellect and highlighted us-them distinctions along both class and race lines. They believed that the news media reinforce an 'intellectual divide' between themselves as middle-class (university-educated) consumers of "intellectually challenging" news and working-class tabloid news consumers who journalists stereotyped "as

not being the smartest bunch [who] just like entertainment stuff” (M-CO-M). In expressing this, we see these audiences highlighting their sense of middle-class belonging or (self-)inclusion. However, they also argued that journalists see tabloid audiences as people who “just read cheap news and we don’t need to try and challenge them, whereas the larger White majority who read our newspaper, we like to challenge them and put this intellectual stuff here” (M-CO-M). In claiming that journalists target quality news at White audiences, which these audience participants are not, we see evidence of racial (self-)exclusion. Therefore, the middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed audiences saw themselves simultaneously included along class and excluded along race lines.

Similar intelligence- and education-based distinctions were evoked and challenged within a group of middle-upper-class-Black-Indian-White-female audiences. Here audiences united and diverged in their observations of tabloid journalism at intersections of class and race. Across race, both middle- and upper-class audiences rejected the *Sun*’s legitimacy, labelling it “rubbish, but people buy it for the jokes” (M-BL-F). Asked if it serves a unique purpose, a participant demarcated: “to their life, yeah” (M-BL-F). However, racist stereotypes emerged and were challenged when upper-middle-class-White-female audiences described *Daily Sun* readers as seeking ‘scandal’ and ‘sensation’ and lacking the ‘education’ and ‘intelligence’ of a *Sunday Times* reader, as captured in the disagreement below:

U-WH-F: [...] you know, you just have to look at the demographics to understand what the difference is between the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Sun*, for instance...

[...]

M-BL-F: I don’t necessarily think that that’s true [...] we have a number of staff that live in Alex and Diepsloot⁵ and I don’t necessarily think they read the *Daily Sun*, I think if anything they have access to phones, and you know when you get to work you’ve got access to Wi-Fi, so you read news online...

Although treated interchangeably by audiences, education and intelligence could be understood as different forms of discrimination. To Bourdieu (1984), the presence of education indicates availability of cultural capital, helping to locate an individual within a classed social space. However, references to intelligence, in particular, have racist roots in White colonialist ideologies which depict Black people in cultural products (incl. media) by emphasizing the body and physical faculties over the mind and intellectual aptitude (Collins 2004; Buffington and Fraley 2008). This includes distinctions where “White represents the mind and logic,

⁵ Alexandra and Diepsloot are townships in Johannesburg.

perceiving natives as physical and illogical bodies requiring domination and control” (Alley-Young 2008: 309).

Such racist discourses were also observed by working-class-Black-Coloured audiences who argued that news media reinforced ‘aggressive Black’ stereotypes.

5.1.5.3. Language of violence

Working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences said news media manipulated language to speak to specific class-race groups. They said that news media “know our language,” “understand the psychology, our mentality,” and use emotional language to “provoke” (W-BL-F). Traditionally, emotion has been treated as inferior and disruptive to journalism’s concern for rational discourse (Costera Meijer 2001). Emotionality arguably also implies impulsiveness and “a lack of restraint associated with incomplete socialization, and a predilection for violence” associated with Black men (Collins 2004: 152). Journalists were seen to stereotype White audiences as non-violent – “when speaking to the White guys [...] they [journalists] know that they are not so violent” (W-BL-F) – and Black protesters as violent – “when they are speaking about people striking, they know that they are directly speaking to Black guys” (W-BL-F). Community protests are a critical form of communication for marginalized audiences to express their frustrations about growing inequality but are often ignored by mainstream ‘quality’ media or framed as incompetent, disruptive, and theatrical (Wasserman et al. 2018). Referring to TV news coverage (SABC1 and ETV) of xenophobic violence against Somalis, working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences stressed that journalists provoke xenophobic violence in the Black community: “they know that Black people won’t sit and be quiet... same as the Black guy that was like being beaten by the two White guys... they were telling us ‘what are you going to do about these two White guys?’” (W-BL-F). These findings echo scholarship which shows that central to the construction of White identity are narratives that construct Black people (men in particular) as “inherently violent” by depicting the Black body as “hypersexual, animalistic, and savage” (Ferber 2007: 15). The findings presented here suggest that similar narratives guide media representations and audiences’ expectations of journalists.

5.2. AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS OF LIFESTYLE JOURNALISTS

As with their expectations of political journalists, audiences expected lifestyle journalists to fulfil some fundamental values, such as to be truthful, knowledgeable and well-informed, but

in particular they expected journalists to be transparent, especially about advertising and sponsorship. Beyond these norms, audiences' expectations also reflected several of the role conceptions detected among lifestyle journalists in this study, referring to the local conditions in terms of the issues they felt were important to them, that intersected with class and race. Specifically, audiences expected lifestyle journalists to be a service provider by offering tips and advice on diverse issues and topics, to offer escapism and distraction particularly as a reprieve from negative news, to provide entertainment through celebrity news and gossip, to provide education around serious societal issues that affect people on a daily basis, and to provide inspiration by showing trends across different lifestyle genres. In expecting inspiration, audiences also revealed their awareness of gradations of affordability, and a further expectation to be provided with aspiration. The expectations expressed by audiences here had prescriptive, descriptive and cathectic dimensions that were complex and at times difficult to delineate (Biddle 1979). For example, audiences observed that lifestyle journalists provide a service and advice, but also claimed that this is indeed what they should do. They also had distinctly cathectic expectations, especially in relation to the roles of aspiration and mindful marketing. Although audiences claimed journalists should provide aspiration and expose them to products and services which they could consume, and believed that this was one of lifestyle journalists' primary role, they also expressed emotional reactions. They both liked that lifestyle journalism promotes aspirational thinking in the form of consumption and motivation, and disliked lifestyle journalism's promotion of conspicuous consumption and pursuit of extrinsic aspiration which audiences approached with caution.

The working-class audiences in this study consumed lifestyle content from print tabloid and local community newspapers, primarily because these were the cheapest or free, respectively. Middle- and upper-class audiences accessed lifestyle content in broadsheet newspapers (print and online) as well as social media platforms such as Twitter and YouTube – news sources that are more expensive and require Internet access. These consumption patterns reflect past studies that have shown how class shapes whether South African audiences are able to access international or local media content (Schieferdecker 2017). While magazines speak to the “aspirations of the new Black elite” (Wasserman 2010: 35), tabloids do that for working-class audiences, generally those neglected by the mainstream press (Steenveld and Strelitz 2010; Wasserman 2008). However, even the economically more privileged class groups in this study remarked that magazines were unaffordable and rarely purchased them. These findings are discussed in more detail below and in relation to existing scholarship.

5.2.1. Providing a service, escapism, entertainment, education, and inspiration

Audiences' expectations reflected to a large extent the role conceptions expressed by lifestyle journalists in this study, some of which have been detected in past research (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Wasserman 2010; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). While the journalists saw themselves as a service provider, therapist, provider of escapism, mindful marketer, and provider of inspiration and aspiration (to different class groups), audiences in this study also expected journalists to provide them with a service in the form of advice and tips, offer them avenues of escapism through beautiful images and positive stories, to provide entertainment through celebrity news, but also to be a mindful marketer who is transparent and truthful about products and services, and is aware of gradations of affordability across different class groups. Reflecting the key journalistic role conception of providing aspiration in two distinct ways (consumer imitation and hope/motivation, Section 4.2.3), audiences also expected journalists to provide them with aspirational content by promoting consumption which enables them to imitate an unaffordable lifestyle in affordable ways, and by promoting a sense of hope and motivation which enables them to envision a more desirable future which for the time being remains out of reach.

Providing a service was discussed primarily by female audiences, across racial identities, and across the social class spectrum although reflecting classed dispositions that also intersect with the lived experiences of specific race groups. For example, middle-upper-class-Black-White audiences wanted recipes and advice on “how to revamp your kitchen” (M-WH-F) or “how to keep my body in shape” (M-BL-M), while the working-class-Black-Coloured audiences wanted recipes for “how to bake a cake” and “relationship advice” and financial advice on “how to plan, how to budget” (W-BL-F). Service provision is a derivative of service journalism or a news-you-can-use orientation that sees journalists providing audiences with practical advice about everyday life (Hanusch 2012; Eide and Knight 1999).

Audiences expected lifestyle journalists to *provide escape and distraction* from everyday problems and from negative news. As with the journalistic role of being a “mood manager” (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018: 159), audiences sought out lifestyle content to regulate their emotional well-being by escaping work stress, calming their mind, and also enjoying the sensory experience of flipping through a glossy magazine. As these two women from different classes and races said: “I just want to escape... from work, life...” (U-WH-F) and “to read and keep your mind at ease” (W-BL-F). Consuming lifestyle journalism brought about a sense of calm and appreciation of beauty. Here, upper-class-White-female-male audiences spoke about sensory experiences, and the enjoyment of the “glossy paper” against their fingertips as well

as seeing “how colourful they are” (U-WH-M) and “just seeing all those beautiful flowers, it just gives you a good... it’s nice to see that, yes” (M-WH-F), “that automatically brings about calmness” (M-WH-F).

Audiences across the class-race intersection also expected lifestyle journalists to *provide entertaining news*, in particular celebrity news and gossip. Audience expectations of entertainment were far more rudimentary compared to those of the lifestyle journalists, who sought to captivate their audiences’ attention through salacious, viral, shocking content. Instead, audiences claimed that they mostly wanted information on “who is divorcing who...” (U-WH-F), which arguably offers an element of surprise and shock, to “read up about the royal family” (U-WH-F) and to keep updated on “what’s going to happen in soapies” (W-BL-F). At the same time, upper-middle-class-Black-White audiences who enjoyed celebrity news also retorted that celebrity gossip was used as salacious bait to drive profit: “they think that by having such content, they are going to sell more and more, so they are pushing profit” (U-WH-F) and “they think that if they put something which is not popular, they won’t make profit” (M-BL-M). These remarks resemble a belief that audiences also held about political journalists – that they have become too market oriented and driven by commercial imperatives (as outlined in Section 5.1.1). For working-class-Black-Coloured audiences, it was especially important to see celebrities that look like them from similar backgrounds. While audiences across the class-race intersection expected celebrity news, upper-class-White audiences also denigrated it, arguing that interest in such content is only there because it is available and “pushed down your throat” (U-WH-F), leading them to wonder what benefit it might bring to their lives. These narratives of symbolic distinction again revolve around racist and classist othering based on perceptions of ‘news quality’ and the levels of intelligence and education of those who consume quality news versus tabloids and lifestyle journalism, and who broadly seek out emotional gratification and entertainment over rational engagement and information (Costera Meijer 2001; Costera Meijer 2007; Lindell 2020; Spivak 1985).

Although the lifestyle journalists in this study held multiple roles traditionally associated with political journalism such as being an advocate, change agent, mediator, and educator (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), audiences in their expectations reflected only one of these roles – to educate – and it was only raised by working-class-Black-Coloured audiences, who wanted lifestyle journalists “to teach and *to educate*” (W-BL-F) about complex societal issues of rape, mental health, and HIV/Aids. These audiences felt that such issues affect them exponentially and disproportionately more than they affect the wealthier populations across race groups. One participant said: “how do I deal with my sister when my sister comes back home

and says ‘I’ve been raped’ [...] how does a person come and say, ‘my daughter, my child, I’m HIV positive,’ how do I talk, how do I deal with that person?’” (W-BL-F).

Reflecting the lifestyle journalists’ role of providing audiences with inspiration, audiences across class-race-gender intersections expected journalists to *provide inspiration* by exposing them to “the trending stuff” (M-BL-M) and “what’s in right now, which style we are going to wear in December” (W-BL-F), whether this be fashion, make-up, home décor, travel, and so on. However, these conversations pivoted around the ability to pursue inspirational products and services and hinged on gradations of affordability and imitating more expensive brands through cheaper ones; something that was evident across social class groups. Among lifestyle journalists, inspiration was aimed at audiences with the economic capital to pursue products and services they had been inspired by, while aspiration appeared to be targeted at those with less but adequate economic capital to imitate desirable lifestyles. However, what became evident among the audiences is that inspiration-driven consumption was indeed unreachable for most, arguably because only a very small percentage of the elite (4% according to the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit 2021) is likely to be able to afford the portrayed lifestyles. These audiences did not count themselves among this elite, even though their self-declared incomes (economic capital) would place them in that cadre. For example, one upper-class-White-female audience participant said that she “would tend to flip through and look at holidays and just dream because most of them are out of my price range anyway” but she would use such content as inspiration to research and come up with a more affordable itinerary at the same destination. This suggests that most audiences felt lifestyle products and services were ‘aspirational’ – however, for some this aspiration was financially further removed from their reality than for others. These beliefs turned to conversations around aspiration and highlighted audiences’ awareness of **gradations of affordability** amongst themselves and others, and the need for journalists to have a similar awareness. These considerations are reflected most clearly in the audiences’ expectations of journalists to *provide aspiration* and *be a mindful marketer* – expectations that mirror lifestyle journalists’ role conceptions – illustrated in the following two sections.

5.2.2. Providing aspiration

Congruent with journalists’ aspirational role, among the most-discussed audience expectations was aspiration. Audiences sought out aspiration in two forms – consumption and hope – but with two key differences. While aspiration through consumption spoke to audiences across the class spectrum, aspiration through motivation and hope spoke to working-class audiences and

young, middle-class audiences only. An important reminder here is that lifestyle journalists in this study generally neglected to target working-class audiences with aspirational content (whether consumption- or motivation-driven) despite evidence, as will be shown here, that working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences do in fact seek out and expect aspirational content of both types.

5.2.2.1. Aspiration through consumer ‘imitation’

Aspiration through consumption was about seeking ideas on new trends and “decorating your home” (W-BL-F). However, this form of aspiration highlighted gradations of affordability (Alexander et al. 2013) and fulfilling aspirational goals by ‘imitating’ (Bourdieu 1984) a lifestyle through more affordable products. Such aspirational behaviour and thinking were evident not only among the ‘nouveau riche’ (Bourdieu 1984) who were primarily targeted by lifestyle journalists, but audiences across the socio-economic spectrum, albeit exercised differently. Working-class-Black-Coloured-female audiences talked about replicating more expensive styles by shopping at budget stores, factories, or sewing their own clothes, while middle-upper-class-Black-White-female-male audiences talked about shopping at more affordable brand stores. Captured in this exchange is audiences’ aspirational thinking and behaviour in seeking imitation:

U-WH-F: You look at the price tag and, well, it’s out of my price range, but maybe I can go to Mr. Price and get the knockoff” [...] I mean we obviously all aspire to...

M-WH-F: There is an expensive way of doing things and there is a copy-cat way of doing things...

U-WH-F: Exactly!

M-WH-F: ... and it’s just as effective.

U-WH-F: Yeah!

As another working-class-Black-female said: “it’s gonna take me how many months to have this dress, it does frustrate you, but you give yourself that, I can have something similar to this but at a cheaper price.” (W-BL-F). Comparing their experiences to wealthier women, one working-class-Black-female participant who sews her own clothes said: “she bought it there for 350, and I make it for 50 Rand” (W-BL-F). These examples in particular illustrate how consumption can be used as a gateway to facilitate social belonging and therefore addresses the domain of identity (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Engaging in measured conspicuous consumption allows audiences otherwise invisible to the dominant social classes (including

lifestyle journalists) to replicate desired lifestyles and position themselves within an aspirational social class (Bourdieu 1984; Goffman 1959).

5.2.2.2. Aspiration through motivation and hope

Aspiration through motivation and hope spoke primarily to working-class-Black-Coloured-female audiences, but also middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-female-male audiences, albeit in slightly different ways. For working-class-Black-Coloured-female audiences, aspiration was about seeking “true-life stories” (W-BL-F) and exposed them to people who had achieved something, and could offer hope. As such, aspiration spoke more directly to the emotional domain of lifestyle journalism, but also the domain of identity (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) in their anticipation of desired social belonging in the future – expectations that speak to intrinsic goals of self-growth (Kasser and Ryan 1996). While journalists targeted such content almost exclusively at the aspirational middle class or the ‘nouveau riche’ (Bourdieu 1984), findings show that this form of aspiration also spoke to working-class audiences, and allowed them to recognize themselves in other people’s struggles and imagine potential future successes. Such examples of hopefulness and resilience were best captured in their repetition of the words “one day...” signifying their anticipation of a better future, as captured in this exchange:

W-BL-F: Same as like the celebrities, when you hear about them, it’s like they were from...

W-BL-F: Down.

W-BL-F: ...down, like, they were poor and same as we, always eating the cabbage, and I’m like ‘wow I’m eating that cabbage’.

[laughter]

W-BL-F: And they are eating that cabbage [...] it will relate to you like ‘oh that means you must just have that perseverance and then one day I’m going to be...’

W-BL-F: One day...

W-BL-F: ...just tell yourself that ‘this, it’s going to happen’ but with us mostly it’s like, yes you do get that motivation, but there will be something that is going to ...

W-BL-F: Put you down.

W-BL-F: ...put you down. [...] but as she is saying, by reading those stories, it really puts that thing, that one day...

While aspiration through hope and motivation was primarily about working-class-Black-Coloured audiences seeing themselves in others’ stories of success, it also presented itself more explicitly as motivation towards succeeding and gaining the economic capital to access

material products and services that are currently unattainable. This latter form of motivation was detected among middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed-female-male audiences, as captured in the following exchange:

M-BL-M: I'm just like... that's a good car, and I know that car is expensive, and yeah maybe I've gotta work harder, but it doesn't make me depressed or feel like I'm not worthy, or that I don't deserve it... it's just, ok, it's a nice car, so maybe one day, when I'm in that market... I can afford that car.

M-CO-F: It motivates you...

RESEARCHER: So, it's sort of something to...look forward to...

M-BL-F: Inspiration.

M-BL-M: I wouldn't say inspiration, but something like that... I mean...

M-BL-F: Motivation.

This form of aspirational thinking, middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed-female-male audiences said, “can give you a goal or direction” (M-CO-F) and “motivate you to want to work” (M-IN-M). It entailed daydreaming and imagining themselves in a better future; having access to such motivational material through lifestyle journalism they said, is “always a good thing” (M-IN-M). Others said: “I can't afford Woolworths, I'm not up there (M-MX-F), “but it's better to see the things than to not see it and just carry on living dull” (M-CO-F). Comments like these indicate just how nuanced and fluid the class structures in South Africa is, with evidence of aspirational thinking among working-class audiences, which consists of those living in both chronic and transient poverty, and the established and recent entrants to the middle class, all aspiring to relative levels of higher class belonging (Burger et al. 2015; Seeking and Nattrass 2015; Melber 2017).

The above outlined forms of aspiration speak to different but overlapping domains of everyday life that lifestyle journalism seeks to address, namely consumption, identity, and emotion (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). While these can be delineated, they also overlap. For instance, consumption feeds into audiences' domains of identity and emotion as they aspired to purchase or imitate products that allowed them to exercise both social belonging and emotional fulfilment, in pursuit of psychological growth (Ryan and Deci 2000).

While it was assumed that aspirational thinking and behaviour would exist among economic middle-class audiences – in particular the so-called ‘nouveau riche’ (Bourdieu 1984) – aspirational needs and behaviour was evident among both the aspirational middle class and the otherwise ignored working class, across racial and gender identities. These findings further problematize the neglect and invisibility of working-class audiences in lifestyle journalists’

conceptions of their target audiences – audiences who, although excluded from lifestyle journalism, evidently find value and meaning in it. The implications of these findings are elaborated on in the conclusion chapter.

5.2.3. Being a mindful (and transparent) marketer

Closely related to the aspirational role, audiences also expected lifestyle journalists *to be mindful marketers* of consumer products and services. However, audiences also had mixed responses and problematized both the journalistic role and their own expectations of marketing. While such lifestyle content offered them aspiration to pursue a richer life, audiences across all class groups, races and genders also expressed discretion and had an uneasy and cautious relationship with conspicuous consumption and extrinsic aspiration. They said that lifestyle journalism can “put up people’s expectations of what they can buy and what they can do when actually they can’t” (U-WH-F). Another person said:

you know you spend so much money on something that is up there, whereas you can buy something that’s within your bracket [...] you need to be cautious about that (M-BL-F).

Audiences were very cautious of the financial impact that extrinsic aspiration can have on them, stressing that “you need to be very rational when it comes to wants” (M-BL-F) and that “I mustn’t go for everything that’s in the magazine because you run out of money” (W-BL-F). Consumption cautiousness among audiences to a great extent reflects the commitment of lifestyle journalists in this study towards moderating conspicuous consumption and acting as ‘responsible’ cultural intermediaries (Hovden 2008), by expecting journalists to both manipulate but also discourage the pursuit of cultural wants and needs. Among working-class audiences, conspicuous consumption in particular was an outcome of peer pressure to fit in and the desire to escape the reality of poverty and “feeling defeated because they don’t have” (W-BL-F), by reallocating limited economic capital to conspicuous products. Delving further into these findings is beyond the scope of this thesis, as they relate more broadly to scholarship on consumption culture and aspiration within social psychology, however they do suggest that audiences expect journalists to moderate the promotion of conspicuous consumption and the pursuit of extrinsic aspiration to prevent its potentially negative impact on people’s well-being (Kasser and Ryan 1996). Working-class-Black-Coloured audiences spoke about being cautious of conspicuous consumption but understood it intimately, in claiming that many of them, especially younger people who “have struggle so much while growing up, don’t want to face the consequences” (W-BL-F) and therefore re-allocate economic capital to conspicuous,

material goods (Bourdieu 1984) over inconspicuous goods such as subsistence necessities. Similar findings have been detected among African American and Hispanic US consumers (Charles et al. 2009) and recent entrants to the Black-middle-class in South Africa (Burger et al. 2015), who are more likely to re-allocate economic capital to goods that signal status over invisible or inconspicuous goods such as health. Much of this also has to do with the peer pressure and the emotional and psychological need to “fit in” (W-BL-F) with those in higher economic classes: “you want to be accepted by people so rather than buying food I’m gonna go buy these shoes [...] If most of them have money, you have to act as if you have money” (W-BL-F). However, findings also suggest that audiences in this study engage in measured consumption practices, which challenges past research showing that those of a lower socio-economic status and with greater susceptibility to normative pressures are more likely to engage in materialism in order to regain control over their lives (Chang and Arkin 2002). Beyond conspicuous consumption or the need to “look the part” (M-WH-F), middle-upper-class audiences across race and gender pointed to the importance of quality, no matter the cost, “if I know its quality and its actually gonna do something” (M-CO-F), pointing to the fact that consumption is not always about status-signalling but also about the pursuit of quality (Truong 2010).

5.2.3.1. Class-race distinctions around affordability

Audiences were acutely aware of gradations of affordability and held the belief that lifestyle journalism and especially the products and services it advertises is out of touch with reality and caters to the rich and elite, which the upper-class audiences in this study also felt excluded from. Levels of affordability of course are relative and vary from one class group to another; what is affordable to one is aspirational to another. The upper-middle-class-Black-White audiences in this study remarked: “I come across these expensive clothing... and I’m like, I don’t think I can afford these kinds of things” (M-BL-M) and “if you can’t afford to buy it or do it, why be interested?” (U-WH-F). At the same time, these audiences recognised themselves as being a part of journalists’ target group and distinct from the working classes who they saw as entirely excluded: “they [lifestyle journalism] have to sell to someone and you know, for the lower-class people, unfortunately for them, you know, some of them don’t even have access to resources” (M-BL-M).

In almost identical ways, upper-middle-class-Black-White audiences shared lifestyle journalists’ beliefs about how working-class audiences would experience lifestyle content. Whereas lifestyle journalists across race and gender claimed that such content would evoke

anger, jealousy, disconnection and an inability to relate to this content, among working-class audiences, and that it could even cause harm (see Section 4.3.1.1), upper-middle-class-Black-White audiences also believed that such content could have a damaging effect, as this exchange illustrates:

M-BL-M: They are going to wonder how far they have been left behind in life...

[...]

U-WH-F: It's going to breed discontent.

U-WH-M: For example, if you have no running water [...] and you pick up a magazine that's been discarded and you see people sitting next to a swimming pool, I mean the dichotomy is so vast that...

RESEARCHER: So, what do you think they might think or feel?

U-WH-M: Envy.

M-WH-F: What have I done wrong in life... why can't I sit next to the pool.

Reflecting similar classist and racist distinctions related to intelligence/education, an upper-class-White participant believed not only that working-class audiences were unlikely to improve their lives, but that a lack of education meant they were unable to comprehend lifestyle journalism. As this participant said: "you find that these people's lifestyle hardly ever will change and so they are always at a disadvantage; because of bad education they can't get any further in life" (U-WH-F). Referring to a working-class person reading a lifestyle magazine, this participant added: "he actually doesn't know what any of this means whereas for the privileged who have had a good education they can actually enjoy and be critical of what's going on there" (U-WH-F).

In contrast, working- and aspirational middle-class audiences expressed some frustration about lacking the economic (money) and cultural (education) capital to access such lifestyle products and services, but they also accepted this as a current reality that they seek to change. On the contrary, working-class audiences did not express anger, envy, a disconnection or inability to relate to lifestyle journalism as anticipated by lifestyle journalists and upper-middle-class-Black-White audiences. Even though lifestyle journalism reminded working-class and some aspirational middle-class audiences of what they do not have and reaffirmed class distinctions, these audiences also appeared to accept this as 'just the way it is'. As one participant said: "when you read the magazine you've got that thing, if I would like go to school or go back to school to finish, I would be someone like this" (W-BL-F). Another added that she sometimes asks herself: "why are these things happening to me, I do not have money, and so on and so on, but at some point, again then you say, these people they work for this money"

(W-BL-F). A middle-class participant said: “it just comes with the territory, so once you get to a certain level there are certain things that you should be looking at,” however until that point, he said, you have to “stay in your lane” (M-BL-F). Indeed, as findings presented above illustrate, working- and aspirational middle-class audiences found in lifestyle journalism a source of aspiration.

Although lifestyle journalism could be a source of frustration and a reminder of what they do not have and cannot afford, working-class audiences also rejected the appeal of extrinsic aspiration, stressing the intrinsic importance of community and making the best out of what they had (Kasser and Ryan 1996). One said: “when you see the negative, you remove the negative and you put the positive and move on with your life” (W-BL-F). They relativized its value, thus in some way “refusing what they are refused” (Bourdieu 1984: 471). As one person said: “I don’t need such fancy stuff. It makes you realize that I can have a good lifestyle without having a lot, do you understand?” (W-BL-F).

Finally, in response to the above beliefs and perceptions, audiences reiterated an idea that journalists should be ‘mindful marketers’ and become better aware of the full spectrum of economic and cultural capital that audiences in South Africa have. This would allow them to better reach and more effectively market their products and services to a greater diversity of groups. As one participant said:

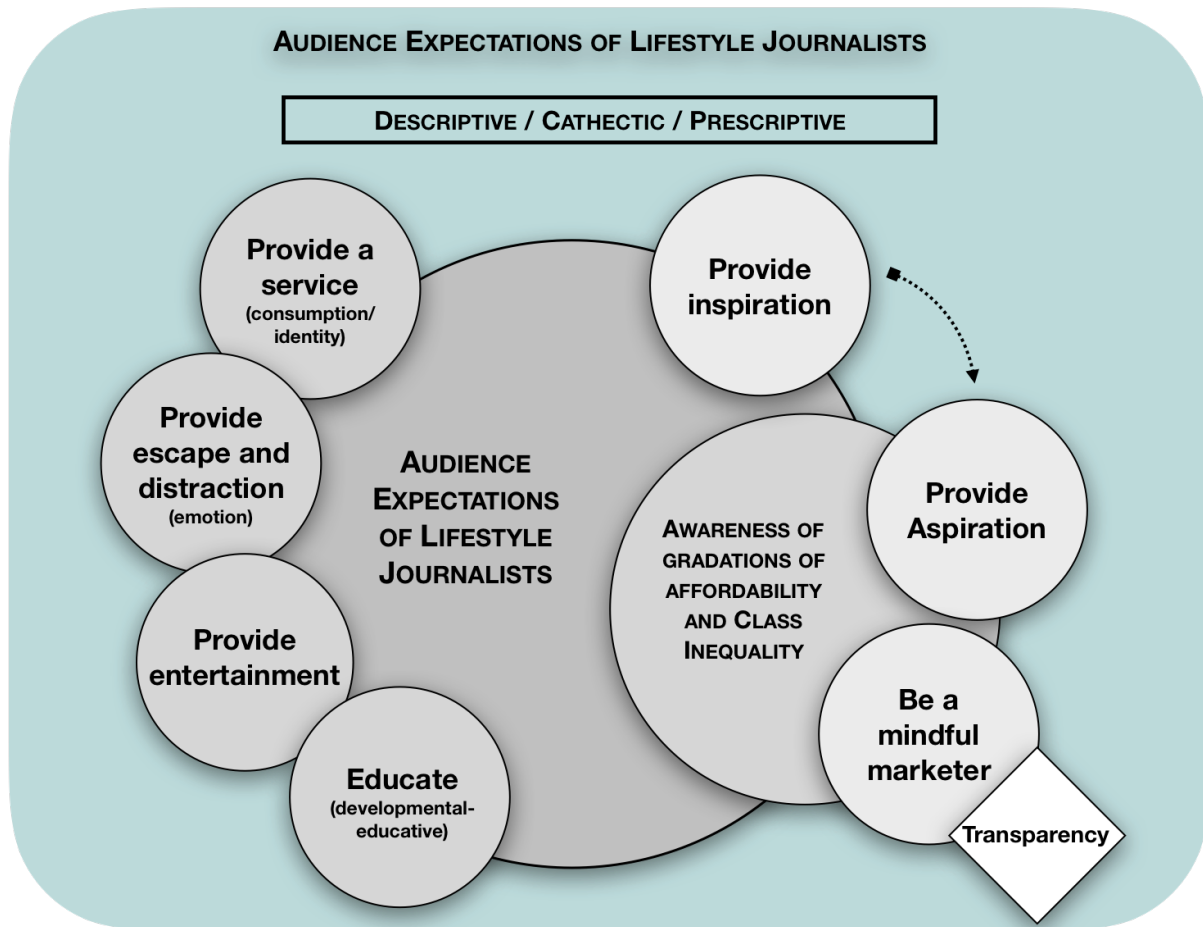
I think they need to study their target market, study their LSM readers, and don’t put stuff into those magazines that are out of people’s reach because then they are either going to become very discontented or lose interest completely. I think that’s something they need to look at (U-WH-F).

5.2.3.2. Transparency: Wariness of commercial imperatives and false advertising

For audiences across the class-race-gender intersection, **transparency** was another key expectation they held of lifestyle journalists in their role as mindful marketers. Specifically, because of audiences’ belief that lifestyle journalism more so than political journalism was beholden to advertising and sponsorship pressures, and would not always be transparent, openly critical, or tell the truth about a product or service. While being transparent is not a role conception per se but a value and orientation among many others, including truthfulness, objectivity and impartiality (Hanitzsch et al. 2013), audiences believed that it was a critical component of the journalists’ role of being a mindful marketer. They expected journalists to research products and deliver information that openly praised but also critiqued products, so that audiences themselves do not have to engage in “trial and error” (M-BL-F) exercises which

can be costly. At the same time, audiences were sceptical about whether such transparency was always possible. As this upper-class-White-female said, lifestyle journalists are “dependent for income from advertising, they are not in a position to say, ‘look this is such rubbish, we are not going to publish this’” (U-WH-F). In particular, audiences were frustrated by ‘false promises’ pushed through products that do not deliver on these. As such, audiences expected lifestyle journalists to “learn to say no” to such advertising because “in one way or another it also gives the publication a bad name” (M-BL-M). This belief extended beyond traditional lifestyle journalists to interloper media (Eldridge 2018), specifically, those who post on the social media network Instagram. Here, especially younger, middle-class audiences across racial and gender identities believed that influencers were particularly beholden to commercial influences and imperatives. As one audience member said: “people get paid to say certain things about certain things” (M-MX-F) and “it’s not believable [...] you know they are getting paid to say it” (M-CO-F), which they said made it hard to fully trust influencers. Those who openly critiqued products or stated that they purchased the product themselves were perceived as believable. These findings very much reflect those detected among young consumers of lifestyle content across Instagram, YouTube and blogs in Austria, who said influencers that were perceived as more transparent were also seen as more authentic, which promoted greater connection and perceptions of credibility among audiences (Banjac and Hanusch 2020) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Audience Expectations of Lifestyle Journalists



COMPLEX EXPECTATIONS: In relation to lifestyle journalists, audiences expressed predominantly complex expectations. For example, audiences both believe it is a key role of lifestyle journalists to market products and service, and at the same time claim that journalists should do so mindfully.

5.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The audiences in this study expressed diverse expectations of political and lifestyle journalists, and conveyed these through varied modes, as both simple and complex expectations. In relation to political journalists, audiences expressed mostly descriptive (beliefs) expectations – specifically, that journalists were market-oriented and preoccupied with capturing audience attention over providing them with ‘quality’ journalism, that they were captured by political powers that were partisan and biased, and that they were driven too strongly by negative and problem-centred news. While the first two expectations are simple, the last of these is particularly interesting as it is part of a complex expectation. Besides believing that journalists

were too negativity-driven, audiences also expressed disliking this as it had a negative psychological impact on them (cathectic expectation), prompting news avoidance, and in response, audiences demanded that journalists should instead be providing solutions to problems. How audiences wanted these solutions to look depended on their intersectional identities and lived experiences, with audiences marginalized along class and race seeking solutions to be empowering and driven by a sense of empathy, and audiences with greater intersectional power seeking solutions to invite accountability and expose positive news.

In relation to lifestyle journalism, audiences expected journalists to provide a service, escapism and distraction, entertainment and education. Reflecting the roles of lifestyle journalists, audiences also conveyed an awareness of gradations of affordability and inequality, expecting journalists to be mindful of class differences in how they market lifestyle products and services to audiences, and the way they promote aspirational ideals, so as not to encourage overspending or conspicuous consumption. While the journalists more explicitly targeted inspiration and aspiration at those with varying levels of economic/cultural capital, audiences both drew and collapsed class distinction. On the one hand, audiences differentiated their and others' ability to afford lifestyle products or even comprehend lifestyle journalism, and on the other hand, they claimed all lifestyle journalism was too unreachable and aspirational for audiences across class groups in South Africa. Unlike their expectations of political journalists, audiences' expectations of lifestyle journalists were predominantly complex. For example, audiences believed that lifestyle journalists marketed lifestyle products and services, had mixed feelings (like/dislike) about this role, and expected journalists should be mindful about how they engage with this role.

Audiences also evoked racist and classist stereotypes to draw distinctions between themselves and the 'other' around the idea of what constitutes 'quality' versus 'popular' news and who consumes what. Both in relation to political and lifestyle journalism, audiences with greater intersectional power shared descriptive expectations (beliefs that emerge as stereotypes) about audiences marginalized at the intersection of class and race, by evoking colonialist ideologies about intelligence. The political journalism they consumed was intelligent and for the intelligent, while the tabloid journalism the 'other' consumed lacked intelligence and was based around sensationalism and entertainment. Similarly, although audiences across intersectional identities expressed diverse, positive expectations of lifestyle journalism, intersectional differences emerged when those with greater intersectional power characterized the consumption of lifestyle journalism as a mindless exercise engaged in by the

‘other’ (a finding that emerges explicitly in findings on lifestyle-political journalism boundaries – see Chapter 6).

In answer to the broader question addressed by both chapters 4 and 5, once triangulated, the findings suggest different levels of consensus and conformity across journalists’ role conceptions, their imaginations of audience expectations, and audiences’ actual expectations. As already suggested in the summary of findings for Chapter 4, the consensus between role conceptions and imaginations was low for political journalists, and relatively high for lifestyle journalists. Factoring in audiences’ actual expectations we see a continuing trend. Audiences’ actual expectations of lifestyle journalists show high consensus in accurately mimicking not only journalists’ imaginations of audience expectations, but also journalists’ role conceptions. In relation to political journalists, audiences’ actual expectations are also strikingly similar to journalists’ imaginations of audiences’ expectations, meaning that journalists hold a fairly accurate awareness of what their audiences actually expect of them. Where this consensus falls apart is in political journalists’ role conceptions, which in a kind of idealized way sits almost entirely detached from and unreflective of these expectations (imagined or actual). What this begins to suggest is a discursive construction of roles so deeply rooted and established that they cannot or do not seek to conform to the evidently contradictory expectations. Alternatively, the political journalists in this study experience other organisational or institution/society-level influences that disrupt their roles and prevent them from conforming to the observed audience expectations. The theoretical implications of these findings are unpacked in the conclusion chapter.

6. POLITICAL-LIFESTYLE BOUNDARIES: Findings

The concept of boundaries has so far allowed scholars to examine questions about what constitutes journalism at a time when the field is increasingly becoming porous to new entrants or interloper journalistic actors and media (Carlson and Lewis 2015; Eldridge 2018). However, the concept is equally useful in detecting where journalists within more dominant forms of journalism (e.g. political) have engaged in the expulsion of ‘other’ popular forms of journalism (e.g. lifestyle) by drawing on explicit, discursive boundary markers. Even though this study found boundary-blurring in the overlapping role conceptions expressed by both political and lifestyle journalists (Section 4.2.4), when asked explicitly what they believe about one another and their societal functions, political and lifestyle journalists discursively constructed boundaries. The political journalists engaged in the ‘othering’ of lifestyle journalists by drawing on gendered language that was, astoundingly, very similar or almost identical to those detected in past studies (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), and conversely, many lifestyle journalists engaged in ‘self-othering’ or ‘self-deprecation’ by stressing that their societal function was insignificant in comparison to that of political journalists. Similar forms of symbolic distinction are also seen in the way audiences (with intersectional differences) exert their beliefs about the societal value of political and lifestyle journalism to everyday life. These patterns are explored below.

The following sections illustrate how lifestyle journalists believe political journalists perceive them, and these views are contrasted with how political journalists actually perceive lifestyle journalists. Also examined is how lifestyle journalists perceive themselves and their work vis-à-vis political journalists, evident in their negotiation between self-deprecation and self-affirmation. Finally, these boundary discourses are explored from the perspective of audiences: what value audiences attach to political and lifestyle journalism, and how they construct or challenge boundaries between the two, where markers of the grand public-private dichotomy emerge clearly. More specifically, Chapter 6, answers:

RQ6: *How are boundaries between political and lifestyle journalists implicitly and explicitly reinforced or challenged, by journalists and audiences?*

6.1. Where journalists draw boundaries: Imagined Perceptions Versus Actual Perceptions

When asked how they believe political journalists imagine them, most lifestyle journalist interviewed for this study, without much difficulty, seemed to conjure up very similar descriptive terms, that in many instances reflect evaluations expressed by Australian and German lifestyle journalists (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). In the words of the lifestyle journalists, they believed that political journalists perceive them as “frivolous” (Khanyisile-BL-F; Heidi-WH-F), “fluffy” (Kassy-WH-F), “shallow, without conviction, spineless” (Andrea-WH-F), “not as serious” (Kassy-WH-F; Patrick-WH-M), “unimportant” (Khanyisile-BL-F), “just a party” (Thembile-BL-F), “the people that make everybody happy” (Rekopile-BL-F), “always out at lunches” (Maria-WH-F), “doing/going to fancy things” (Thembile-BL-F), “not actually serving so much of a purpose” (Patrick-WH-M), “not making a difference” (Julia-WH-F), “not doing real work” (Thembile-BL-F), “that what we do is a complete joke, and that they are doing something so much more serious and meaningful” (Patrick-WH-M), that “we are kind of wasting paper by writing this stuff and we should really be working for a cause” (Andrea-WH-F), and that “they look down on us” (Heidi-WH-F). Similarly, German and Australian lifestyle journalists believed that political journalists saw their work as “quite trivial and fluffy,” “having a good time [and] lots of long lunches and fun,” and that all they did was “go on holidays” (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013: 955). That almost identical discourse is found among lifestyle journalists across these different countries speaks to just how entrenched gendered stereotypes are in perceptions of lifestyle journalism’s societal value across journalism cultures and contexts. Put differently, the above descriptors not only reflect terminology traditionally associated with the feminine and private spheres of life, such as emotion, intuition, and nature (Pateman 1983) “concord, harmony, affiliation, community” (Covert 1981: 4) or reproduction, nurturing, and family life (Costera Meijer 2001; Ross and Carter 2011) but even more insidiously, they suggest that the feminine and private is superficial and fleeting, pliable and manipulable, inconsequential and peripheral, mindless and laughable, merely gleeful foolery. Beyond being gendered, such discourse is imbued with ethno-centric assumptions about what is and is not quality in journalism, as will become particularly evident in audiences’ perceptions of the political-lifestyle binary (Costera Meijer 2001). The interviewed lifestyle journalists who work for lifestyle sections of newspapers as opposed to magazines were even more aware of and likely to have had experiences of their work not being taken seriously, mainly because, unlike magazine journalists, they share their newsroom with

political journalists. As one lifestyle journalist said: “in the newsroom there is definitely still a hierarchy as far as how people appreciate and respect lifestyle journalism versus news versus politics” (Thembile-BL-F).

In contrast, political journalists expressed far fewer but nonetheless similar boundary markers predictably expressed by lifestyle journalists, namely that *they have it easy*. Political journalists believed that lifestyle journalists “are having it nice” (Shaun-BL-M), “having a good time” (Richard-BL-M), and “have it easy” (Wandile-BL-F). On the other hand, political journalists perceived themselves as driven by a societal cause, and reporting on “serious stuff” (Shaun-BL-M) – perceptions that arguably reflect gendered terminology associated with the masculine and public sphere, such as reason and power (Pateman 1983), democracy and citizenship (Costera Meijer 2001), and being a self-sufficient, liberated man on a quest for freedom (Covert 1981). Political journalists’ change agent role conception, associated with improving the lives of people, was exerted as more important than offering audiences celebrity news. Instead of “stalking Beyonce on Instagram” one political journalist said, “shouldn’t journalism be striving towards changing people’s lives?” (Richard-BL-M). In particular, political journalists believed that lifestyle journalists were held captive by commercial pressures and influences from advertising and PR and thus *lacked autonomy, impartiality, and credibility*, and by extension offered little to no value to society. Lifestyle journalism was seen as an “an extension of PR and advertising” (Samuel-WH-M) and “just bidding for which freebie they are gonna go on” (Shaun-BL-M). These boundary markers reflect the fact that lifestyle journalists do indeed negotiate varying commercial pressures, including from advertisers, public relations, and the provision of freebies – free products and services in exchange for (favourable) news coverage. Studies have found that lifestyle journalists do indeed often feel they lack autonomy and therefore are resigned to their economic dependencies, but that they also resist these pressures in creative ways (Hanusch et al. 2016). While journalists experience advertisers and their economic leverage as a source of hard power that makes them more susceptible to sacrificing editorial autonomy, lifestyle journalists experience public relations as a source of soft power, meaning they have been somewhat accepted as a helpful and relevant aspect of journalists’ work practices and this is not so much seen as jeopardizing but rather as contributing to acts of editorial autonomy (Hanusch et al. 2019). Political journalists’ views of lifestyle journalists’ commercial dependence neglect the reality that mainstream journalism in general, due to growing economic precarity, technological transformation, and the need to market the news to audiences, has become more beholden to market influences (Fürsich 2012). That political journalists distinguish themselves

from lifestyle journalists in this regard is a discursive strategy that allows them to construct and maintain their authority and legitimacy in the eyes of the public (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), something lifestyle journalists also discursively engage in, but also appear to be more transparent about.

Besides believing lifestyle journalists have it easy and lack autonomy and credibility, political journalists also acknowledged that *lifestyle journalists are important but within a different sphere*. As these journalists claimed, lifestyle journalists “perform an important role just in a different space” (Tania-WH-F), serving as “light relief” (Shaun-BL-M) for society, and may even be “crucial to the success of journalism” (Samuel-WH-M). Again, such views reflect past findings, to the extent that in Germany and Australia lifestyle journalists believed that their political news colleagues perceived them as able to “generate reasonable amounts of advertising” and were therefore “respected and even admired by their colleagues” (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013: 955). Some political journalists in this study even expressed a strong aversion towards their fellow colleagues’ ‘snobbery’ towards lifestyle journalists. One political journalist said that lifestyle journalists “have a role in reflecting society back on itself and allowing society to express itself through their channels and they could also possibly have a developmental role” (Tania-WH-F). This belief on the part of the political journalists accurately reflects the finding that lifestyle journalists do indeed have developmental roles. Another political journalist argued that lifestyle journalism was “underappreciated” and that such dismissive beliefs are “quite horrible snobbery,” especially when lifestyle journalists, he argued, “are the first to go” (Kailash-IN-M) in a financial crisis and during cost-cutting measures.

As becomes clearer in the following section, many lifestyle journalists negotiated conflicting self-beliefs, having both absorbed the above outlined stereotypes but also actively challenging them. On the one hand, they engaged in self-othering and self-deprecation (Spivak 1985) by highlighting ways in which their work was societally insignificant in contrast to political journalists, and on the other hand, they engaged in self-affirmation, by challenging these stereotypes and asserting their vital function in society (Jensen 2011).

6.2. Self-affirmation and self-deprecation: Lifestyle journalists’ self-beliefs vis-à-vis political journalists

To a large extent, lifestyle journalists in this study internalized their own beliefs about how political journalists perceive them, as well as political journalists’ actual beliefs. Specifically,

lifestyle journalists believed their work made key contributions to society alongside political journalists, but also, and perhaps to a greater degree, they expressed self-deprecating beliefs about their journalism, claiming that their work was much easier, less serious and stressful, carried less risk of harassment, and overall contributed less value to society. These views are expanded on below.

6.2.1. Self-deprecation and self-othering

Lifestyle journalists' self-deprecating beliefs largely reflected normative views about the societal value of lifestyle journalism, citing stereotypes on *democratic seriousness versus everyday fluff*, *dependence versus autonomy from commercial influences*, and *pleasure versus survival of human life* as values that separate lifestyle and political journalism. Put differently, lifestyle journalists othered themselves around dimensions of emotion, commerce (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018), and even human life.

As one lifestyle magazine editor claimed, lifestyle journalism was “*just doing fluff*, restaurant reviews and so on, it's pleasant, it's easy reading, but it's not of any real value” (Jake-WH-M). Another lifestyle magazine editor said: “if I was a news journalist today, I just wouldn't be able to take magazine journalists seriously at all” (Gary-CO-M). ‘Real’ journalists – political journalists – were seen as “important contributors to society and to democracy and to change” (Jake-WH-M), and as “fulfilling the mandate of the fourth estate which is to distribute useful information to uplift people's lives through that information” (Gary-CO-M). In doing critical reporting political journalists were seen to face greater psychological and physical risks than lifestyle journalists and thus their work deserves greater appreciation. As one lifestyle journalist said: “no one is gonna kill a technology journalist” (Clive-WH-M). It was due to her earlier work as a political journalist that one lifestyle journalist claimed she can go beyond being “just a lifestyle person where people see you as just doing fun things” to doing “hard news stories about fashion and travel” (Rekopile-BL-F) – by making her lifestyle reporting more ‘political’ she validated her works' worth. Likewise, an editor believed that lifestyle journalism becomes journalism when it takes on a more critical stance and integrates elements of anthropology, history, and nature conservation (Jake-WH-M), in other words, when it has greater political utility and public value (Hanusch 2019).

Lifestyle editors also critiqued lifestyle journalism's close relationship to the lifestyle industry, commercial imperatives, and *dependence on advertising and freebies*. They believed that lifestyle journalism was lightweight, full of pictures, without valuable information, and “mostly selling adverts” (Gary-CO-M). Once again reflecting political journalism norms,

lifestyle editors believed that their work became valuable when it was completely independent and when it stirred or invited a strong reaction from its audiences, as might be found among political journalists with participatory and interventionist roles associated with the advocative-radical and developmental-educative dimensions (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). As one lifestyle editor argued:

journalism is only journalism when you are upsetting somebody, and in lifestyle journalism you are desperately trying not to upset anybody. So, it's not journalism, it's advertorial. [...] They [political journalists] are rejecting the lunches, aggressively rejecting the lunches, and we are aggressively embracing the lunches (Jake-WH-M).

Finally, lifestyle journalists believed that political journalism made a larger contribution to life, going so far as to say it was critical to the *survival of the human race*. As this editor said about lifestyle journalism: “it’s good for relaxation but I don’t think it’s ever going to save someone’s life” (Maria-WH-F). Asked to choose between political and lifestyle journalism, one lifestyle journalist said: “out of the need for the human race to continue, I would say political journalists are probably more important because they do deal with harder-hitting issues than whether to put spirulina in your smoothies bowl” (Kassy-WH-F). What these comments imply is that lifestyle journalism’s concern with the everyday (e.g. food and health) was trivial to human life, while political journalism’s key societal function – beyond contributing to democracy and citizenship – was a matter of life and death. While stereotype dichotomies of fluff versus seriousness and commercial autonomy versus dependence as discursive distinctions have to some extent been detected in past research on lifestyle journalism (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), the journalists in this study amplified the hierarchy between political and lifestyle journalism to existential questions of human survival.

6.2.1.1. Inaccessible specialists or accessible generalists: What’s in a name?

Among reasons why lifestyle journalists and editors denigrated and discredited lifestyle journalism’s societal value were its name; that the term ‘lifestyle’ was associated with a lack of specialisation or directed focus on specific areas of life. Specifically, lifestyle journalists said that political journalism like cultural, art or music journalism is a *specialization*, focusing in-depth on one area of life, namely politics, culture, art, or music. Lifestyle, on the other hand, was perceived as a generalized term encompassing multiple genres and aspects of life and was thus associated with a watered-down or superficial journalism. This, one editor believed, was the reason why journalists who are genre experts command respect and look down on those who identify as ‘lifestyle journalists’ and are thus perceived to be “*generalists*” or “very

surface” (Kabelo-BL-M). Perceptions of lifestyle journalism as too generalist also related to beliefs about *accessibility*. Lifestyle journalism was seen as accessible, while specialist-genre journalism such as politics or art, were seen to be “super inaccessible to anyone, and no one really gets it, because everyone is sort of not academic enough or informed enough” (Patrick-WH-M). That political, art, culture and music journalists are seen as *inaccessible specialists* reflects to some extent an understanding of the field of cultural production as an opposition between the sub-field of small-scale production where producers produce for others like them and a small population that can appreciate their exclusive, specialist knowledge and work, and the sub-field of large-scale production where producers produce for the non-knowledgeable, general public with the aim of reaching the broadest possible market through products that are easily accessible and digestible (Hovden 2008: 41, citing Bourdieu [1971] 1985). Echoing the above lifestyle journalist’s perceptions of, for example, art journalists, the small-scale producers are seen as producing “‘pure’, ‘abstract’ and ‘esoteric’ works which are more or less unintelligible outside the subfield,” while lifestyle journalists, in the context of this study at least, might be seen as superficially appealing to the broadest possible public and market (Hovden 2008: 41, citing Bourdieu [1983] 1993: 115), making them *accessible generalists*.

Drawing on gendered stereotypes of emotion and frivolity versus rationality and information (Pateman 1983; Costera Meijer 2001), further dichotomies were drawn when another editor claimed that the term ‘lifestyle’ in itself denoted merely *superficial trivialness* which underappreciated how lifestyle journalism also offers *in-depth usefulness*. As he said, lifestyle journalism is “basically news that you can use; it’s useful information, it’s not just frivolous articles on celebrities, it’s stuff that really informs you and that changes the way you live, or influences the way you live, guides the way... it’s a lifestyle guide [...] but I wouldn’t call it lifestyle because that kind of undervalues what it really is” (James-WH-M). Interestingly, the editor here appeared to construct a further hierarchy between roles found exclusively within lifestyle journalism’s roles of being a service provider – which stems from service journalism’s news-you-can-use orientation, and provides audiences with useful, practical advice about everyday life – and of providing entertainment and relaxation (Hanusch 2012; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Eide and Knight 1999). That is, the hierarchy that emerges here is not enforced only between lifestyle and political journalism broadly, but also between various roles within lifestyle journalism that seem closer or further to the rational-informative versus emotional-entertaining dimensions of journalistic roles.

Although lifestyle journalists reinforced hierarchies and drew boundaries between political journalists and themselves by self-othering, they also reinforced their societal value,

by expressing self-affirmative claims about their key function and contribution to their audiences' everyday life.

6.2.2. Self-affirmation and rejection of othering

Despite the self-deprecating beliefs, lifestyle journalists also reaffirmed their societal value, arguing they provide a balance to political journalism, especially for audiences who may be news avoiders by: (1) being a counter to the negativity of political journalism; and (2) providing in-depth coverage and solutions to problems exposed by political journalism's fast, superficial, and event-driven news. Both of these approaches are also reflected in audiences' beliefs about lifestyle journalism vis-à-vis political journalism (as illustrated below in Section 6.3).

Even though "it [lifestyle journalism] seems a little silly" one journalist said, "it definitely has its place" (Julia-WH-F), and despite their perceived hierarchy, political and lifestyle journalists "work hand in hand" (Maria-WH-F). They argued that lifestyle journalism can act as a *counter to the negativity of political news*, as one journalist noted: "we need both, for people to be happy" (Kassy-WH-F). Lifestyle journalism, one journalist claimed, "offers something different than the perpetual 'this person got killed'" (Khanyisile-BL-F). Such a counter-role to political journalism may be particularly vital in light of research showing that audiences increasingly avoid news because they experience it as negative and a source of depression, hopelessness and cynicism (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; Poindexter et al. 2010; McIntyre 2019). Lifestyle journalists also felt that they complemented political journalism's event-driven, superficial coverage by *providing more in-depth engagement with issues, furthering public conversation, and providing solutions to problems*, therefore reaching news-avoiding audiences. Specifically referring to the story of the child raped in public toilets, to which audiences felt political journalists offered no solutions, one lifestyle journalist said that she "has the responsibility to go look at other angles" (Philani-BL-F). Solutions journalism offers audiences rigorous and comprehensive coverage that highlights tangible solutions to problems and can make audiences feel less negative and hopeless (McIntyre 2019; McIntyre and Lough 2019). While solutions journalism has been increasingly explored in relation to political journalism and its impact on audiences (Wenzel et al. 2018; McIntyre 2019), these findings indicate that lifestyle journalists see the provision of solutions journalism as their key counter-function to political journalism's lack of solutions-driven reporting.

The distinction that lifestyle journalists made between 'fast news' and 'in-depth coverage' was seen in their consistent reference to political journalists as reporting "news"

versus lifestyle journalists telling “stories.” By having a greater human-element focus to their storytelling, lifestyle journalists believed that they *engaged news-avoiding audiences with political issues in an entertaining and accessible way*. As one journalist said: “the very non-political side of media is important and is able to reach a reader who is not picking up the *Mail & Guardian*, is not picking up a hard news source” (Chloe-WH-F). Another journalist said that it is about making sure that “the style of writing is entertaining but the content is informative” (Andrea-WH-F). These views relate to the soft-hard news dichotomy in journalism, and to how audiences also perceive their consumption of quality/serious versus popular/entertaining news, and that young people, especially, expect journalists to provide them with quality news but presented in captivating and entertaining ways that capture their attention (Costera Meijer 2007). Being entertaining does not mean abandoning quality, rigorous journalism, but it does suggest that audiences expect journalists to transcend the private-public, quality-popular binaries. Some lifestyle journalists suggested that the boundary between entertainment and ‘serious’ news is blurring because, “**so much of what we call serious journalism is becoming lifestyle journalism**” (Rick-WH-M) and readers are increasingly demanding entertainment, as well as ‘hard’ news presented in entertaining ways. Indeed, as discussed in Section 4.1.4, providing news in an entertaining (captivating and accessible) way was important for political journalists.

The above discussion begins to highlight some **entrenched dichotomies and boundary markers** that lifestyle and political journalists explicitly draw upon to distinguish themselves from each another, even when their role conceptions imply greater overlap between the two. Broadly speaking, the findings presented above reinforce binaries around concepts like ‘hard’ versus ‘soft’ news, ‘serious’ versus ‘fluffy’ and ‘frivolous’, ‘provocative’ versus ‘pleasing’, ‘information’ versus ‘entertainment’, ‘news’ versus ‘stories’, ‘negative’ versus ‘positive,’ and even ‘journalist’ versus ‘writer’. The following section examines the extent to which some of these binaries might be present in audiences’ perceptions of lifestyle-political journalism boundaries in their discussion of the value that each contributes to their everyday life.

6.3. Where audiences draw boundaries: Reinforcing the grand dichotomy

Audiences in this study claimed that both political and lifestyle journalism are important, and that lifestyle journalism offers value to their lives in ways that political journalism does not, citing several reasons also raised by the lifestyle journalists themselves: (1) lifestyle journalism

provides an escape from the negativity of political journalism; by (2) giving audiences a sense of agency and hope, while political journalism provokes feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness; and (3) that lifestyle journalism speaks to their private and intimate lives, while political journalism feels distant in speaking to public issues beyond their control. On the one hand, audiences normalized the boundaries between lifestyle and political journalism in claiming that both play a crucial but different function in society. However, they simultaneously repurposed these ‘natural’ boundaries to draw distinctions between consumers of political and lifestyle journalism, by evoking *classist and racists narratives of intelligence*.

6.3.1. Positivity, agency and intimacy versus negativity, powerlessness and distance

Audiences experienced lifestyle journalism as a source of positivity and an antidote to the negativity of political journalism. While political journalism’s negativity was a source of powerlessness and hopelessness, lifestyle journalism was seen as imbuing audiences with a sense of agency and hope. Much of this sense of agency was experienced in their intimate, private sphere of life, while their sense of powerlessness was associated with political journalism and its concern with issues relevant to the public sphere which felt distant.

Positivity versus negativity: Studies on news avoidance have found that audiences minimize or boycott news consumption precisely because its negativity brings on feelings of depression and hopelessness in changing the status quo (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; McIntyre 2019). The findings of this study also reflect past research showing that young audiences increasingly expect political news to be presented in entertaining and engaging ways, to be a source of humour and empathy, and to offer inspirational storytelling to counter negative news (Costera Meijer 2007: 2010). As these audiences said: “lifestyle is just... it’s life, it just gives you that feeling of freedom, it’s just a good feeling, whereas news, if you talk news, you think negative” (U-WH-F); “one makes you feel good, and the other makes you feel bad” (M-IN-M). Visible in this quote also is that audiences frequently referred to political journalism as news, and lifestyle journalism as either ‘lifestyle’ or ‘stories’ – as lifestyle journalists did too. Audiences associated lifestyle journalism with lightness and happiness, and political journalism with negative feelings, as captured in this exchange, discussing why they like lifestyle journalism:

M-MX-F: Because it’s lighter! If you watch a lifestyle video, whether you like it or not you are more likely to be happier afterwards as opposed to a political video or something ... if something bad happens you will be upset for days...

M-BL-F: Yeah, politics sort of affects you negatively in certain aspects.

When magazines do feature negative or sad stories, one person remarked that they immediately flip past it as this is precisely what she seeks to escape from in her daily consumption of political news: “I won’t read that... as soon as I see that headline... waaah, next page” (U-WH-F). As noted among audiences who either moderate their consumption of or completely avoid political news (Section 5.1.3), this participant also engaged in “measured avoidance,” allowing her to quickly assess the topic of the news item and whether it might have a negative effect on her mood (Groot Kormelink 2020: 872).

Agency versus powerlessness: As an extension of escaping negativity, audiences felt that lifestyle also offers them a sense of hope and agency to take charge and make changes to aspects of their life that they have control over. This, of course, was contrasted to political journalism which they believed provoked a sense of powerlessness and helplessness to make changes to issues that felt larger than them. Past studies have found that news avoidance is also prompted by the feeling that there is not much that audiences can do about the reported issues or to challenge the status quo (Kalogeropoulos 2017). For audiences in this study, across class, race and gender, lifestyle journalism provided answers to everyday questions, and a feeling that they have agency over their life. As one person said: “you feel so emotional, and there is nothing you can do... like you have so little influence over politics, versus in lifestyle, you can do whatever the fuck you want...” (M-BL-F). For a working-class-Black-woman lifestyle journalism offered answers to everyday life’s questions: “if I ask something about my life, there is an answer” (W-BL-F). However, the ‘agency-helplessness’ binary was predominantly discussed by aspiring middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed audiences across gender, who had adequate economic capital (Bourdieu 1986) to expend on the products and services which allowed them to enact control over their lives, whether this involved colouring their hair based on a new look they discovered or making a meal from a recipe. They also felt they had little political efficacy, which led them to reorient a lot of their attention to lifestyle journalism which in offering solutions to daily problems also offered an instant sense of gratification. As these audiences said, political news feels like “it’s the end of the world” (M-MX-F) and “you feel extremely helpless as opposed to hope [...] you get news and you just have to listen and you can’t do shit” (M-MX-F). Much of this sense of hopelessness and helplessness related to expectations of solution to problem (discussed in Section 5.1.4). This dynamic is best captured in this exchange among the young middle-class audiences across race and gender:

M-BL-F: ...do you think people consume lifestyle to avoid politics sometimes?

M-MX-F: Yes, I do... on top of that I think lifestyle you can apply to something, you can do something about it, as opposed to politics...

M-MX-F: ‘Cos, I think it’s psychological...

M-BL-M: It’s so big, like how much power do I have as an individual...

M-MX-F: You feel helpless when your politics... like shit’s going down... I can’t do shit...

RESEARCHER: So, lifestyle gives you agency?

ALL: It dooooooos!

M-MX-F: You feel empowered...

PM-MX-F: While the political thing gives like a hopelessness...

M-BL-F: Can you solve poverty alone? No, you can’t...

M-MX-F: But you can change how your fridge looks!

M-BL-F: And the change is more instantaneous...

M-MX-F: It’s instant gratification.

As Coleman (2012) has argued, consuming news without feeling a sense of agency to bring about change affects people’s perceptions of political efficacy and the extent to which they believe that news can facilitate this sense of agency. For young people in particular, as with those in this study, news that is presented in positive (solution-seeking) and humorous ways can increase their sense of political efficacy and engagement (Becker 2011).

Intimacy versus distance: Political journalism speaks to and addresses concerns pertaining to the public sphere and was experienced by audiences as distant – issues that affected them in ways that were invisible or unclear to them and that they had little control over. Lifestyle journalism on the other hand addressed aspects of their private sphere on issues that were intimate and that audiences could have immediate control over. Audiences argued that both lifestyle and political journalism aim to “inform their audiences in some kind of way and better their lives in some way but they do it on a different scale” (M-MX-F). Highlighting public-private sphere dichotomies (Costera Meijer 2001; Ross and Carter 2011), audiences said: “lifestyle influences the inside and the other [political] influences the outside” (M-BL-F). Political journalism was perceived as impersonal, distant, bigger than them, objective and affecting the whole country. Lifestyle journalism was experienced as personal, within reach, intimate, subjective, and affecting the individual, as captured in this remark:

I do think that political journalism is the bigger picture while lifestyle journalism is like the detail [...] political journalism is like people are involved on a bigger scale, and it’s a bigger picture and bettering the bigger picture not just your intimate life (M-MX-F).

Audiences frequently referred to the public sphere as a space of political deliberation on issues that referred to collective well-being but felt far removed from their daily, private, intimate

lives, where issues of nurturing one's own needs and those of their friends and family were prioritised (Costera Meijer 2001). Across all dichotomies identified in the above discussion, especially those relating to agency and the private sphere, it becomes evident that lifestyle journalism in contrast to political journalism speaks to audiences' key dimensions of everyday life (Hanitzsch and Hanusch 2018; Hanusch 2019). These include: 1) emotional management by seeking out positive experiences through news consumption and by seeking out news that offers them a sense of agency which speaks to their psychological needs to have control over their life; 2) identity by seeking out news that helps them understand and locate themselves within the private sphere of their family and friends, but perhaps problematically, the private-public dichotomy also isolates them from seeing themselves as a citizen of the collective society (Costera Meijer 2001); and 3) consumption by exposing them to products and service that allow them to exercise both emotional management (e.g. control over their hair colour) and identity (connecting with themselves and others in the private sphere). It is also clear from the above discussions that audiences drew very stark boundaries between lifestyle and political journalism around key dichotomies, even though, on several occasions, audiences claimed that "politics is basically your everyday life" (M-BL-F) and that political journalism "should be personal, but it's not personal" (M-BL-F) highlighting again just how necessary it is to continue to challenge the private-public grand dichotomy (Weintraub 1997; Costera Meijer 2001; Ross and Carter 2011) and reconceptualize political journalism as but one genre among many (e.g. fashion, travel, food) that constitutes everyday life.

6.3.2. Normative pressure to consume political journalism: Classist and racist narratives of intelligence and education

Although audiences highlighted significant dichotomies in relation to lifestyle and political journalism, they also said that both played a critical function in society and were inseparable. In other words, both politics and various genres of lifestyle journalism contributed to a disjointed but nevertheless single life and everyday existence, thus normalizing the boundaries between them. Given a hypothetical dilemma in which only political or lifestyle journalism could continue to subsist, audiences across intersectional identities struggled to choose and maintained that "they are both important" (W-BL-F), stressing that without lifestyle journalism "life would be so dull" (W-BL-F). Audiences argued that access to both provided a balanced approach to everyday life:

M-BL-M: Well, I believe... I don't think you can give up one of the two. You know it's... you must have both. I know there is a question but I don't think the question is actually applicable [...]

M-WH-F: I think you need...

U-WH-F: The balance.

M-WH-F: ...one another to have that balance.

M-BL-M: It's life. It's disjointed but it's actually one thing, if you think about it.

At the same time, discussions of the joint importance of lifestyle and political journalism were quickly peppered with normative societal demands to consume political journalism, despite audiences' temptation to avoid its negativity. Upper-middle-class audiences across race and gender claimed that they felt the pressure to consume political journalism because of a sense of "duty" (M-MX-F). Duty here implies a link to the public sphere, and the role of a person as an engaged citizen in a democratic society capable of rational deliberation (Costera Meijer 2001; Habermas 1991). Here news consumption was a tool by which upper-middle-class audiences proved their belonging to a social class associated with being an avid consumer of cultural goods, an active citizen, and member of society (Lindell and Sartoretto 2018). However, audiences also felt the normative pressure to consume political news on a daily basis because not doing so would result in a lack of information over which to converse with others, leading to being excluded from social interaction. This was a source of embarrassment and feelings of inadequacy, as these participants said:

M-BL-F: If you are not informed, guys, like it's gonna be like hella awkward like...

M-CO-F: People are having conversations and you are like 'mmmmmm'...

As much as audiences were tempted to avoid being exposed to negative political news, the normative pressure to remain informed and connected was also evident in these participants' remarks: "you can't live in a bubble" (M-MX-F), "you've got to know what's going on in the world" (U-WH-F).

The same audiences that claimed both political and lifestyle journalism were important also evoked gendered narratives to characterize lifestyle journalism as "superficial, and a bit farce" (U-WH-F) because it does not offer a view into "what's going on in the world... you'll never find that in a lifestyle magazine ever!" (U-WH-F). Another claimed, "the cost of producing all these lifestyle magazines is disproportionate to the amount of benefit that it serves the people, you know" (U-WH-M). In other words, lifestyle journalism, which on the one hand offered a respite from negative news, a sense of agency and connection to the private sphere, had also become superficial, with a very low cost-benefit ratio to society and audiences. These

beliefs that revolved around the ‘superficial-deep’ dichotomy also revealed *classist and racist narratives of intelligence*, where political journalism was associated with mental engagement, as well as education and intelligence, and lifestyle journalism was associated with mindlessness. As one participant said: “one makes me think and the other one puts me into mindless mode” (U-WH-F). To be mindless implies being relaxed and absentminded, which in and of itself is not problematic. However, referring back to the same hypothetical question, upper-class-White audiences claimed that they would rather give up or opt for eliminating lifestyle over political journalism from society, and stressed that the answer to this question would be different if asked of someone from rural parts of South Africa, as captured in this exchange:

U-WH-M: But if you ask the same question of somebody who lives in the Transkei...

U-WH-F: Oh yeah, completely different.

U-WH-F: Mmmm.

U-WH-F: Sure, and again, we are going back to that question of level of intelligence and education.

Identical to the distinctions audiences drew between consumers of quality and tabloid news in expressing their expectations of political journalism (discussed Section 5.1.5), here again audiences evoked classist and racist narratives rooted in colonialist ideologies to engage in the symbolic othering (Spivak 1985) of those who consume lifestyle journalism vis-à-vis those who consume political journalism.

6.4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Boundaries between lifestyle and political journalists were both challenged and reinforced. As mentioned in the summary of findings for Chapter 4, there is evidence of implicit boundary-blurring in the role conceptions political and lifestyle journalists shared, specifically, in seeing themselves as advocates, educators, and change agents. Although this study sought not to politicize lifestyle journalism, that lifestyle journalists expressed roles traditionally associated with political journalism suggests some politicization. Conversely, this may simply be an elucidation of roles that indeed ‘belong’ to lifestyle journalism and are yet to be fully ‘owned’ as such in their own right. Moreover, both political and lifestyle journalists shared in their role of providing entertainment, suggesting a transfer of a function traditionally associated with lifestyle and more broadly popular journalism, onto political journalism. From the perspective of audience expectations, there is less evidence of role-boundary-blurring. In comparing their

expectations of political and lifestyle journalists, there is some overlap across their expectations of political journalists to provide solutions to problems (through positive news for some), and their expectations of lifestyle journalists to be a service provider (service journalism) and offer escapism and distraction which also encompasses positive news. Political-lifestyle journalism overlap was also evident in audiences' expectations of education – a role traditionally associated with political journalists.

Where boundaries become reinforced is where journalists and audiences draw explicitly on private-public dichotomies relating broadly to gender, racist narratives, and ideals of autonomy. Political journalists expelled or 'othered' while lifestyle journalists self-expulsed or -othered by evoking gendered language to describe lifestyle journalism as fluffy and trivial and beholden to market imperatives and thus lacking autonomy. At the same time, political journalists tentatively expanded their field and the boundaries around it by acknowledging lifestyle journalism's vital role in society as a provider of light relief, and lifestyle journalists sought out field-expansion by asserting the way in which they complement political journalism in fulfilling the roles it fails to fulfil. Specifically, lifestyle journalists asserted their value and thus challenged boundaries by claiming they provide audiences with solutions to problems by delving into societal issues more deeply than political journalist (can) do, they counter the negativity of political journalism, and in arguing that both political and lifestyle journalism are becoming increasingly entertaining in order to garner audience attention. As such, even though boundaries were explicitly drawn, here we see they were also challenged by highlighting roles commonly held between the two: the provision of solutions journalism and entertainment.

From the perspective of audiences, boundaries were largely reinforced but also normalized in claiming that political and lifestyle journalism were indeed separate, different, and served distinctly unique functions and addressed different aspects of everyday life. In drawing this normalized distinction, audiences highlighted dichotomies between private/intimate and public/distant spheres of life, between agency and helplessness, and between positivity and negativity. In that regard, they reflected similar dichotomies to those expressed by political and lifestyle journalists with regards to negativity-positivity, and the gendered narratives of intimacy-distance. At the same time, audiences repurposed normalized distinctions to evoke and reinforce racist and classist stereotypes in their beliefs that political journalism was for the intelligent and lifestyle journalism was for the mindless. The theoretical implications of these findings are unpacked in the next chapter.

7. CONCLUSION AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This PhD project set out to explore the changing relationship between journalists and their audiences, and how this shift might be reflected in the way journalists understand their roles and what audiences expect from journalists. In delving into this relationship, this study has examined several key shortcomings and gaps that emerged from existing conceptual and empirical scholarship: 1) much of journalistic roles and audience expectations scholarship has been predicated on relatively limited theoretical engagement; 2) roles and expectations have primarily been studied separately, limiting the opportunity for these to emerge and be compared simultaneously within a single study; 3) roles research has overwhelmingly focused on political journalists over other popular forms of journalism, such as lifestyle journalism, which has reinforced a hierarchy in how their respective societal contributions are seen, one that is further rooted in gendered dichotomies; 4) roles and expectations research has rarely accounted for the impact of social identity on roles and expectations, or they have treated identity categories as independent variables; 5) roles and expectations scholarship has primarily focused on journalists and more recently on audiences in the Global North, drawing on and reinforcing a traditional-liberal understanding of journalism, especially in its 6) overreliance on quantitative (survey) research methods that use established role conceptions, leaving little room for hybrid roles or expectations to emerge outside of these normative confines.

This concluding chapter reflects on how this study and its findings address these shortcomings and, importantly, on the theoretical and conceptual contributions it makes to the field of journalism studies. The chapter is divided into five sections: Section 7.1 discusses how journalists' role conceptions and audiences' expectations can be reconceptualized through role theory to better understand this relationship; Section 7.2 discusses how an intersectional approach to studying role conceptions and expectations complicates and illuminates a more nuanced understanding of this relationship; and Section 7.3 discusses how examining political and lifestyle journalists through the lens of boundary discourses and markers highlights both instances of blurring and distinction between the two seemingly opposing genres of journalism. Each of these sections addresses the key aims and theoretical enquiries outlined at the start of this thesis in the 'Introduction' chapter. Section 7.4 highlights key limitations of the study, and Section 7.5 finally brings together the central arguments and contributions of this study to outline their implications for and to advance our thinking around how journalism studies continues to explore the journalist-audience relationship through journalistic role conceptions and audience expectations.

7.1. Reconceptualizing roles and expectations with role theory

Unpacking the contributions made in this research begins with two distinct shortcomings that this study aimed to address: that roles and expectations have been studied separately; and that they have been studied with limited theoretical engagement. Until recently, role theory (Biddle 1979) has been relatively underused in journalism studies. The shortcomings identified in existing research are relatively independent of one another, however by relying on role theory and its central argument that roles and expectations shape each other, this study was able to explore them simultaneously. Where utilized, studies have relied on a handful of the theory's concepts to explore, for example, how journalists who hold multiple position experience role conflict and role strain (Goode 1960; Tandoc and Peters 2015; Obermaier and Koch 2014), and what audiences expect of journalists (Tandoc and Duffy 2016), albeit not by expanding on the expectation-concept through various modes. Here, role theory offers not only a rich repertoire of other concepts but is constructed almost entirely on the central argument that roles and expectations shape each other. As such it allows this study to explicitly examine the journalistic role conceptions–audience expectations relationship in tandem; to expand on understandings of audience expectations through various expectation modes; and to do so by drawing on a diverse array of role-concepts. This section addresses the following theoretical aims and enquiries outlined at the start of this thesis:

How can role theory's various role-concepts help us better understand the disruptions shaping journalistic roles?

How can role theory's concept of expectation modes help us move beyond normative conceptualizations of audience expectations?

How can exploring conceptions vis-à-vis expectations help reconceptualize this journalist-audience relationship?

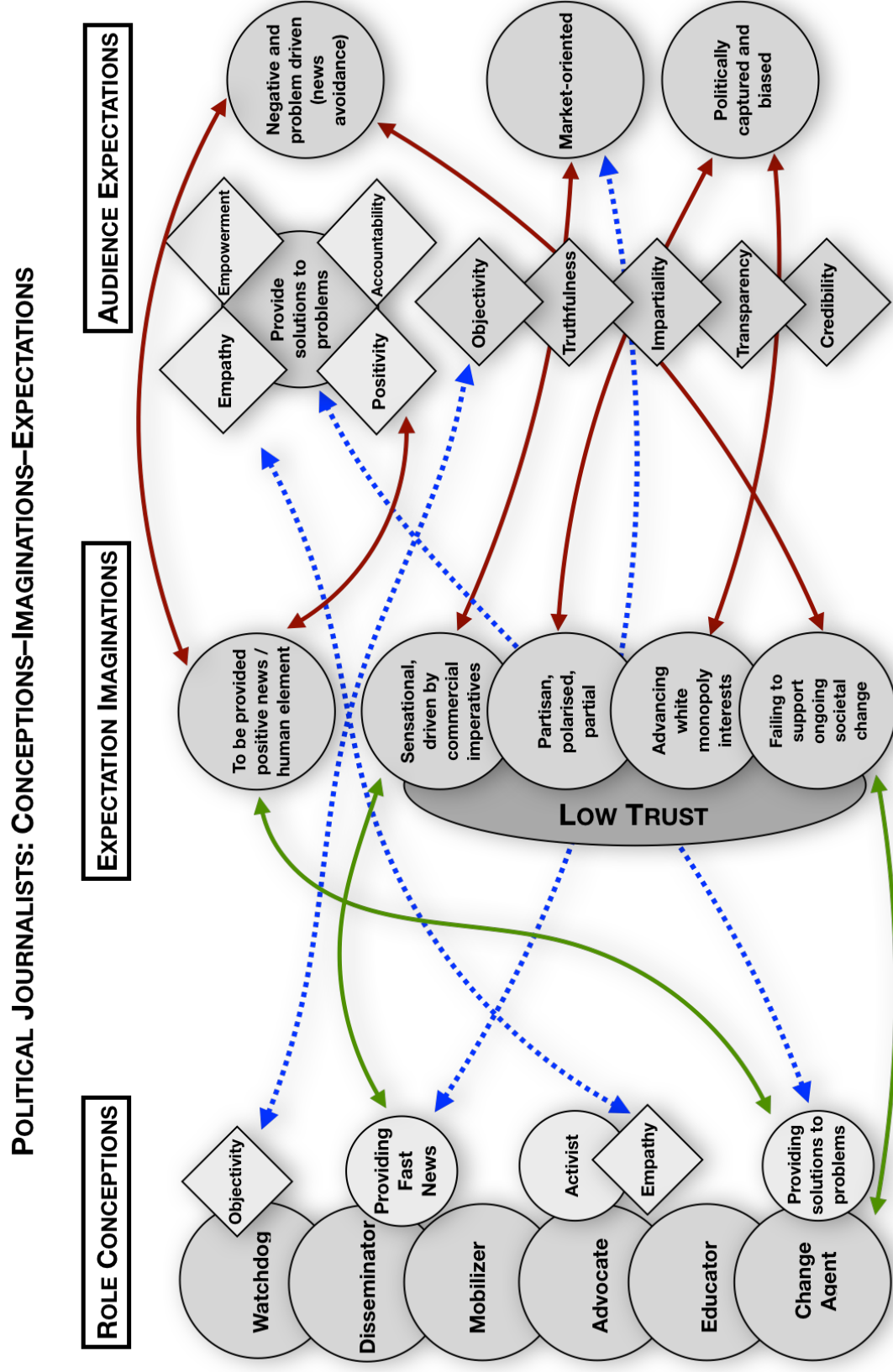
By considering role theory's various concepts, this study revealed a more complex picture of role-expectations. A key contribution of this study is the triangulation of journalistic role conceptions, journalists' imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations. The findings in this study reveal that both **political and lifestyle journalists have relatively high levels of role consensus** (Biddle 1979), meaning there is general agreement

and unity amongst the journalists (both political and lifestyle) in terms of their role-conception repertoires. This is evident in how journalists' discursive constructions and performances of roles were shown to be fairly uniform, which is not in and of itself surprising, given that roles come into being and become institutionalized as they are talked about, commonly by the journalists themselves (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017, 2018; Vos 2016).

However, that there is consensus among journalists' role conceptions does not mean that political and lifestyle journalists' respective role-sets (Merton 1957; Biddle 1979) are not plagued by various disruptions. These disruptions are the result of expectations stemming from various (external) role-senders (Rommetveit 1954; Snoek 1966). Rather, what the role consensus that has emerged in this research suggests is an almost self-fulfilling internal conformity (or role-consistency) of discursively established and deeply rooted normative role conceptions. This role consensus may or may not reflect to any degree of accuracy what journalists *imagine* others expect of them or what is *actually* expected of them. This indeed becomes evident in that this study shows, first, **dramatically different levels of consensus** across roles-imaginings-expectations for political and lifestyle journalists, and second, **different levels of role strain** (conflict, overload, malintegration), affecting political journalists to a far greater extent than lifestyle journalists.

Role conformity refers to the willingness or ability of a role-incumbent to adapt their behaviour to changing expectations, whether these come from others (e.g. audiences, in which case it is understood as *role-compliance*) or from themselves (e.g. the journalist, in which case it refers to *role-consistency*) (Biddle 1979; Coyne 1984). The findings here show that political journalists, due to various feedback mechanisms (web analytics, reader comments), are able to fairly accurately articulate what they assume or 'imagine' their audiences expect of them, captured by the concept of *expectation-taking* (adapted for this study from Turner's 1956 concept of role-taking). However, despite this imagination-expectation congruence, political journalists' role conceptions appear to be almost detached from reality in that they reflect no more than two audiences' expectations (actual or imagined). That is, political journalists imagine their audiences' expectations accurately, but they appear unable to conform to these by adapting their own role conceptions (see Figure 7). In contrast to political journalists, the role-imagining-expectation triangulation within lifestyle journalism shows far greater harmony and congruence (see Figure 8). For Figure explanations see p. 238.

Figure 7: Political Journalists: Conceptions-Imaginations-Expectations



Explanation Figure 7

CONCEPTIONS-IMAGINATIONS-EXPECTATIONS TRIANGULATION (POLITICAL):

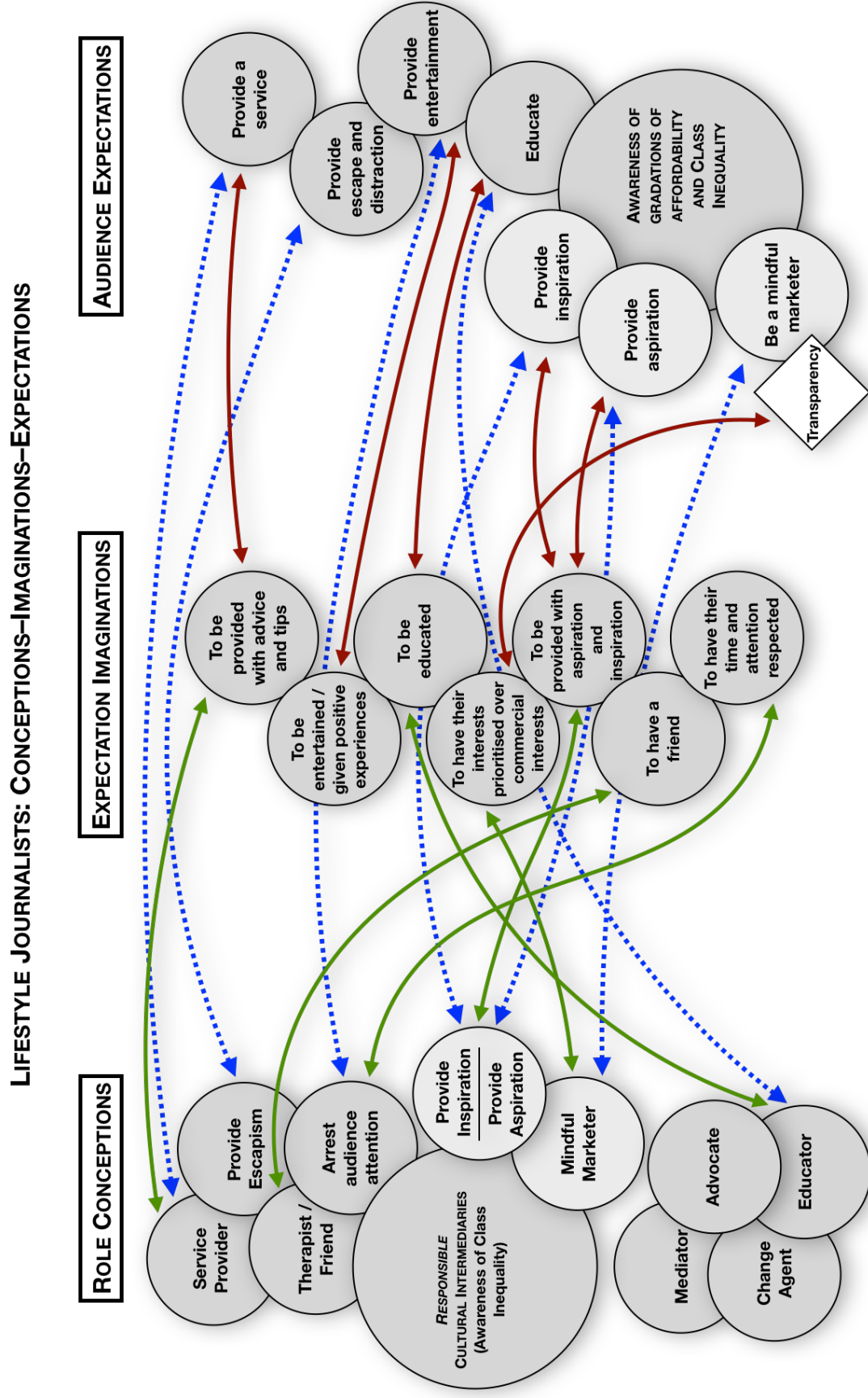
Figure 7 illustrates the extent to which there is consensus (or congruence) between political journalists' role conceptions, their imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations. These are shown by the six **red** lines, which indicate *high imaginations-expectations congruence*, suggesting that political journalists' imaginations fairly accurately reflect audiences' actual expectations. The three **green** lines, however, indicate *low conceptions-imaginations congruence* or conformity, suggesting that journalists recognize or are aware of audience expectations but are unable to meet them (due to role disruptions). Lastly, the four **blue** dotted lines further indicate *low congruence between journalists' role conceptions and audiences' actual expectations*, indicating further non-conformity.

Explanation Figure 8

CONCEPTIONS-IMAGINATIONS-EXPECTATIONS TRIANGULATION (LIFESTYLE):

Figure 8 illustrates the extent to which there is consensus (or congruence) between lifestyle journalists' role conceptions, their imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations. Similar to political journalists, the six **red** lines indicate relatively *high imaginations-expectation congruence*, suggesting that lifestyle journalists' imaginations fairly accurately reflect audiences' actual expectations. However, unlike political journalists, lifestyle journalists' role conceptions reflect to a greater extent their audiences' actual and imagined expectations, suggesting *higher levels of conformity*, or the ability for journalists to 'meet' their audiences' expectations in the way they conceive of their roles. This is visible in the high number of connections between *conceptions and imaginations* (six **green** lines) and *conceptions and expectations* (seven **blue** lines).

Figure 8: Lifestyle Journalists: Conceptions-Imaginations-Expectations



Goffman (1959) argues that roles are masks we wear in our performance of our idealized selves for an observing other. The role conceptions both political and lifestyle journalists express are arguably their idealized self-expectations or role conceptions – what they believe audiences expect of an ideal journalist, and what they believe will maintain their societal authority while staving off any stigma (Goffman 1963). However, while journalists may attempt to *give* this impression to the observing audience, the impression they ultimately *give off* appears to be relatively off the mark (Goffman 1959), at least for the political journalists in this study, whose conceptions do not appear to conform to or resemble to any great extent the audiences' expectations, actual or imagined. From this discussion, two further conceptual contributions emerge, namely that looking more closely at the various 1) role-disruptions that political journalists expressed, and considering the various 2) expectation modes through which audiences express their expectations of journalists can better explain the discrepancies visible across conceptions-imaginings-expectations, especially with regard to political journalism. This is discussed in the following two sections.

7.1.1. Role disruptions

Where role-imagining-expectation consensus among political journalists was evident, it centred around two broad aspects of journalism: solutions journalism, and a growing market orientation. In the former, political journalists in their role as change agents sought to provide solutions to problems, and imagined their audiences expected more positive and human-interest-driven stories. Indeed, audiences expected journalists to provide solutions to problems, albeit in various ways (discussed later in the chapter). In the latter, journalists in their role as disseminators sought (felt pressure) to provide fast news, and imagined their audiences expected them to be driven by commercial imperatives. Again, audiences expected journalists to be market-oriented in prioritising profit (attention-grabbing, sensational news) over audience's needs.

These two orientations were a central source of **role conflict** for political journalists in their struggle to conform to contradictory expectations (Biddle 1979; Stryker and Macke 1978; Örtqvist and Wincent 2006). At routine and organisational levels of journalism, these conflicting expectations may normally stem from both audiences and management (Shoemaker and Reese 2013). However, more broadly and on an institutional or societal/social systems levels, this study shows **conflicting expectations stem from journalism's changing business model and increased commercial pressures**. Among the political journalists in this study, **role conflict was also evident in their competing commitments to traditional-liberal roles**

and values associated with rationality and whiteness (Robinson and Culvert 2019; Aleman 2014). This includes a conflict between being an objective disseminator that provides fast news (and dehumanizes journalism), and roles associated with development journalism (Kanyegirire 2006; de Beer et al. 2016; Wasserman and de Beer 2005; Rodny-Gumede 2015), such as being an empathetic advocate and change agent that provides solutions to societal problems. Here, journalists experienced role conflict when forced to fulfil roles and produce journalism that they believed to be inconsequential for society, journalism which was therefore incompatible with the roles they believed were more reflective of societal needs. As such, the source of role conflict is not single or even multiple role-senders *per se* (Sell et al. 1981; Rommetveit 1954; Snoek 1966) but more fundamentally found in journalism's reorientation towards the market (Hanitzsch 2007), and in journalism's long-established, normative, and hegemonic traditional-liberal orientation (Wasserman and de Beer 2016; Nerone 2013). The lifestyle journalists in this study, however, appeared to experience less role conflict, except with regards to simultaneously seeking to promote and market lifestyle products and services, while also seeking to be mindful marketers and responsible cultural intermediaries in a highly class-stratified society (discussed further below).

To varying extents, political and lifestyle journalists in this study experienced different forms of role conflict. In their inability to reconcile market-driven role conceptions with those they believe reflect societal needs, journalists experience **inter-role conflict** or incompatible expectations stemming from different roles (Gross et al. 1966). They also experienced what Sell and colleagues (1981) call **person-role conflict**, or the incompatible expectations a role incumbent holds for themselves, and expectations associated with their position. When journalists are consistently asked to negotiate and balance divergent demands and standards, as this study has found, they are likely to experience fatigue, depression, and unhappiness. They also form negative attitudes, distrust, and frustration towards competing role-senders (management, market pressures) (Biddle 1979; Stark 1962; Stryker and Macke 1978; Örtqvist and Wincent 2006). Rather than being unwitting victims of such conflicts, journalists interviewed in this study have become acutely aware of these discrepancies and even anticipate them, including by highlighting their perceived inability to practice what they preach. In that sense, and in their conceptions of their roles, journalists factored in their past experiences and envisioned obstacles to being able to perform their roles. This is particularly interesting as it implies a conceptual bridge between the way roles have thus far been theorised as orientations (cognitive and normative role ideals) and performances (narrated and practiced role enactments) (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017).

Whereas role orientation and performance are commonly studied separately (Mellado et al. 2016), the findings here indicate that in narrating their role ideals, journalists are actively reflecting on their (in)ability to enact those very roles. Such **discontinuity between role orientations and anticipated role performance** is, to some extent, an indication of **role malintegration**, or the perception that roles associated with a position do not fit well (Biddle 1979, 1986; Nabers 2011; Giagliotti and Huff 1995). Malintegration is particularly visible in the perceptions of different rewards/sanctions associated with more or less favourable roles. While the journalists in this study experienced greater self-reward in fulfilling roles associated with development journalism, their organisational and institution/society-level demands placed greater reward on roles associated with market imperatives and traditional-liberal orientations.

The interviews in this study illustrate how a greater perceived market orientation and changing business models within journalism have brought about organisational changes associated with experiences of **role ambiguity**. Changes entail increased complexity of organisations, reorganisation of its members and inter-member relationships, and a frequent misalignment between management and members on the substance of roles (Biddle 1979; Sell et al. 1981; Schmidt et al. 2014). For journalists in this study, role ambiguity was not primarily experienced as a lack of clarity about what is expected of them, but rather as a question of how and whether they can fulfil or perform these expectations in a satisfactory manner. As argued by role theory scholars, role disruptions can lead to a host of psychological and physical disturbances, that then lead to lower professional satisfaction and performance (Biddle 1979; Goode 1960; Snoek 1966; Merton 1957; Stryker and Macke 1978). Such effects have already been detected among journalists who have been entrenched and made redundant as a result of journalism's economic crisis (Zion et al. 2016).

Such role disruptions also raise the question: why do political journalists appear to be experiencing greater role disruptions than lifestyle journalists? A key argument here relates to their respective relationships with commercial pressures and market forces. While political journalism has founded itself as a profession on claims of autonomy and independence from market and political forces (Nerone 2013), often evoking the rhetorical 'wall' between its editorial and commercial aspects (Coddington 2015), lifestyle journalism has on the other hand always had a more intimate and direct relationship with various commercial influences (Hanusch 2012). This relationship is not without complications. First, lifestyle journalism has been critiqued and subordinated as having a lesser contribution to society precisely because of its 'dependence' on commercial imperatives, including advertising and public relations within lifestyle industries; and second, lifestyle journalists themselves have had an uneasy relationship

with such commercial pressures, with studies showing that they have both resisted and surrendered to them (Hanusch et al. 2015). However, a somewhat greater acceptance of and transparency about such pressures and their presence in lifestyle journalism's occupational identity has, to some extent, given audiences the opportunity to accept this relationship as part and parcel of lifestyle journalism. Political journalism's historical claims to commercial autonomy, on the other hand, sit uncomfortably with audiences in light of the more recent reorientation to market forces. This creates a role disconnect or dissonance in the minds of audiences, thus inviting audiences to express expectations describing political journalists in negative terms as market oriented, sensationalist, and caring more about profit than audiences' needs and providing them with 'quality' journalism.

Role theory is vast, providing multiple concepts through which to understand how changes in expectations – whether internally held self-expectations (i.e. role conceptions) or externally held others-expectations (i.e. by role senders) – may lead to changes to and disruptions in roles. However, as this study shows, disruptions within this relationship are also visible in the reverse; role disruptions (among journalists) lead to disruptions in (audience) expectations. To that end, role-disruption concepts such as role strain, conflict, ambiguity, and malintegration can also provide a lens through which expectation-disruptions can be understood. For example, role strain is associated with the inability (of journalists) to adjust their roles to (internal or external) expectations. However, conversely, *expectation-strain* can be associated with the inability of audiences to adjust their expectations to roles held by position-holders (journalists). Similarly, role ambiguity refers to role-incumbents (journalists) lacking clarity around what expectations are associated with their positions. However, *expectation-ambiguity* may capture a lack of clarity around what roles are associated with a position. That is, when position-holders' role-sets or role-repertoires have been disrupted by various influences, those with externally-held expectations may become confused about what roles can be expected of them. A similar, converse argument can be applied to arrive at concepts such as *expectation-conflict* (inability to conform to conflicting roles), and *expectation-malintegration* (expectations that do not fit well).

When considered this way, the following question arises: could disruptions to roles and converse disruptions to expectations lead audiences to have lower trust in journalism, or experience it as less valuable? An initial answer to this question can be found in this study's findings, where a reorientation towards market influences leads to role strain among journalists, and where audiences also express negative expectations about journalism's stronger market orientation. An expressed lack of trust and the perception that news is biased and driven by

political and economic interests are among the key reasons behind news avoidance (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; Poindexter et al. 2010; McIntyre 2019; Kalogeropoulos 2017; Newman and Fletcher 2017; Toff and Palmer 2019; Schröder 2016).

Inasmuch as role theory is vast and, as such, opens new avenues for understanding, its vastness also makes it difficult to embrace all aspects of it in any given study. A key limitation of this study is that it introduces only a select few concepts deemed to be most helpful in studying the journalistic role conception-audience expectation relationship. To begin to answer the question posed above, Biddle (1979) suggests concepts that are far more developed within psychology than sociology, and thus not elaborated on within this study, namely, the concepts of **accuracy** and **alignment**. While role conformity (consistency or compliance) speaks to the idea that role behaviour is adjusted to changing expectations, accuracy and alignment suggest that expectations adapt to role behaviour. In other words, if a child were to repeatedly underperform at school, their teachers or parents may eventually start expecting them to underperform (Biddle 1979: 180). Following the same logic, if journalists repeatedly ‘underperform’ or fail to perform their roles in a way audiences expect, eventually audiences may begin to expect journalists to underperform. While this study can only explore this supposition hypothetically, future studies should engage with the vast potential of role theory to examine more explicitly how role disruptions may lead to expectation disruptions.

That role-disruptions may shape expectation-disruptions points to this study’s second conceptual contribution within role theory: how relying on expectation modes offers a more nuanced and complex understanding of what audiences expect from journalists, outside of the normative confines ascribed to these expectations in studies to date.

7.1.2. Expectation modes

Audience expectations have been studied to a far lesser extent than have journalistic roles, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and this includes in studies that do not refer to audience expectations explicitly. Qualitative studies of expectations have found that audiences expect diverse behaviour and values from journalists, such as providing quality news but in an entertaining way (Costera Meijer 2007), to promote social integration and cohesion, include diverse voices, and create a sense of community (Costera Meijer 2010), and to include a human-interest element in stories (Bird 1998), among others. In many cases, scholars suggested that such expectations appear to contradict the journalism that political journalists deliver (Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer 2017). Among quantitative studies of audience expectations, these have taken a more direct approach of examining these against existing

journalistic role conceptions, showing both instances of congruence and incongruence (Tsfat et al. 2006; Tandoc and Duffy 2016; Vos et al. 2019; Loosen et al. 2020). While the former approach does not explicitly account for expectations as a concept, the latter approach has limited our understanding of expectations as extensions of normative role conceptions as they are understood by journalists. Navigating between these two approaches, this study examined the concept of expectations explicitly, and qualitatively, thus distancing them from the normative confines of journalistic roles.

The findings of this study reveal that, when allowed to emerge ‘freely’, audiences’ expectations: a) are expressed through three different expectation-modes, including but not confined to norms or prescriptions; b) are expressed both simply and complexly, with various modes shaping or overlapping one another, and c) rarely reflect the same role conceptions articulated by the journalists in this study or those captured in existing role conceptions literature. Audiences in this study held and articulated multiple simple descriptive expectations (beliefs/assertions) (Biddle 1979; Bank et al. 1977) of political journalists, specifically the belief that journalists were market oriented, politically captured, and placed too much focus on negative news. The last of these expectations is particularly noteworthy as it goes on to form one component of a more complex expectation (Biddle 1979: 144) – that audiences also disliked journalists focusing on negative news as it has a negative psychological and emotional impact on them (cathectic expectation), and in turn demanded that journalists provide solutions to problems in the form of positive or empowering news (prescriptive expectation). Considering expectations as complex structures reveals that expectations often work in tandem to communicate an interrelated set of demands, assertions, or assessments (Biddle 1979: 144).

In contrast to their expectations of political journalists, audiences’ expectations of lifestyle journalism were predominantly complex, often combining several expectation modes. For example, findings show audiences believe lifestyle journalists market lifestyle products (descriptive expectation) while simultaneously demanding that they do so because this offers them inspiration (prescriptive expectation). Cathectic expectations (preferences) often intersected with a key dimension of everyday life that lifestyle journalism seeks to address: emotion (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2019). Audiences are also shown to simultaneously demand that lifestyle journalists provide them with escapism (prescriptive expectation), and express that they like them doing this because it offers respite from daily stress (cathectic expectation).

That audiences’ expectations of political journalists were predominantly simple and descriptive suggests that audiences held distinct expectations with singular, prevailing

narratives (e.g. journalists as market oriented, politically captured, negativity-driven). This can be interpreted through two arguments. First, political journalists have not only occupied more scholarly attention, but they have come to occupy a societal position of holding most of journalism's authority and legitimacy to serve the public interest (Zelizer 2013; Carlson 2015). In doing so, political journalists have established a normative blueprint or repertoire of journalistic roles that are exposed to greater critique, including from audiences. Second, taking into account the concept of *expectation performance*, audiences' expectations become readily articulated through various online feedback mechanisms, including via social media, creating dominant, collectively shared, or disputed expectation discourses. As with journalists' discursive construction and performance of journalistic roles – which over time become institutionalized (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017, 2018; Vos 2016) – commonly articulated audience expectations become self-reinforcing and established through their expression and circulation among audiences.

While complex expectations provide more nuanced insights, simple expectations arguably create an opportunity for inference, and can lead to the construction of *inferential expectations*. As outlined in the findings, audiences in this study believe journalists are market-oriented, and more concerned with advertisers' needs and capturing audiences' attention over providing quality journalism (descriptive expectation). Inferring from this suggests that audiences dislike this type of role behaviour (cathectic expectation) and would demand that journalists should be more concerned with and attentive to audiences' needs over those of market pressures (prescriptive expectation). Such an inferential approach might allow future studies to generate a more complex typology of expectations, one which could inform larger-scale, quantitative studies of audience expectations across different modes.

Finally, in terms of audience expectations, this study reveals that, when explored qualitatively, expectations hardly resemble the established role conceptions of journalists used in past studies or, more pertinently, the role conceptions of journalists outlined above and examined in this study. This poses various implications for future studies of expectations, including whether the expectations of audiences or other actors have influence over journalistic roles. Particularly, and in light of the argument highlighted in the previous section, it opens a door for examining whether role disruptions shape expectations and expectation-disruptions. It seems all the more critical for scholars to take these opportunities on board, in order to examine how key shifts in journalistic roles may be giving rise to, first, strongly held simple expectations from which inferential expectations can be constructed; and second, complex, multi-modal expectations, neither of which can be fully captured by quantitative approaches

and established (normative) role conceptions. By employing focus groups to study audience expectations, this study yields unexpected expectations that cannot be captured in such a nuanced way when relying on survey measures of existing journalistic role conceptions research (Tsfati et al. 2006; Schmid and Loosen 2015; Tandoc and Duffy 2016; Loosen et al. 2020; Vos et al. 2019). While such studies assess direct levels of congruence between expectations and role conceptions, they may also inadvertently limit the opportunity for expectations to emerge freely. Thus, future research exploring role conception-expectation (in)congruence should more readily rely on qualitative methodological approaches.

7.2. An intersectional approach to roles and expectations

Extant role conceptions and audience expectations research has shown how identity, and various identity determinants, shape how journalists understand their roles, and what audiences expect from journalists. These studies have provided key insights into how political orientation, age, gender, and factors such as education, media trust, media use, and medium type might shape audience expectations (Loosen et al. 2020; Vos et al. 2019; Gil de Zúñiga and Hinsley 2013), and how characteristics such as age, years of professional experience, and gender might shape journalists' role conceptions (Cassidy 2008; Hanitzsch and Hanusch 2012; van Dalen et al. 2021). A key limitation within this body of work has been that these studies have considered these aspects of identity in isolation, treating them as independent variables rather than accounting for identity as a composite and dynamic intersection of categories that shape experiences of power/oppression and inclusion/exclusion (Steiner 2012; Hancock 2007; Nielsen 201). To reflect on where this study has addressed these gaps, this section addresses the following theoretical aims and enquiries outlined at the start of this thesis:

How can an intersectional approach reveal dynamics of power and/or oppression in the way journalists understand their roles and what audiences expect of journalists?

How does awareness of these dynamics of inequality help us better understand the journalist-audience relationship?

By exploring roles and expectations through an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989, 1990) and by using Bourdieu's (1984) concept of capital and habitus, the findings of this study, 1) further expose journalism's institutional elitism, and 2) show how various aspects of identity

intersect fluidly to render journalists' and audiences' experiences as mutually inclusive and exclusive. These two contributions are outlined in detail below.

7.2.1. Journalistic role-identity-conflict at the intersection of race and class

Journalism's elitism and dynamics of mutual inclusion and exclusion among journalists were most notable in the way both political and lifestyle journalists routinely neglect and render invisible the audiences marginalized at the intersection of race and class. Specifically, the findings here showed that with the exception of the tabloid *Daily Sun*, political journalists working for mainstream 'quality' news media struggled to imagine working-class audiences across races (notably Black and Coloured), reaffirming past arguments that such media in South Africa primarily speak to suburban, elite audiences and reflect their middle-class worldview (Friedman 2011). Similarly, lifestyle journalists primarily targeted audiences with adequate economic and cultural capital to appreciate and expend on the marketed lifestyle products and services, and struggled to imagine how working-class, poor audiences (again notably Black and Coloured) with little to no economic capital would find such content of value. Rather, they assumed that it might actually be a source of frustration and anger. Where an intersectional approach becomes particularly valuable in exploring these dynamics is in showing how journalists simultaneously feel included, having been socialized to become members of an elite journalistic habitus, and excluded, in exhibiting journalistic roles (norms and values) that fall outside of the dominant newsroom ideology or vision of the field, as these are rooted in whiteness and privilege (Hovden 2008; Aleman 2014).

Within the context of this study, findings show that journalists may be recognized first and foremost based on their occupational identity. For journalists, the *habitus* is closely aligned with their journalistic identity through a set of recognizable roles (among other elements) that they have been socialized to play according to specific rules that unify those who share the same identity (Eldridge 2018; Willig 2013). However, more broadly, the *habitus* can also be understood as an individual's 'core' or the space where a person's multiple identities intersect, overlap, and compete (Hall 1972) to form a complex socialized whole with a distinctive, cultivated set of dispositions or preferences for cultural practices and goods (Bourdieu 1984; Lindell 2018). As this study also shows, journalists find themselves negotiating multiple identities. That is to say, they hold a commonly recognized occupational role identity that allows them to interact socially with other actors (e.g. audiences) who may or may not and to varying extents find their own identities and worldviews reflected in those of journalists (Biddle 1979; Hogg et al. 1995). Their role-identity-conflict is located between their socialized

journalistic identity and dominant vision of journalism as an ideology that promotes an elite (middle-class), masculine, and White worldview (e.g. Hovden 2008; Steiner 2020; Slay and Smith 2011). Here the question becomes: to what extent might journalists experience **role-identity-conflict** as a result of competing identity categories and to what extent do **journalists recognize themselves in or share the identities or habitus of the audiences** to which they speak?

Aspects of this role-identity-conflict become particularly evident when considering the intersectional identities of both political and lifestyle journalists. Political journalists across intersectional identities in this study expressed division and frustration at having to negotiate traditional-liberal ideals of journalism – specifically the ideal of neutrality and objectivity, when this is in contrast to ideals associated with participant-advocate roles which entail advocating for the underprivileged (Cohen 1963; Janowitz 1975). Through an intersectional lens, this conflict becomes further visible in the way Black political journalists spoke about the need to be empathetic towards audiences that are marginalized at the intersection of class and race – an expectation that working-class-Black-Coloured audiences also had of political journalists, suggesting direct role-consensus (Biddle 1979). Journalists also emphasized the importance of using accessible language in the way they cover the stories that matter to these audiences, and some called for a fundamental overhaul and re-humanization of a journalism that, in its preoccupation with objectivity and sophisticated, intellectually superior language, has become dead and elusive to large portions of their audiences. Along these lines, Black lifestyle journalists also sought to celebrate Black culture and challenge negative stereotypes about Black culture. In addition to adding layers of understanding to how journalists understand their roles, these findings show where an intersectional approach can reveal fissures in how a dominant traditional-liberal model of journalism is embraced amongst journalists who are diverse across intersectional categories. It further shows the limitations of continuing to imagine journalists' audiences simplistically, and through a singular understanding of their needs, rather than complexly. This is particularly limiting when this is predicated on dominant, Western, models that fail to account for the publics that journalists purport to serve.

This finding can be further expanded by looking at how Black and Coloured journalists in this study experienced role-identity-conflict at the intersection of class (e.g. in the socialized belonging to an institution, alongside the neglect of marginalized audiences) and race (e.g. the rejection of White/rationality/privilege ideologies of objectivity, empathizing with marginalized audiences). On the one hand, the political journalists in this study are socialized to neglect audiences marginalized at the intersection of class and race as a result of conforming

to and being *included* within a dominant elite journalistic ideology (Parisi 1998; Aleman 2014). That is, these journalists have been socialized within a newsroom and more broadly within a journalism culture (Filak 2004; Sigelman 1973) that demands they suspend their racial and class identities and foreground their occupational identity (Slay and Smith 2011). From this perspective, journalists are encouraged to see themselves and their *habitus* as part of the (occupational) elite, and thus treat their audiences as a distant mass that equally embodies this privilege (Hovden 2008; Coddington et al. 2021). On the other hand, the political journalists in this study explicitly challenge and reject journalistic norms and values rooted in White rationality ideologies of neutralizing distance and objectivity (Aleman 2014) and do so by seeking to speak to marginalized audiences in an empathetic and accessible way. That is, the journalists' *habitus* and 'stigmatized cultural identities', shaped by early life experiences that include racial and economic discrimination, in fact *exclude* them from the journalistic in-group and the dominant vision of the field (Bourdieu 1984; Slay and Smith 2011; Tajfel and Turner 1986). From this perspective, journalists identify more strongly with the marginalized aspects of their *habitus* and seek to express empathy and a lack of distance, or rather closeness to marginalized audiences (Hovden 2008). In doing so, journalists are calling for both a decolonization of journalistic ideals (Aleman 2014; Slay and Smith 2011; Robinson and Culvert 2019) and a 'feminization' of journalism (van Zoonen 1998).

Similar role-identity-conflict emerged among lifestyle journalists, albeit revolving predominantly around social class. Awareness of class inequality became most evident in their roles of being a *mindful marketer* and of *providing aspiration* (and inspiration) to audiences with varying levels of economic and cultural capital. As mediators between the worlds of production and consumption (Smith Maguire 2014) in a highly stratified society, lifestyle journalists here become *responsible cultural intermediaries* (Hovden 2008), both encouraging and discouraging consumption. Such an awareness of class inequality might be explained by the argument that consumption is a key dimension of lifestyle journalism (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), and that lifestyle journalism has a far closer relationship with the lifestyle industry and commercial influences than does political journalism (Hanusch 2012; Hanusch et al. 2015). However, the provision of aspiration and an awareness of gradations of affordability (Alexander et al. 2013) extended only to those belonging to middle-class factions (Bourdieu 1984). That is, only the aspiring, and established middle-class factions (Burger et al. 2015; Melber 2017) and elite classes were offered aspirational content, whether through stories of hope and motivation, or by encouraging imitation of lifestyles to visually position themselves within a desired social class (Bourdieu

1984). Working-class audiences were entirely excluded from journalists' imagination, even though findings showing working-class audiences also find value and meaning in lifestyle journalism, despite their limited economic capital to expend on realizing it (elaborated below). Here then, lifestyle journalists demonstrate role-identity-conflict between their occupational habitus, which demands they encourage consumption and target audiences with expendable economic (and cultural) capital, and their personal habitus. For many the personal habitus includes early life experiences and an awareness of economic discrimination, thus deterring them from encouraging economically vulnerable audiences from engaging in economically risky conspicuous consumption (Slay and Smith 2011).

In using an intersectional lens, it becomes clear that classed dispositions and racial identity, as well as their relative awareness of socio-economic inequality in society, shape how journalists conceptualize their roles and experience these as a source of both inclusion and exclusion from their occupational identity, and how negotiating these also becomes a source of role-identity-conflict. Once they become a part of the occupation, the journalists in this study become socialized to reflect dominant, elite ideologies, and begin (or continue) to accumulate the economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital that locates them higher within the social class space (Hovden 2008). While the journalistic institution can be seen as a capital 'equalizer', this study shows that not all who enter it embody the same predispositions or 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1984). Because of South Africa's history of economic and racial segregation and oppression, not all journalists within this study have had the same lived experiences or equal access to various forms of capital (Hovden 2008). It also becomes clear that experiences of role-identity- or habitus-conflict also shape how political and lifestyle journalists approach their audiences. As this study has shown, both political and lifestyle journalists are aware of class-race inequalities and this awareness shapes their role conceptions and experiences of role-identity-conflict, as well as how they approach their audiences. Among political journalists, this emerges in their desire to be empathetic, to challenge objectivity, and to push back against traditional-liberal models of journalism. Among lifestyle journalists, this emerges in an awareness of class inequalities, and a desire to be mindful marketers, provide aspiration, and to be responsible cultural intermediaries. For both groups, their roles are primarily constructed in response to an imagined middle-upper-class audience. Working-class audiences are not only ignored, but seen as ignorable due to either their limited capital and limited engagement with politics, or the perceived potential of exacerbating class divisions. By engaging in some theoretical eclecticism through social psychology scholarship (Kasser and Ryan 1996), this study also raises new questions about how lifestyle journalism may be a

positive (or negative) tool for audiences to seek out psychological growth through aspirational goals.

7.2.2. Not all audiences (or expectations) are treated equally: Classist and racist othering

The value of an intersectional approach in guiding this study came through even more strongly when examining audience expectations of journalists. Here, an intersectional approach made visible audiences' experiences of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion from the journalism they consume, as well as instances of classist and racist othering that reinforces us-them distinctions. While audiences expressed several shared expectations (Biddle 1979) across intersectional identities, differences at the intersection of class, race and gender were most visible in their expectations of solutions journalism (McIntyre and Lough 2019) which reflected specific lived experiences. For middle-upper-class-White-female audiences, solutions journalism was about engendering accountability, showing instances of societal improvement, and sharing positive news, especially news employing South Africa's 'rainbow nation' unity narrative. Here solutions journalism is equated with news that act as a balm (Wenzel et al. 2018; citing Tuchman 1978) and allows this group to present themselves positively by referring to non-racialism, concern for poverty and '*good blacks*', while resisting systemic transformation (Steyn and Foster 2008). For working-class-Black-Coloured-female-male audiences, solutions journalism was about addressing societal problems at a systemic level, through sustained reporting, on issues affecting their community, findings similar to those detected among stigmatized communities in the US and South Africa (Wenzel et al. 2018; Malila et al. 2013). Crucially, Black-Coloured-working-class audiences expected journalists to report on solutions in ways that are empathetic to their lived experiences; this expectation is congruent with the Black political journalists' need to report empathetically in their role of being an advocate, and to provide solutions to problems in their role of being a change agent.

This meeting of 'culturally stigmatized identities' (Slay and Smith 2011) or *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984) around a common role-expectation across audiences and journalists is a critical finding as it shows a mutual recognition from both perspectives of the journalistic norms and values that require de-colonization in order to make journalism a more inclusive institution and ideology (Aleman 2014). However, this is not equally found across intersectional identity groups, as solutions were expected only by women in upper-class audiences, whereas in working-class audiences they were expected by both men and women.

South Africa's media landscape is stratified and speaks to different class-race groups (Friedman 2011; Rodny-Gumede 2015). Within this landscape, the tabloid *Daily Sun* occupies a central role in delivering news that is accessible and speaks to the needs and concerns of a marginalized audience community that is largely neglected by mainstream journalism (Steenveld and Strelitz 2010; Wassermann 2008). However, despite its affordability and accessibility, the key argument put forward here is that for the marginalized audiences in this study, the *Daily Sun* was one of few sources – if not the *only* source – of affordable and accessible print journalism. To overcome this exclusion, audiences spoke of creative solutions (Alper et al. 2016) to access mainstream 'quality' journalism, including by consuming old, discarded copies of newspapers available freely at local, community establishments. While this approach is admirable, it also begins to uproot (political) journalism's central ideological claim of serving the public (Deuze 2005), when in reality, that public consists primarily of those with sufficient economic capital to afford their choice of news. Those marginalized at the intersection of class and race, therefore, find themselves excluded from journalism's public-service ideal. Although lifestyle journalists excluded working-class audiences and addressed aspirational content at middle-class audiences, working-class audiences indeed consumed and found value in lifestyle journalism and engaged in creative ways of aspiring towards and imitating lifestyles, as did audiences in other class groups. The difference was the economic capital available to expend on performing the desired lifestyle. Contrary to the argument that working-class audiences who live under "conditions of scarcity" have merely a "taste of necessity" (Blasius and Friedrichs 2008; Bourdieu 1984), they demonstrate a "***taste of aspiration***" with relative choice over how they enact it with limited economic capital. In other words, although their "conditions of existence" (Bourdieu 1984: 170) reflect those of necessity, their taste of aspiration sees them engage in creative ways of anticipating "being by seeming" (Bourdieu 1984: 253). By engaging in some theoretical eclecticism through social psychology scholarship (Kasser and Ryan 1996), this study also raises new questions about how lifestyle journalism may be a positive (or negative) tool for audiences to seek out psychological growth through aspirational goals. It is crucial for future scholarship to examine more explicitly working-class audiences' perceptions and expectations of lifestyle journalism. More broadly, studies could explore the role of aspiration in relation to social class, among journalists and audiences in other societies.

Instances of symbolic distinction along class and race lines are further found in narratives around what constitutes 'quality' in both political and lifestyle journalism, evoked by audiences at various intersectional identities. Such narratives reinforce a sense of distinction

(Bourdieu 1984), that is, the inclusion and exclusion of themselves and the ‘other’ (Spivak 1985). While past studies have detected classist and racist news distinctions separately (Lindell 2020; Campbell et al. 2011), the intersectional approach in this study reveals instances where audiences simultaneously or mutually experience exclusion and inclusion at the intersection of class and race. Crucially, it has also been revealed how audiences at various intersections of class and race simultaneously evoke both classist and racist narratives of intelligence and violence rooted in colonialist ideologies to engage in both self-othering and ‘othering’ (Spivak 1985; Collins 1989). On the one hand, audiences across all races reaffirmed their middle-upper-class inclusion in seeing themselves reflected in mainstream political media’s ‘intellectually challenging’ news, while working-class audiences were othered as lacking the intelligence for or interest in consuming such political news, preferring tabloid or lifestyle journalism instead. On the other hand, Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed audiences within middle-upper-class groups reaffirmed their racial exclusion from political journalism’s ‘intellectual news’ seen to be targeted primarily at White audiences – a view that was also reinforced explicitly by White audiences themselves. In other words, while class and race were a constant foundation of inclusion for middle-upper-class-White audiences, for middle-class-Black-Coloured-Indian-Mixed audiences, class and race provided instances of mutual inclusion and exclusion from mainstream political news. These findings in particular point to the value of an intersectional framework in exposing the way in which identity categories mutually constitute (Crenshaw 1989, 1990) the expectations audiences hold of political and lifestyle journalists and journalism. From this discussion, two further contributions emerge: on the **inference of expectations at the intersection of race and class**, and the **gendered nature of the boundaries between quality and ‘trashy’ news** (the latter is further elaborated on in Section 7.3).

The expectations expressed by audiences here are primarily descriptive in nature; describing beliefs about what ‘quality’ journalism is and about who consumes which journalism. As beliefs, descriptive expectations are often the origins of stereotyping (Biddle 1979; Bank et al. 1977). In asking audiences what they expect from political journalism, their answers often revealed what they do not expect, leaving expectations to be inferred. Returning to the earlier argument about **inferential expectations**, audiences’ beliefs tell us that in problematising unaffordability, working- and middle-class audiences across racial and gender identities implicitly express an expectation that in order for journalism to reach the public they purport to serve, news should be accessible and affordable to all. In expressing normative valuations of ‘quality’ journalism, middle- and upper-class audiences across race and gender

implicitly express an expectation that *'their'* journalism should be intellectually challenging. By deploying racist and classist narratives of intelligence, upper-middle-class-White audiences across gender lines imply that intellectually challenging, 'quality' journalism is for South Africa's *White* population. Finally, in critiquing journalism's use of language to portray Black audiences as 'violence-prone,' Black-working-class audiences expect journalism to re-examine the colonialist ideologies embedded in its professional ideologies. This approach allows us again not only to consider expectations beyond the norms captured by journalists' role conceptions, but also to consider expectations as mutually constructed at the intersection of diverse identity categories, exposing dynamics of inequality between journalists and audiences, and inferring from implicitly expressed expectations.

7.3. Lifestyle-politics boundaries: Re-evaluating journalism in everyday life

Existing scholarship has pointed to an artificial distinction and hierarchy between political and lifestyle journalism rooted in gendered values (Costera Meijer 2001; van Zoonen 1998; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). Lifestyle journalism scholars have argued that such a hierarchy has subordinated lifestyle journalism and treated it as occupying a marginal or peripheral position within the field, as well as having lesser societal value and contribution, in contrast to political journalism (Hanusch 2012; Fürsich 2012; Vodanovic 2019). However, transformations within society and a growing consumer culture have seen lifestyle journalism come to play a central role in audiences' management of everyday life (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Hanusch 2012; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013). As such, lifestyle journalism not only warrants ongoing scholarly focus, but also presents a growing counter-force to political journalism and presence within the journalistic field, potentially disrupting existing boundaries. The concept of boundaries and boundary discourses and markers (Eldridge 2018; Gieryn 1983; Loosen 2015) has thus far in scholarship been used to primarily study patterns of expulsion and expansion (Carlson 2015) of the traditional field of journalism vis-à-vis new journalistic actors or interlopers (Eldridge 2014). However, as this study has shown, boundary markers and discourses are also useful conceptual tools for exploring journalists' and audiences' perceptions of the contributions and authority that political and lifestyle journalism hold within society and everyday life. While past scholarship has indicated that this power has largely been controlled by traditional, institution-bound journalists (Eldridge 2018), this study shows that this power rests more precisely in the hands of *political* traditional journalists. To address these shortcomings and broaden understanding of the boundaries between political and lifestyle

journalism, this section addresses the following theoretical aims and enquiries, as outlined at the start of the thesis:

How can boundary discourses illuminate the implicit and explicit markers political and lifestyle journalists rely on to reinforce/subordinate the authority either holds in society?

How does an awareness of these boundary markers help us reconceptualize established and hierarchical ways of thinking about journalism and everyday life, and the relationship between journalists and audiences?

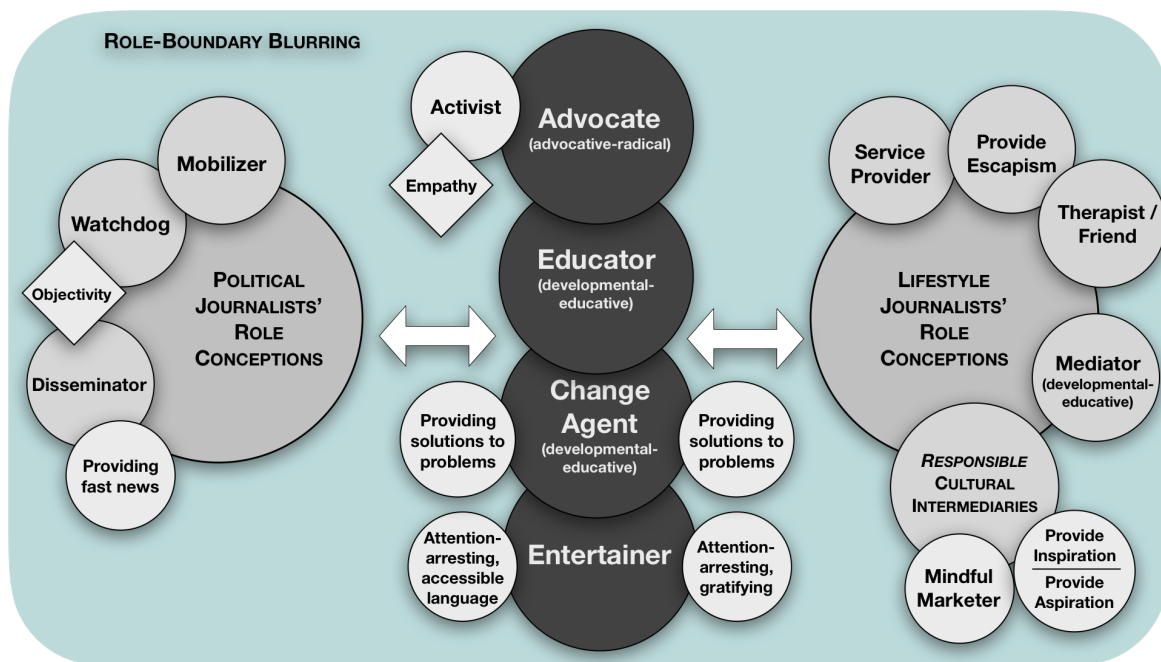
It becomes evident in examining boundary-dynamics that: 1) in both challenging and reinforcing boundaries, political and lifestyle journalists in this study engage in the expansion of the field, however they more predominantly engage in acts of othering and self-othering (Spivak 1985) to underscore existing value hierarchies between the two (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018); and likewise, 2) audiences both normalized and reinforced the boundaries between political and lifestyle journalism. On the one hand, audiences pointed to the different functions either genre of journalism holds in everyday life, and on the other, they used this differentiation to other lifestyle journalism audiences by drawing distinctions between the intelligent political reader and mindless lifestyle reader. These two contributions are outlined in more detail below.

7.3.1. Implicit expansion and explicit expulsion and the othering of lifestyle journalists

From the perspective of political and lifestyle journalists in this study, boundaries are **blurred implicitly in the way they articulate their respective role conceptions and reinforced explicitly in the way they evoke and articulate specific boundary markers**. In exploring both political and lifestyle journalists' roles within the same study, several shared role conceptions emerged that – although different in their content and substance – demonstrate identical role behaviour. These shared role conceptions include being a change agent, advocate, and educator – roles that fall into the advocative-radical and developmental-educative dimensions (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) and show lifestyle journalism's political/public utility (Hanusch 2019). Such roles, otherwise associated with political journalism, have also been detected in past research (Hanusch 2011; McGaurr 2012; Duffy and Yang 2012). Furthermore, political journalists spoke about the growing importance of being entertaining and accessible – functions long embraced by lifestyle journalists (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), that speak to

the so-called softer aspect of journalism and point to a feminization of (political) journalism (van Zoonen 1998). While political and lifestyle journalists' roles have often been studied and conceptualized separately, visible here is a shift towards a common or blurred middle (see Figure 9). By exploring both political and lifestyle journalists simultaneously, this study illustrates role similarity and overlap between them, to a greater extent, and challenges existing conceptualizations of political and lifestyle journalism roles as binaries.

Figure 9: Role-Boundary Blurring



ROLE-BOUNDARY BLURRING: Political and lifestyle journalists shared several roles conceptions, suggesting a blurring of role-boundaries. Political and lifestyle journalists held roles traditionally associated only with political journalism, specifically, being an advocate, educators, and change agent. Journalists also shared the function of entertaining, traditionally associated more strongly with lifestyle journalism, but mentioned by political journalists as increasingly important.

Although implicit boundary-blurring can be seen in terms of roles, a somewhat different picture emerges when political and lifestyle journalists were asked explicitly to discuss their societal function and contributions in relation to the 'Other'. Here, narratives of (self-)expulsion (Carlson 2015) and (self-)othering (Spivak 1985) emerged, and these drew on boundary markers of gender and autonomy (Costera Meijer 2001; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Coddington 2015). In asserting that lifestyle journalists lacked autonomy and were beholden to market forces and by evoking gendered references of lightness and easiness versus

seriousness and complexity (Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013), the political journalists in this study positioned themselves as the powerful master and possessor of knowledge and intellectual refinement (Spivak 1985), thereby delegitimizing and othering lifestyle journalists, reinforcing the existing hierarchy between them (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018; Weintraub 1997; Pateman 1983; Costera Meijer 2001; van Zoonen 1998).

To a large extent, lifestyle journalists, having internalized this hierarchy, self-expelled and self-othered, mirroring political journalists' assertions that their contribution to society was indeed lesser than that of political journalists. They did so by evoking gendered references to softness ('fluff'), a lack of commercial autonomy, and going so far as to attribute the survival of human life to political journalism's contributions. So deeply embedded are positive discourses of political journalism that it has taken on a larger-than-life authority. While in articulating their roles, both political and lifestyle journalists spoke about the importance of entertaining and speaking to their audiences in an accessible way, these same markers were evoked explicitly by lifestyle journalists to illustrate what distinguishes them in relation to political journalists (i.e. self-deprecation or self-subordinating). In viewing themselves as accessible generalists as opposed to inaccessible specialists, lifestyle journalists reinforced another grand dichotomy within the field of cultural production between large- and small-scale producers (Hovden 2008: 41, citing Bourdieu [1971] 1985). Here, lifestyle journalists are seen as appealing to the mass, unrefined, non-knowledgeable public by providing easily digestible and intelligible content, while political journalists appeal to the small, refined, exclusive-knowledge-seeking public by providing intellectually abstract content.

At the same time, instances of boundary expansion (Carlson 2015) and boundary-blurring (Eldridge 2017) could be seen. This was mostly found in instances of political journalists highlighting how lifestyle journalists contribute to society, or in taking for granted political journalism's established contribution. Here political journalists acknowledged that lifestyle journalists, in offering light relief, play an important role overall, albeit in a different space. Lifestyle journalists, to some extent, also engaged in processes of 'capitalization' and 'refusal', imbuing themselves with agency to resist 'othering' and counter their own self-othering (Jensen 2011).

By 'capitalizing', lifestyle journalists do not refuse othering discourses, but appropriate and infuse them with value by claiming that in being 'light' they also act as a counter to the negativity of heavy political news, and that by being entertaining they engage audiences that otherwise avoid political news. By 'refusing', lifestyle journalists also outright reject othering discourses of being trivial or superficial, by claiming that they counter political journalism's

event-driven superficiality by providing audiences with in-depth engagement with an issue. In many ways, such reactions mimic those of interloper media's strategies (Eldridge 2018: 212), evident when lifestyle journalists in this study both attempted to align themselves to political journalism in espousing their roles and societal value, while at the same time being contrarian about political journalists, arguing that they are fulfilling roles and values which political journalists have become complacent about fulfilling.

Despite this study's intentions to go beyond merely politicizing lifestyle journalism (Kristensen and From 2015), the discussion above and the findings previously outlined highlight how more often than not lifestyle journalists embrace traditionally political roles, and how lifestyle journalists either self-other or refuse their othering by embracing the functions that political journalists have failed to achieve. This could reflect an enduring dominance of the Western-liberal hegemonic ideology which, despite being resisted, has been infused in the socialized space and habitus which both political and lifestyle journalists occupy.

In light of the outlined implicit and explicit boundary markers, it becomes apparent that political and lifestyle journalists share several further role orientations and broader concerns. Specifically, they both seek to provide audiences with solutions journalism, and are either preoccupied with or seek to counter negative news. They also share an awareness of the (growing) importance of entertainment and market-driven pressures. Identical concerns are also expressed by audiences of both political and lifestyle journalists. Solutions journalism has primarily been explored in relation to political journalism (McIntyre and Lough 2019); however, as highlighted above, this study points to its parallels between solutions and service journalism (Eide and Knight 1999; Hanusch 2012) in that both aim to provide audiences with pointed advice for improvement, whether in relation to a societal problem or one concerning an individual. Likewise, audiences perceive a (growing) market orientation among both political and lifestyle journalists as questionable: in relation to political journalists, market pressures have destabilized audiences' existing perceptions of political journalism as autonomous, while in relation to lifestyle journalists, existing market pressures continue to keep audiences wary of pressures to engage in conspicuous consumption. These parallels further point to a blurring of boundaries between the political and lifestyle journalists and begin to indicate the extent to which these are reflected among audiences too, as discussed in greater detail in the following section.

7.3.2. Political-lifestyle boundaries as seen by audiences

Similar to how journalists in this study see boundaries, at least to some extent, audiences also relied on public-private binaries and gendered dichotomies to draw boundaries between political and lifestyle journalists in their expectations and more explicitly in their reflections on the differences between the two. In doing so, audiences simultaneously **normalized the boundaries** between political and lifestyle journalism and relied on this normativity to **reinforce a racist hierarchy between consumers of either journalism**.

Audiences drew lifestyle-politics boundaries by referring to emotion, utility, and sphere (Costera Meijer 2001; Becker 2011; Habermas 1991; Weintraub 1997). Specifically, audiences described lifestyle journalism as having a positive effect on them, being a source of agency, and speaking to the private sphere of their life, while political journalism was experienced as negative, a source of powerlessness, and speaking to the public or distant sphere of their life. By offering positivity and a sense of agency, lifestyle journalism, for these audiences, offsets two key established reasons behind news avoidance: negativity and a sense of helplessness to change the status quo (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020; Newman et al. 2017; McIntyre 2019). Political journalism may reinforce its authority and hierarchy by drawing on traditional markers of political engagement, efficacy, and of citizenship embedded in a normative conception of the public sphere (Habermas 1991), however, from the perspective of audiences in this study, it is indeed the ‘frivolity’ of consumption and individual pleasure (Fürsich 2012) that offers them a sense of empowerment and agency. By addressing their private sphere, for these audiences, lifestyle journalism speaks to a key component of everyday life that is otherwise neglected by political journalism and treated as separate and subordinate by scholarship (van Zoonen 1998; Fürsich 2012; Hanusch and Hanitzsch 2013; Hanitzsch and Vos 2018).

At the same time, the audiences in this study, to some extent, also normalized the boundaries between political and lifestyle journalism, on the one hand citing both as vital components of everyday life, and on the other, using the boundaries to evoke racist distinctions. As the findings show, audiences drew on this normative distinction to articulate racist beliefs about the consumers of either, similar to those expressed about consumers of ‘quality’ versus tabloid news. Specifically, for middle-upper-class-White audiences, political journalism and its consumers possessed intelligence and rational acumen, while lifestyle consumers were mindless – a distinction also rooted in colonialist ideologies (Collins 2004; Alley-Young 2008; Costera Meijer 2001).

Drawing again on the notion of **inferential expectations**, findings such as these suggest that depending on their intersectional identity, audiences might implicitly expect political

journalism to continue to be rooted in ideals of rationality and whiteness (Robinson and Culvert 2019; Aleman 2014; Costera Meijer 2001). They might also implicitly expect political journalism to report on positive news to a greater extent and provide audiences with greater agency and directives for how to challenge the status quo (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020). An inferential approach would also suggest that audiences expect political journalism to address more explicitly the intimate and private sphere of their life, or at least point to how issues of public concern relate to and have an impact on their private spheres (Costera Meijer 2001; Ross and Carter 2011).

These private-public and racial distinctions are rooted in the much broader social constructs and dichotomies that stem from Western-liberal thought and from colonialist ideologies that arguably permeate almost all aspects of life (Weintraub 1997; Collins 2004). In other words, that such gendered and racist boundary-making emerges between lifestyle and political journalists and audiences is merely reflective of a grander, gendered, and racially divided organisation of society. In some sense this raises the question of whether the boundaries between political and lifestyle journalism could ever fully blur, given that journalism itself is embedded within and reflective of larger societal hierarchies and inequalities. The answer to this question may be beyond the scope of this particular project, but its findings show the value of considering these dynamics going forward. It seems that, before political-lifestyle boundaries can begin to be challenged, journalism needs to find itself within a society where such dichotomies have ceased to define social life.

7.4. Limitations

Role theory is vast. In *Role Theory: Expectations, Identities and Behaviours* (1979), Bruce J. Biddle provides a rich and integrative overview of role theory scholarship, both empirical and conceptual, highlighting a number of concepts that might have broadened and deepened the study at hand. However, in order to construct a cohesive and feasible framework through which to study role and expectation behaviour, this study utilized a fraction of key concepts it deemed most fundamental to the study of role and expectations. While these have been useful in understanding the journalist-audience relationship and the various role-expectation-disruptions that may befall it, a much larger framework may have revealed further nuances and theoretical implications. Some of these additional concepts and potential avenues for future research are indicated in the following section. Based on Biddle's (1979) extensive review of expectation studies across disciplines, this study draws on the three outlined modes of overtly expressed

expectations. While these three modes are most commonly detected in social science scholarship, it is possible that more modes exist and may emerge if empirical studies can: (a) differentiate the various consequences that expectations have; (b) distinguish moral expectations from expedient ones, that is those suitable to particular circumstances only; and (c) further distinguish different forms of cathectic expectations (levels of dislike or like) or others (Biddle 1979). This study was able to delineate different modes of expectations; however, a closer, deep-reading examination of the language of expectations may have revealed further nuance, which points to avenues for future research.

A second key limitation of this study is that it considered how journalists and audiences narrate their role conceptions and expectations. While this arguably points to one aspect of discursive role performance (Hanitzsch and Vos 2018) as well as expectation performance, the way in which these are enacted has not been explored. Of course, integrating this aspect within this study would have yielded a bigger (beyond the current scope) but also completely different study. Nevertheless, future research that combines role orientation-performance dimensions would point to discrepancies between what journalists and audiences say and do (Mellado and van Dalen 2013). Such a study would examine the ways in which journalists' role conceptions become visible in the news they produce, and the ways in which audiences' expectations become visible in reader comments as well as web analytics data, that is, *expectation performance*. For example, the audiences in this study expressed the expectation that political journalism is too negative, and yet the journalists joked that web analytics data points to audiences' consumption of negative news. The question here is whether audiences consume negative news because they want to or because it is there – a future orientations-performance study might better address this paradox.

A third key limitation of this study is methodological in that it relied on eight focus groups to explore how intersectional identities shape audiences' expectations of journalists. While this number of focus groups is generally accepted as adequate for qualitative studies of this nature (Guest et al. 2017), for a study with an intersectional approach, further groups may have revealed greater nuances across different intersections. Another limitation, discussed in Chapter 3, is that although race and gender are heterogenous across the groups, they are in most instances (except for two groups) homogenous along class lines. This means that class as an intersectional identity may have come through more strongly in the findings as a determinant of differences and distinctions across groups than did race and gender.

This study relied on Bourdieu's concept of capital (1984) to conceptualize and capture class distinctions following previous studies of this kind (Lindell and Sartoretto 2017; Lindell

2020). However, such past studies have primarily focused on European countries where class capital distribution is less stark and nuanced than in South Africa (Seeking and Nattrass 2015), where only 4% of the population belongs to the elite or ‘upper class’, 35% combined belong to the stable and vulnerable middle class, and 61% live in either chronic or transient poverty (Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit 2021; Schotte et al. 2018; Burger et al. 2015). Past studies have also relied on symbolic markers such as attendance of theatres and museums as measures of the presence of cultural capital – markers rooted in Western cultural ideals and values. Indeed, many of the audiences and in particular journalists did participate in such examples of legitimate cultural practices. The critique here, however, is that such ideals are arguably too narrow to capture the different and equally legitimate ways in which culture rooted in diverse histories is practiced in ways that do not include attending theatre. Broadening such symbolic markers to account for the cultural and historical diversity of different groups living in South Africa would have enriched this study, and points to both a key limitation of this study and an avenue for future research.

Finally, this study reveals that tabloid journalism is among the most (arguably almost exclusively) financially accessible sources of news for audiences who are most marginalized along class and race. This study includes interviews with tabloid journalists, however, the number of these within the total sample pales in comparison to journalists working for ‘quality’ news media. Only three journalists working for two different tabloid newspapers, out of a total of 48 political and lifestyle journalists, were interviewed. Noting how critical a role tabloid news plays for audiences largely ignored by mainstream media (Steenveld and Strelitz 2010; Wasserman 2010), this study could have better included and reflected these journalists’ understandings of their roles vis-à-vis a greater focus on marginalized audiences’ expectations of tabloid journalism.

7.5. Implications for the journalist-audience relationship

The central aim of this PhD study was to *better understand and reconceptualize how we think about journalistic roles and audience expectations*, and it sought to do so through a theoretical framework informed by role theory (Biddle 1979), intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989, 1990) and boundary discourses (Eldridge 2018; Gieryn 1983; Loosen 2015).

Going forward, studies concerned with journalistic role conceptions need to more explicitly take account of not only how various sources of influence shape roles but how, as a result of these influences, journalists experience and negotiate diverse *role-disruptions*. To

date, studies of role disruptions have focused on journalists that occupy other (conflicting) positions (Tandoc and Peters 2015). However, as this study shows, role disruptions emerge in response to a diverse array of influences, including: 1) journalism's growing market orientation and changing business models interrupting journalists' ideals of providing the public with in-depth, sustained reporting on societal issues that matter; 2) competing ideals enshrined in dominant traditional-liberal models of journalism versus those associated with development journalism, and, by extension; and 3) journalists' experiences of inclusion and exclusion from journalism's dominant ideals and occupational habitus vis-à-vis their personal habitus, found at the intersection of various identity categories. Negotiating these role-disruptions arguably has a far greater impact on the journalism journalists are able to produce and the extent to which they can serve the public the way the public expects them to.

Considering role disruptions reveals a further avenue for future research that speaks directly to a key concern within journalism studies: a breakdown and a decline in the trust audiences have in journalism and, consequently, the increase of news avoidance. This is also reflected in recent transnational studies of news (Newman et al. 2021). This study has argued that role-disruptions experienced by journalists lead to *expectation-disruptions* – a lack of clarity among audiences about what roles they can expect of journalists, and an inability to accept how roles are performed, which may lead to audiences holding expectations that are contradictory. From these findings, and going forward, studies concerned with audience expectations need to consider how audience expectations exist not in a vacuum but how they are informed by reactions to the ways journalists discursively construct and perform their roles (Hanitzsch and Vos 2017, 2018). One avenue for exploring how expectations adapt to disrupted roles may lie in role theory's concepts of 'accuracy' and 'alignment' (Biddle 1979).

Contributing to scholarship on expectations, this study has made the argument that in order to broaden our understanding of expectations, future research needs to explore how expectations are expressed through various *expectation-modes* and to do so qualitatively. To merely ask audiences how much importance they afford established journalistic roles is a self-fulfilling prophecy where, even when allocated varying levels of importance, the expectations expressed by audience members remain mere reflections of journalism's dominant ideology. This is particularly the case when expectations are studied using the terminology of traditional role conceptions. Exploring expectations outside of these normative (prescriptive) confines, as this study has done, shows where future studies that move beyond these strictures may reveal a vast array of expectations, including not only those that diverge from established journalistic roles. This approach shows, more importantly, that audiences often express these expectations

not only as prescriptions (or norms) but also as beliefs and emotional reactions. Furthermore, this study has argued – and future studies could follow suit – that the concept of *inferential expectations* can expand our repertoire of expectations, including by inferring expectations across different modes and, more broadly, inferring expectations from the way in which audiences talk about journalism.

Furthermore, the way audiences talk about journalism points to the value of using an intersectional lens in research. This benefits studies not only as a way to highlight journalists' experiences of role-identity-conflict and experiences of inclusion and exclusion in negotiating their professional and personal habitus. The intersectional lens also equips research with a way to highlight how audiences marginalized at the intersection of class and race are excluded both by journalism's dominant ideology and habitus and also by the audiences who see themselves reflected in it. While an alternative research approach that explored audience expectations without considering their intersectional identities might have yielded diverse expectations, as this study underscores, it would have limited such a study's ability to reveal the racist and classist narratives that define expectations.

These contributions help with thinking more critically about one of journalism's key sources of societal legitimacy: its claim to serve the public. As this study shows, this ideal is far from being fulfilled. In studies that treat the 'public' as an equal whole, journalism scholarship fails to confront and challenge journalism's internal inconsistency, inequality, and discrimination. This leads to excluding and rendering invisible marginalized audiences, making journalism an institution that serves middle-class-elite, White publics, not the public. In South Africa, as in as in other countries where class and racial oppression and inequality continue to be felt in everyday life, paying attention to the expectations of marginalized audiences is critical for robust scholarship. Therefore, a key avenue for future research that emerges from the present study is the need to implement an intersectional approach to how we understand both journalists' roles and audience expectations in ways that recognize and account for both the opportunities intersectional approaches offer, and the risks that emerge when such approaches are not engaged with.

Lastly, examining political and lifestyle journalists in tandem as this study has done has revealed that, despite instances of some boundary blurring across shared role conceptions, for the most part boundaries remain firmly rooted in racialized, gendered, and autonomy narratives. These boundaries are drawn not only from journalists' viewpoints, but also from audiences' perspectives. Where role-boundaries blur, lifestyle journalism as the more subordinate 'other' is implicitly politicized in adopting roles traditionally associated with

political journalism. All of this is to suggest two arguments and considerations for future research. The first involves role conception studies peeking behind the semantic curtain of role concepts to examine more closely the ‘characteristic behaviours’ that define each conception (Biddle 1979) in order to arrive, perhaps, at a more granular understanding of roles and the extent to which they overlap. While this study has shown that political and lifestyle journalists share in their roles of being change agents, advocates, and educators, further boundaries may emerge or dissolve across roles if studies were to conduct in-depth critical discursive analyses of the language journalists use to construct and perform these roles, for example. The second consideration involves perhaps a more difficult, philosophical question of whether boundaries between political and lifestyle journalism can ever be de-bounded (Loosen 2015) in a society that is deeply boundaried. For scholarship to reconceptualize established ways of thinking about journalism and everyday life, the answer may not necessarily involve de-bounding political and lifestyle journalism, but more crucially, dismantling the hierarchy between the two. To do so, journalism as an institution may need to first find itself within a society that has ceased to be defined by dichotomies and hierarchies.

As journalism scholarship continues to explore the journalist-audience relationship, and as it endeavours to better understand the ways in which both journalistic roles and audience expectations contribute to it, this study has shown and future studies should embrace how this rests on acknowledging more explicitly how role- and expectation disruptions factor into this relationship. From the outset, this PhD research was deeply concerned with these dynamics, and in its qualitative approach, integrating interviews with journalists and focus groups with audiences, it has shown the benefits of such a deep engagement. Going forward, the hope is that the contributions outlined in this thesis engender research that pays continued attention to these dynamics. As I have argued in this chapter, this is critical not only for understanding the roles and expectations of journalists and audiences in South Africa, in other post-colonial settings, and in transitional democracies, but more broadly within the work of journalism scholars striving to make sense of these dynamics.

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9. APPENDIX

Summary/Abstract in German and in English

DEUTSCH

Seit Mitte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts untersuchen Journalismusforschende das Rollenverständnis von Journalist*innen und seit Kürzerem auch, welche Erwartungen das Publikum an Journalist*innen stellen. Dieses Forschungsgebiet weist jedoch mehrere Defizite auf: 1) Journalistische Rollen und Publikumserwartungen wurden bisher vorwiegend getrennt voneinander untersucht; 2) die Forschung hat sich überwiegend auf Politik-Journalismus und weniger auf den Populär-Journalismus konzentriert; 3) die Einflüsse von sozialer Identität auf Rollen und Erwartungen wurden nur selten berücksichtigt oder Identitätskategorien als unabhängige Variablen betrachtet; und 4) die Forschung stützt sich bislang hauptsächlich auf eine relativ schwache theoretische Basis, auf ein westlich-liberales Journalismusverständnis und quantitative Ansätze. Um diese Desiderata zu adressieren, macht die vorliegende Studie umfassenden Gebrauch von der Rollentheorie (Biddle 1979) um herauszufinden, wie sich Rollen und Erwartungen gegenseitig prägen. Sie untersucht, wie sowohl Politik- als auch Lifestyle-Journalist*innen Abgrenzungen betonen/anfechten, und stützt sich dabei auf Intersektionale Theorie (Crenshaw 1989; 1990) sowie auf Bourdieus (1984) Kapital- und Habitusbegriff, um herauszuarbeiten, wie Identitätskategorien (Race, Klasse, Geschlecht) Rollen und Erwartungen formen. Indem die Studie den Blick auf Journalist*innen und Publika in Südafrika richtet, stellt sie das herkömmliche, von westlich-normativen Theorien geprägte Verständnis von Rollen und Erwartungen in Frage. Die Studie stützt sich auf 48 qualitative, halbstrukturierte Tiefeninterviews mit Politik- und Lifestyle-Journalist*innen sowie acht Fokusgruppen mit 57 Teilnehmer*innen aus dem Publikum. Drei zentrale Ergebnisse kristallisieren sich heraus: 1) Journalistische Rollen und Publikumserwartungen formen sich gegenseitig, wobei es unterschiedliche Grade der (In-)Kongruenz zwischen den Rollenkonzepten der Journalist*innen, ihren Vorstellungen von Publikumserwartungen und den tatsächlichen Erwartungen des Publikums gibt. Zwischen Politik-Journalist*innen und ihrem Publikum bestehen größere Inkongruenzen als zwischen Lifestyle-Journalist*innen und ihrem Publikum; 2) Politik- und Lifestyle-Journalist*innen weisen Überschneidungen bei ihren Schlüsselrollen auf, was auf ein Verschwimmen der gegenseitigen Abgrenzung hindeutet, gleichzeitig gibt es explizit geschlechterspezifische Abgrenzungsmarker; 3) Soziale Identität formt die Erwartungen des Publikums und führt zu Narrativen des 'Otherings'. Auf theoretischer Ebene legt die Studie eine Neubewertung der Art und Weise, wie wir Rollen und Erwartungen untersuchen, nahe und dass Identität als Faktor anzuerkennen ist, der die beruflichen Ideale des Journalismus und die Erwartungen des Publikums formt. Zudem offenbart sie, dass bestimmte Teile der Öffentlichkeit für die dominante Ideologie des Journalismus (un)sichtbar bleiben.

Since the mid-twentieth century, journalism scholars have studied how journalists understand their roles and, more recently, what audiences expect of them. However, within this scholarship several shortcomings exist: 1) roles and expectations have primarily been studied separately; 2) research has overwhelmingly focused on political journalism over popular journalism; 3) research rarely accounts for the impact of social identity on roles and expectations or has treated identity categories as independent variables; and 4) scholarship has been largely predicated on relatively limited theoretical engagement, a Western-Liberal understanding of journalism, and quantitative approaches. To address these gaps, this study draws extensively on role theory (Biddle 1979) to examine how roles and expectations shape one another. It studies how both political and lifestyle journalists reinforce/challenge boundaries, and relies on intersectionality theory (Crenshaw 1989; 1990) and Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of 'capital' and 'habitus' to examine how identity categories (race-class-gender) shape roles and expectations. In studying journalists and audiences in South Africa, it challenges existing understandings of roles and expectations informed by normative Western theories. This study utilises 48 qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with political and lifestyle journalists and eight audience focus groups with 58 participants. Three key findings emerge: 1) Roles and expectations shape one another, with varied levels of (in)congruence between journalists' role conceptions, their imaginations of audiences' expectations, and audiences' actual expectations. Greater levels of incongruence exist between political journalists and their audiences, compared to lifestyle journalists and their audiences; 2) Political and lifestyle journalists share key roles, suggesting boundary-blurring, but also evoke explicit gendered boundary markers; 3) Social identity shapes audiences' expectations and prompts narratives of 'othering'. The theoretical implications of this research include re-evaluating how we study roles and expectations, acknowledging how identity shapes journalism's occupational ideals and audience expectations, and exposing how portions of the public are rendered (in)visible to journalism's dominant ideology.

Beschluss der Ethikkommission

Decision of the Ethics Committee



universität
wien
Ethikkommission

Antragstellerin/Applicant: **Sandra Banjac, MA**

Bearbeitungsnummer/Reference Number: **00327**

Projekttitel/Title of Project: **'(Re-)conceptualising journalistic role conceptions through audience expectations: Considering journalists and audiences in South Africa'**

Die Stellungnahme der Ethikkommission erfolgt aufgrund folgender eingereichter Unterlagen/ The decision of the Ethics Committee is based on the following documents:

20.02.2018

- BanjacSandra_Antragsformular_Ethikkommission_Jänner_2018_1
- BanjacSandra_TeilnehmerInneninformation_und_Einverständniserklärung_Vorlage_02

11.05.2018

- Banjac_ConsentForm_Audiences
- Banjac_ConsentForm_Journalists

Die Kommission fasst folgenden Beschluss (mit X markiert)/The Ethics Committee has made the following decision (marked with an X):

☒ Zustimmung: Es besteht kein ethischer Einwand gegen die Durchführung der Studien/ Consent: There is no ethical objection to conduct the study as proposed

☐ Negative Beurteilung: Der Antrag wird von der Ethikkommission abgelehnt /Negative evaluation: The proposal is rejected by the Ethics Committee

Unterschrift/Signature



Datum/Date
17.05.2018

Voracek

Vorsitzender der Ethikkommission/Chair of the Ethics Committee
Univ.-Prof. MMag. DDr. Martin Voracek

Information and consent form for participation in the study:

'(Re-)conceptualising journalistic role conceptions through audience expectations: Considering journalists and audiences in South Africa'

Dear interview participant,

You have been invited to participate in the above study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can discontinue your participation or withdraw from the study at any time, without stating any reasons. Refusal of participation or early departure from this study will not be detrimental to you.

This type of study is important and necessary to produce new and reliable scientific research. A crucial prerequisite for carrying out studies, however, is that you declare your consent to participate in this study in writing. Please read the following text (in addition to a briefing) carefully and do not hesitate to ask questions.

Please sign this consent form only

- if you fully understand the nature and course of the study,
- if you are ready to agree to attend, and
- if you are aware of your rights as a participant in this study.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

This study will explore how journalists and audiences perceive each other in South Africa. Specifically, it wants to investigate how journalists understand their roles in society, and in turn, how audiences understand journalists' roles and what they expect from them. The aim of this is to evaluate how much agreement or disagreement there is between these two perceptions, in order to better understand whether journalists are fulfilling their professional roles in the eyes of the audiences. This is particularly important as audiences and journalists become increasingly connected through social media and other online tools.

The study is also interested to understand how your class and race background may influence your role conception / expectations of journalists. South Africa is a highly unequal society, and this study wants to understand how this inequality may be expressed in the relationship between journalists and audiences. The overall aim of the study is to provide insight into whether and how this relationship could be improved so that both journalists and audiences feel their roles and expectations reflect each other more closely.

2. How will the study proceed?

This study is part of my doctoral project, which lasts about four years in total. After my time in South Africa it may take another two years before the study is completely finalized and the data analysed and interpreted. You will engage in an interview discussion that is likely to last about 30 minutes or longer. This can take place at a time that is most convenient for you, either at your work or in an informal public place, such as a café.

During the interview you will be asked about your experiences working as a journalist in South Africa, specifically, how you understand your role as a journalist.

3. What is the benefit of participating in this study?

This study aims to better understand the relationship between journalists and their audiences by getting insight into what they expect from each other, and how they understand each other's roles. Journalists are seen as having a role to serve the public, and for that reason audiences have expectations of journalist to deliver on that promise. This study gives both the journalists and the audiences an opportunity to express these role-impressions and expectations, so that any agreement or disagreement can be detected. By doing that, the findings of this study can be used to bring about a better understanding between the two groups in the long run.

4. Are there any risks involved in participating in this study, and can you expect to experience any other side effects?

Your participation in this study means you will be asked to reflect on your experiences being a journalist in South Africa, especially what you understand to be your roles as a journalist, how you imagine your audiences, and how they shape your role perceptions. You will also be asked to reflect on your socio-economic background and how this may also shape your journalistic role perceptions.

If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable about a question, you can choose not to answer it. If the interview situation becomes uncomfortable and you wish to discontinue your engagement, you are free to do so at any point in the interview, with no negative consequences. If you feel that your participation has harmed you in any way, you are free to make this known to me and I will assist you in accessing free counselling services available to you.

5. Will participation in the study have any other effects on your life?

Participation in this study requires a fair amount of personal self-reflection. During this time, you may feel a variety of emotions, including negative ones. It may be that after your participation in the study, these feeling persist for some time. As already mentioned, you will be assisted in accessing free counselling services in this case.

6. What will be done if symptoms of discomfort, unwanted side effects and/or injuries occur?

Should you feel that your participation in this study has harmed your psychologically or emotionally, this will be reported to a local study advisor immediately. You will also be offered assistance in seeking free counselling services.

LifeLine is a free counselling service available throughout South Africa.

Cape Town: +27 21 461 1113

Johannesburg: +27 11 728 1331

7. What may cause participation in the study to be terminated prematurely?

As has been noted throughout this form, you are free to discontinue your participation in this study at any point, without any negative consequences.

The researcher may also decide to terminate the interview if the interviewee becomes disruptive or if their responses are evidently dismissive or uncondusive to the purpose of the study.

8. How will the data collected in this study be used?

Your identity and the information you share during this study will be confidential and anonymized. This will be ensured by assigning you an anonymous code so that your real name is never revealed. This code (or similar) will be used whenever your data is referenced or cited in any publication. The data will be stored on devices protected by encryption software, and this data is likely to be held onto for a period of 3 years, to allow me as the researcher to analyse the data fully and write the doctoral thesis.

Your interview will be audio recorded. Every effort will be made not to explicitly mention your name or the news organization you work for during the interview discussion. I want to assure you that I will be the only one who will intend to listen the audio recording and I will transcribe and analyse this information myself. If anyone else is asked to access this data at any point they will be required to sign a confidentiality consent form that prevents them from sharing or discussing this data with anyone else.

9. Are any costs incurred for the participants? And, is there any cost compensation?

Your participation in this interview will not be paid. Costs incurred if the interview takes place in a café will be covered by the researcher.

10. Possibility to discuss further questions

Should you have any further questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or about any of the information outlined above, please know that these will be answered by me until you feel confident you are fully informed.

Names of researchers:

Research supervisor	Name: Prof. Folker Hanusch E-Mail: folker.hanusch@univie.ac.at Tel.: +43 1 4277 483 55
Doctoral Researcher	Name: Sandra Banjac E-Mail: sandra.banjac@univie.ac.at Tel.: +43 1 4277 483 58

11. Consent

Name of the interview participant in block letters:

Date of birth:

I agree to participate in the study ***'(Re-)conceptualising journalistic role conceptions through audience expectations: Considering journalists and audiences in South Africa'***.

I have been informed in detail by *Sandra Banjac* about the purpose, significance and scope of the study and requirements of my involvement. I have read fully this 'participant information and consent form', especially the 4th section (risks and side effects of participation). Any questions that came to my attention were answered by the study researcher(s) comprehensively and sufficiently. I had plenty of time to decide if I would like to participate in the study. I have no further questions at the moment.

I will follow the instructions needed to conduct the study, but I reserve the right to terminate my voluntary participation at any time without incurring any inconvenience. Should I wish to leave the study, I can do so at any time in writing or orally, expressed to *Sandra Banjac*.

At the same time, I agree that my data collected during this study will be recorded and analysed. I agree that my data will be permanently stored electronically in anonymous form. The data will be accessible only to those involved in the study project and will be secured according to current standards.

Should I wish for my data to be deleted at a later date, I can request this in writing or orally without giving any reason, from *Sandra Banjac*.

I have read and understood the information and consent form. During the informative conversation, I was able to ask all the questions that interested me. They were answered completely and comprehensively.

I have received a copy of this participant information and consent form. The original remains with the study researcher.

(Date and signature of interview participant)

.....

(Date, name and signature of study researcher)

.....

Information and consent form for participation in the study:

'(Re-)conceptualising journalistic role conceptions through audience expectations: Considering journalists and audiences in South Africa'

Dear focus group participant,

You have been invited to participate in the above study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can discontinue your participation or withdraw from the study at any time, without stating any reasons. Refusal of participation or early departure from this study will not be detrimental to you.

This type of study is important and necessary to produce new and reliable scientific research. A crucial prerequisite for carrying out studies, however, is that you declare your consent to participate in this study in writing. Please read the following text (in addition to a briefing) carefully and do not hesitate to ask questions.

Please sign this consent form only

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- if you are ready to agree to attend, and
- if you are aware of your rights as a participant in this study.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

This study will explore how journalists and audiences perceive each other in South Africa. Specifically, it wants to investigate how journalists understand their roles in society, and in turn, how audiences understand journalists' roles and what they expect from them. The aim of this is to evaluate how much agreement or disagreement there is between these two perceptions, in order to better understand whether journalists are fulfilling their professional roles in the eyes of the audiences. This is particularly important as audiences and journalists become increasingly connected through social media and other online tools.

The study is also interested to understand how your class and race background may influence your role conception / expectations of journalists. South Africa is a highly unequal society, and this study wants to understand how this inequality may be expressed in the relationship between journalists and audiences. The overall aim of the study is to provide insight into whether and how this relationship could be improved so that both journalists and audiences feel their roles and expectations reflect each other more closely.

2. How will the study proceed?

This study is part of my doctoral project, which lasts about four years in total. After my time in South Africa it may take another two years before the study is completely finalized and the data analysed and interpreted.

Your participation in the study as an audience member will take about two hours or less. You will be required to take part in a focus group discussion with 5 to 7 other participants, at a pre-determined place (either a university campus or non-government organization). The discussion will revolve around your impressions of journalism in South Africa, and your expectations of journalists in terms of their role in society.

3. What is the benefit of participating in this study?

This study aims to better understand the relationship between journalists and their audiences by getting insight into what they expect from each other, and how they understand each other's roles. Journalists are seen as having a role to serve the public, and for that reason audiences have expectations of journalist to deliver on that promise. This study gives both the journalists and the audiences an opportunity to express these role-impressions and expectations, so that any agreement or disagreement can be detected. By doing that, the findings of this study can be used to bring about a better understanding between the two groups in the long run.

4. Are there any risks involved in participating in this study, and can you expect to experience any other side effects?

Your participation in this study means you will have to reflect on your experiences as a person living in South Africa and someone who consumes news on a regular basis. You will also be asked to reflect on how your socio-economic background affects your perceptions of journalism and the role of journalists. It may be that when you reflect on these experiences you feel uncomfortable. If this happens, you are free to stop participating in the study at any point. You are free to walk away and no questions will be asked and there will be no negative consequences. If you feel that your participation has harmed you in any way, you are free to make this known to me and I will assist you in accessing free counselling services available to you.

5. Will participation in the study have any other effects on your life?

Participation in this study requires a fair amount of personal self-reflection. During this time, you may feel a variety of emotions, including negative ones. It may be that after your participation in the study, these feeling persist for some time. As already mentioned, you will be assisted in accessing free counselling services in this case.

6. What will be done if symptoms of discomfort, unwanted side effects and/or injuries occur?

Should you feel that your participation in this study has harmed your psychologically or emotionally, this will be reported to a local study advisor immediately. You will also be offered assistance in seeking free counselling services.

LifeLine is a free counselling service available throughout South Africa.
Cape Town: +27 21 461 1113
Johannesburg: +27 11 728 1331

7. What may cause participation in the study to be terminated prematurely?

As has been noted throughout this form, you are free to discontinue your participation in this study at any point, without any negative consequences.

The researcher may also decide to terminate your participation if your responses become disruptive or if these are evidently dismissive or uncondusive to the purpose of the study.

8. How will the data collected in this study be used?

Your identity and the information you share during this study will be confidential and anonymized. This will be ensured by assigning you an anonymous code so that your real name is never revealed. This code (or similar) will be used whenever your data is referenced or cited in any publication. The data will be stored on devices protected by encryption software, and this data is likely to be held onto for a period of 3 years, to allow me as the researcher to analyse the data fully and write the doctoral thesis.

If you are participating in a focus group you will be video recorded, however, the recorder will be placed behind your back so that your face cannot be seen. Your particular anonymous code will be attached to your back so that I as the researcher can link the information you share to your background information. I want to assure you that I will be the only one who will intend to view these video recordings and I will transcribe and analyse this information myself. If anyone else is asked to access this data at any point they will be asked to sign a confidentiality consent form that prevents them from sharing or discussing this data with anyone else.

9. Are any costs incurred for the participants? And, is there any cost compensation?

Your participation will be paid. You will receive a voucher to the value of about ZAR150.

10. Possibility to discuss further questions

Should you have any further questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or about any of the information outlined above, please know that these will be answered by me until you feel confident you are fully informed.

Names of researchers:

Research supervisor	Name: Prof. Folker Hanusch E-Mail: folker.hanusch@univie.ac.at Tel.: +43 1 4277 483 55
Doctoral Researcher	Name: Sandra Banjac E-Mail: sandra.banjac@univie.ac.at Tel.: +43 1 4277 483 58

11. Consent

Name of the focus group participant in block letters:

Date of birth:

I agree to participate in the study ***'(Re-)conceptualising journalistic role conceptions through audience expectations: Considering journalists and audiences in South Africa'***.

I have been informed in detail by *Sandra Banjac* about the purpose, significance and scope of the study and requirements of my involvement. I have read fully this 'participant information and consent form', especially the 4th section (risks and side effects of participation). Any questions that came to my attention were answered by the study researcher(s) comprehensively and sufficiently. I had plenty of time to decide if I would like to participate in the study. I have no further questions at the moment.

I will follow the instructions needed to conduct the study, but I reserve the right to terminate my voluntary participation at any time without incurring any inconvenience. Should I wish to leave the study, I can do so at any time in writing or orally, expressed to *Sandra Banjac*.

At the same time, I agree that my data collected during this study will be recorded and analysed. I agree that my data will be permanently stored electronically in anonymous form. The data will be accessible only to those involved in the study project and will be secured according to current standards.

Should I wish for my data to be deleted at a later date, I can request this in writing or orally without giving any reason, from *Sandra Banjac*.

I have read and understood the information and consent form. During the informative conversation, I was able to ask all the questions that interested me. They were answered completely and comprehensively.

I have received a copy of this participant information and consent form. The original remains with the study researcher.

(Date and signature of focus group participant)

.....

(Date, name and signature of study researcher)

.....

SURVEY FOR JOURNALISTS

1. First name (only) and assigned CODE: _____

2. Contact phone number or email address: _____

3. Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other, specify: _____

4. Age: _____

5. Do you identify as...

☐ African ☐ Coloured ☐ Indian ☐ Asian ☐ White ☐ Other, specify _____

6. What level of education have you completed?

<input type="checkbox"/> No schooling	<input type="checkbox"/> MA degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship /
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate	Certificate / Diploma
<input type="checkbox"/> High school	<input type="checkbox"/> Some university studies,	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> BA degree	but no degree	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Honours degree		_____

7. What subject did you study? _____

8. How many years have you worked as a journalist?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-25
<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-20	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 25

9. Current employer: _____

10. Current position: _____

11. What level of education has your mother completed?

<input type="checkbox"/> No schooling	<input type="checkbox"/> MA degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship /
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate	Certificate / Diploma
<input type="checkbox"/> High school	<input type="checkbox"/> Some university studies,	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> BA degree	but no degree	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Honours degree		_____

12. What is your mother's occupation?

☐ No occupation ☐ Specify occupation: _____

13. What level of education has your father completed?

<input type="checkbox"/> No schooling	<input type="checkbox"/> MA degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship /
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate	Certificate / Diploma
<input type="checkbox"/> High school	<input type="checkbox"/> Some university studies,	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> BA degree	but no degree	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Honours degree		_____

14. What is your father's occupation?

☐ No occupation ☐ Specify occupation: _____

15. How many books do you have at home (approximately)? _____

16. Do you buy or borrow books from library? ☐ Buy ☐ Borrow

17. If borrow, how often do you go to the library to borrow books? _____

SURVEY FOR JOURNALISTS

18. How often do you have a chance to finish reading a book? _____

19. How often do you have a chance to visit a museum, theatre, opera? _____

20. Are you currently employed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. If employed, do you work...

☐ Full-time

☐ Part-time

☐ Casual

22. What is your monthly salary, after tax?

☐ Less than 5,000

☐ 5,000-10,000

☐ 10,000-15,000

☐ 15,000-20,000

☐ 20,000-25,000

☐ 25,000-30,000

☐ 30,000-35,000

☐ 35,000-40,000

☐ 40,000-45,000

☐ 45,000-50,000

☐ 50,000-55,000

☐ 55,000-60,000

☐ 60,000-65,000

☐ 65,000-70,000

☐ 70,000-75,000

☐ 75,000-80,000

☐ 80,000-85,000

☐ 85,000-90,000

☐ 90,000-95,000

☐ 95,000-100,000

☐ More than 100,000

23. Other source of income?

☐ No

☐ Yes: _____

24. Do you own or rent your home?

☐ Rent

☐ Own

25. Do you own a car?

☐ Yes

☐ No

26. How satisfied are you with your economic status?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Somewhat satisfied

☐ Somewhat dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

27. Which languages do you speak? _____

28. Have you lived abroad? ☐ Never ☐ Yes. How long? _____

29. How many times have you travelled outside of South Africa in the last 12 months? _____

30. Have you received any prizes for your journalistic work?

☐ No

☐ Yes

31. Have you been on a jury for a journalistic prize?

☐ No

☐ Yes

32. Are you a member of any community groups/organisations/unions/church?

☐ No

☐ Yes, specify: _____

SURVEY FOR AUDIENCES

1. First name (only) and assigned CODE: _____
2. Contact phone number or email address: _____
3. Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other, specify: _____
4. Age: _____
5. Do you identify as...
☐ African ☐ Coloured ☐ Indian ☐ Asian ☐ White ☐ Other, specify _____
6. What level of education have you completed?
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No schooling | <input type="checkbox"/> MA degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship / Certificate / Diploma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school | <input type="checkbox"/> Some university studies, but no degree | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BA degree | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honours degree | | |
7. What subject did you study? _____
8. How many years have you worked as a journalist?
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 15-20 | |
9. Current employer: _____
10. Current position: _____
11. What level of education has your mother completed?
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No schooling | <input type="checkbox"/> MA degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship / Certificate / Diploma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school | <input type="checkbox"/> Some university studies, but no degree | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BA degree | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honours degree | | |
12. What is your mother's occupation?
- ☐ No occupation ☐ Specify occupation: _____
13. What level of education has your father completed?
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No schooling | <input type="checkbox"/> MA degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship / Certificate / Diploma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school | <input type="checkbox"/> Some university studies, but no degree | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BA degree | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honours degree | | |
14. What is your father's occupation?
- ☐ No occupation ☐ Specify occupation: _____
15. How many books do you have at home (approximately)? _____
16. Do you buy or borrow books from library? ☐ Buy ☐ Borrow
17. If borrow, how often do you go to the library to borrow books? _____

SURVEY FOR AUDIENCES

18. How often do you have a chance to finish reading a book? _____

19. How often do you have a chance to visit a museum, theatre, opera? _____

20. Are you currently employed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. If employed, do you work...

☐ Full-time

☐ Part-time

☐ Casual

22. What is your monthly salary, after tax?

☐ Less than 5,000

☐ 5,000-10,000

☐ 10,000-15,000

☐ 15,000-20,000

☐ 20,000-25,000

☐ 25,000-30,000

☐ 30,000-35,000

☐ 35,000-40,000

☐ 40,000-45,000

☐ 45,000-50,000

☐ 50,000-55,000

☐ 55,000-60,000

☐ 60,000-65,000

☐ 65,000-70,000

☐ 70,000-75,000

☐ 75,000-80,000

☐ 80,000-85,000

☐ 85,000-90,000

☐ 90,000-95,000

☐ 95,000-100,000

☐ More than 100,000

23. Other source of income?

☐ No

☐ Yes: _____

24. Do you own or rent your home?

☐ Rent

☐ Own

25. Do you own a car?

☐ Yes

☐ No

26. How satisfied are you with your economic status?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Somewhat satisfied

☐ Somewhat dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

27. Which languages do you speak? _____

28. Have you lived abroad? ☐ Never ☐ Yes. How long? _____

29. How many times have you travelled outside of South Africa in the last 12 months? _____

30. Have you received any prize for your journalistic work?

☐ No

☐ Yes

31. Have you been on a jury for a journalistic prize?

☐ No

☐ Yes

32. Are you a member of any community groups/organisations/unions/church?

☐ No

☐ Yes, specify: _____

LIFESTYLE JOURNALIST INTERVIEWS

HABITUS (Personal)

RQ 1: Who is a lifestyle journalist in South Africa?

- **How would you describe yourself as a person? What is your life background?**
 - Where did you grow up? Go to school?
 - What kinds of expectations did you have of yourself, growing up?
 - What expectations did your parents have for you?
 - What experiences in your life have had most influence in shaping you as a person?
 - From where or whom did you receive most support throughout life?

PROFESSIONAL ACCESS, QUALIFICATIONS AND MOTIVATION

RQ 2: Is lifestyle journalism distinguished by specific professional motivations, professional access, qualifications and career paths?

- **How did you get into XXXX journalism?**
 - How long? What motivated you? Has this motivation changed over time?
 - Were you previously employed in another beat or have you reported on other topics?
 - Did you undergo an education in journalism (e.g. studied journalism at university, cadetship)?
 - Would you say that you have made your hobby into a job?
- **Do you feel your personal background and experiences suit the demands of being a lifestyle journalist?**
 - What sort of characteristics does a lifestyle journalist need to have?
- **Which journalistic or area-specific qualifications are particularly important in XXXX journalism?**
- **Would you count yourself as part of your target audience?**
 - Did this play a role in your employment?
 - Which media in the area of XXXX journalism do you consume yourself?
 - Which media do you think are the most influential in this area in South Africa?
- **Have you ever worked in public relations or advertising?**
 - Would you say that this is common among your colleagues?
- **What does your typical day look like, from the moment you wake up, get to work, and go to sleep?**
 - How much do you feel your personal life seeps into your work?
 - Which of your characteristics emerge more strongly at work, and which at home?

PROFESSIONAL VIEWS, SELF-PERCEPTION

RQ 3: What do lifestyle journalists in South Africa understand to be their role in society?

- **What is your purpose or mission as a XXX journalist in South Africa? What are you trying to achieve?**
 - How important is it for you to:
 - provide advice?
 - entertain the audience?
 - motivate people to change their lifestyle?
 - Inspire?
 - Entertain?

- Initiate public discourse?
 - Advocate for audiences, and scrutinize lifestyle industries?
 - To what extent do you see yourself as a trend-setter?
 - What role does personal fulfilment or expression play in your work?
- To what extent are you able to fulfil these values or ideals in your work? Does anything prevent you from doing so? (*newsroom structures, editorial/ownership influence*)
- **Would you say that you are different from colleagues who work in other beats or areas? (e.g. political journalism)**
 - How does your work compare to theirs?
 - What is their function in society?
 - What sort of characteristics do they need to have?
 - How do you think they regard your work?
 - **How does your work compare to the work of (...freelancers, online journalists, bloggers, YouTube personalities, and Instagrammers)?**
 - What is their function in society?
 - How do you think they see you? (*boundaries*)
- **Is your work important for South Africa's society? Why?**
 - What is the (added) value of your journalistic work for society?
 - Does lifestyle journalism play a democratic function in any way? How?
- **What are some of the principles that guide you in your work? (ethical considerations)**
 - What kind of values do you uphold in your work? (*objectivity, public service, truth, autonomy, delivering news quickly...*)
 - What kind of dilemmas have you faced in the past and how did you deal with these?
 - What are your thoughts on Ubuntu? Any relevance to lifestyle journalism?
 - How good would you say you are at listening? (*ethics of listening*)
- **How would you compare yourself to lifestyle journalists in other countries? E.g. USA, UK etc.**
 - What are the differences or similarities between lifestyle journalists in South Africa and other countries – what you and they are trying to achieve?
 - How does your impression of lifestyle journalists from other countries influence how you understand your function?
 - What makes South African lifestyle journalists specific?
- **Are you a member of any groups such as professional associations, trade unions? What do such groups offer you?**
- **Are you happy being a journalist? Why/not?**
 - Do you experience any frustrations/challenges? Which ones? (personal/occupational)
 - Long working hours? Work intrudes on life? More demand, fewer resources?
- **Have you ever considered leaving journalism? Why/not? What keeps you going?**

CHANGES IN JOURNALISM

RQ 4: To what extent has lifestyle journalism changed in recent years?

- What do you think are the main changes which lifestyle journalism in South Africa has undergone in recent years?
 - How are these changes felt in lifestyle journalism?

- What trends do you see particularly in your own area of work? (Note: Please relate this specifically to the area of responsibility – e.g. Travel or Fashion, etc).
- Are these changes specific to lifestyle journalism or similar to those experienced by journalism in general?
- To what extent have technological and economic influences changed journalism in general, and your work in particular?
- How do **economic aspects** affect your work? (change daily routines)
 - What is your biggest source of competition?
 - To what extent are competing media organisation monitored, and how do these influence your own organisation?
 - How often do you interact with advertisers / advertising department in your organisation? In what way?
 - Have you experienced any loss of autonomy as a result of changes?
- In what way does **technology affect** your work? (feature in daily work)
 - How much does technology feature in daily work?
 - research, production, interaction with audiences?
- In what way is journalism affected by the current trend toward more shaky employment strategies, i.e. a decrease in permanent full-time work?

JOURNALISM AND PR/ADVERTISING/SOURCES

RQ 5: Is lifestyle journalism distinguished by a particular proximity to public relations, advertising and the economy in general?

- **From the moment you pitch a story to the moment you see it published, how much choice do you have in shaping your story? (working conditions)**
 - How are editorial decisions made in terms of topics, timing, content and thrust of the story?
 - Do you or editor select story? Motivation to select stories?
 - How is angle of the story chosen?
 - Decision influenced by journalist colleagues / editorial agenda / owners? Do these ever conflict with your own views?
 - What role do PR and advertising play in decisions about the setting of topics, timing and the structure and content of stories in your area?
 - Do PR or advertising practitioners try to have influence in this regard? How does this happen? (Note: If applicable, ask about particular influences, e.g. the role played by tour operators in travel journalism)
 - Can this kind of influence in XXXX journalism be seen more often than in other areas of journalism?
 - What percentage of what you initially produce is in the final published product?
- **How important are personal contacts in XXXX journalism?**
 - Are at least some of these contacts of a nature that tends more towards friendships?
 - Would you say that such amicable contacts in XXXX journalism are more important and more common than in other areas of journalism?
- **In your work, do you have access to special benefits, or perks?** (Note: name these, e.g. paid trips or discounts)
 - How common is it in XXXX journalism that one makes use of such benefits?
 - What is your personal view about such benefits?

- Would you say that the benefits have an influence on the work of XXXX journalists?

JOURNALISM AND THE AUDIENCE

RQ 6: Who do lifestyle journalists imagine their audiences to be and what do lifestyle journalists understand to be the audiences' expectations?

- **Who do you imagine to be your audience? Describe the person you write for.**
 - What characteristics do your audiences have?
 - Personality / Education / Occupation / Salary / Where they live (*economic/cultural capital*)
 - Citizen, consumer
 - How important to you is your audiences' access to money, education, and cultural know-how, when you think of your work?
- **What do you think your audience expects from you?**
 - How do you know what audiences expect from you? Where does this information come from? (*social media, analytics...*)
 - How does the newsroom keep track of the expectations and needs of the audience? (*social media, analytics...*)
 - To what extent do these mechanisms and expectations inform editorial decisions?
 - Do you feel any pressure to maintain a relationship with audiences? Why?
 - How do you interact with audiences?
 - What motivates you to interact?
 - Do you read and respond to comments?
 - What sort of comments do you get and respond to?
 - How do you feel if audiences respond negatively to your work?
 - Do you rely on web analytics data? What do you get out of it?
 - To what extent does it shape news story selection / editorial decisions?
- **Are you able to deliver on audience expectations?**
- **How do you contribute to the lives of your audiences on a daily basis? What purpose do you think you serve?**
 - Do you think your audiences would agree with you on that?
 - How would you characterise your relationship with your audience?
 - Do your audiences affect how you see yourself as a journalist?
 - Do you feel a responsibility towards your audiences?
 - How much do audiences influence editorial decisions?
- **What do you expect from them? What role do they play in your work?**
 - Do your audiences play any part in the stories you produce?

RQ 7: How does each group believe the other imagines them and their roles/expectations? What factors may be contributing to incongruence (if found)?

- **If we asked your audience to describe you, what would they say? How do you think audiences imagine you?**
 - Why do you think they have this impression of you?
 - How accurate is this description of who you are?
 - Does this make you feel you need to change?
- **When you yourself consume lifestyle news, do you get what you expect?**
 - Anything you would change about the coverage?

- **I recently asked a group of audiences what they expect from lifestyle journalists in South Africa, and they said (.....) – how do you feel about this?**

RQ 8: How does awareness of audience expectations inform the lifestyle journalists' understanding of their roles in society?

- **How does knowing the expectations audiences have of you make you feel?**
 - Would you reconsider your earlier responses about how you imagine your audiences?
 - Do these expectations make you feel you need to change your mission or purpose as a lifestyle journalist?
 - If you could create the ideal audience for your work, who would they be?

CLOSING QUESTIONS:

- **If you could change anything about journalism or lifestyle journalism in particular in South Africa, what would that be?**
- **Is there anything else you'd like to share that I haven't asked about?**

POLITICAL JOURNALIST INTERVIEWS

HABITUS (Occupational)

RQ 1: *Who is a journalist in South Africa?*

- **Why did you become a journalist?**
 - How long? What motivated you? (*personal background, experiences, personality...*)
 - Did you study journalism?
 - Do you hold any other jobs?
 - What beat do you report most often? How did you end up in this beat?
 - What sort of characteristics does a journalist need to have?

ROLE CONCEPTIONS (Occupational/Societal)

RQ 2: *What do journalists in South Africa understand to be their role in society?*

- **How would you describe your identity as a South African journalist? What words or phrases might you use...**
 - Do you have a particular mission / ambition / purpose as a journalist in South Africa? What are you trying to achieve?
 - What kind of values do you uphold in your work? (*objectivity, public service, truth, autonomy, delivering news quickly...*)
 - To what extent are you able to fulfil these values in your work? Does anything prevent you from doing so? (*newsroom structures, editorial/ownership influence*)
 - What makes your work important for South Africa's society? Why?
 - What is your view on being a detached reporter versus being an advocate in your work? – If you had to choose one, which do you think informs your work more strongly?
- **From the moment you pitch a story to the moment you see it published, how much freedom do you feel you have in shaping your story? (*working conditions*)**
 - How do you select a story? What motivates you to select stories? – personal values?
 - How do you choose the angle of the story?
 - To what extent are these decisions influenced by journalist colleagues / editorial agenda / owners? Do these ever conflict with your own views?
 - What sort of expectations do others in your daily work have of you?
 - What percentage of what you initially produce is in the final published product?
 - Competition with other media/colleagues? Pressure to sell stories? Adequate resources/time? Audience analytics?
- **What are some of the principles that guide you in your work? (*ethical considerations*)**
 - What kind of dilemmas have you faced in the past and how did you deal with these?
 - What are your thoughts on Ubuntu? Any relevance to journalism?
 - How good would you say you are at listening? (*ethics of listening*)
- **Would you say that you are different from colleagues who work in other beats or areas? (*e.g. lifestyle journalism*)**
 - How does your work compare to the work of lifestyle journalists?
 - What is their identity / function in society?
 - What sort of characteristics does a lifestyle journalist need to have?
 - How do you think lifestyle journalists regard your work?
 - How does your work compare to work of freelancers, online journalists, bloggers?
 - What is their function in society?

- How do you think they see you? (*boundaries*)
- **What is your impression of the current state of democracy in South Africa and the way in which journalists have been covering it?**
 - Do you have a particular function in relation to democracy? What?
 - How much of your work is a response to democratic issues in the country? (*poverty, unemployment, inequality, racism, xenophobia, violence...*)
 - If you could envision a fictional democratic model for South Africa, what would it look like? What does democracy in South Africa need to look like to work?
 - What would journalism look like in this system?
- **Do you feel it is part of your responsibility as a journalist to support national development?**
 - What is your relationship like with those in power? (*political, business, religious, court, police*)
 - What about civil society groups, NGOs?
- **How would you compare yourself to journalists in other countries? E.g. USA, UK etc.**
 - What are the differences or similarities between journalists in South Africa and other countries – what you and they are trying to achieve?
 - How does your impression of journalists from other countries influence how you understand your function?
 - What makes South African journalists specific?
- **Are you a member of any groups such as professional associations, trade unions? What do such groups offer you?**
- **Are you happy being a journalist? Why? Why not?**
 - Do you experience any frustrations / challenges? Which ones? (*personal/occupational*)
 - Long working hours? Work intrudes on life? More demand, fewer resources?
- **Have you ever considered leaving journalism? Why? Why not? What keeps you going?**

TECHNOLOGY, CHANGES IN JOURNALISM

RQ 3: To what extent has journalism changed in recent years?

- **What would you say has changed the most about your work since you started working as a journalist?**
 - To what extent have technological and economic influences changed journalism in general, and your work in particular?
- How do **economic aspects** affect your work? (change daily routines)
 - What is your biggest source of competition?
 - To what extent are competing media organisation monitored, and how do these influence your own organisation?
 - How often do you interact with advertisers / advertising department in your organisation? In what way?
 - Have you experienced any loss of autonomy as a result of changes?
- In what way does **technology** affect your work? (feature in daily work)
 - How much does technology feature in daily work?
 - research, production, interaction with audiences?
- In what way is journalism affected by the current trend toward more shaky employment strategies, i.e. a decrease in permanent full-time work?

JOURNALISTS AND THEIR AUDIENCES

RQ 4: Who do journalists imagine their audiences to be and what do journalists understand to be their expectations?

- **What comes to mind when I say the word “expectation”?**
 - what expectations do you have for yourself? (*personal / occupational*)
 - who else in your life and work has expectations of you? (*personal / occupational – hierarchy of influences*) – How do you deal with these? (*role conflict*)
- **Who do you imagine to be your audience? Describe the person you write for.**
 - What characteristics do your audiences have?
 - Personality / Education / Occupation / Where they live
 - Citizen, consumer
 - Do you think your audiences also consume lifestyle journalism? Why?
- **What do you think your audience expects from you? (*participation, engagement*)**
 - How do you know what audiences expect from you? Where does this information come from? (*social media, analytics...*)
 - How does the newsroom keep track of the expectations and needs of the audience? (*social media, analytics...*)
 - To what extent do these mechanisms and expectations inform editorial decisions?
 - Do you feel any pressure to maintain a relationship with audiences? Why?
 - How do you interact with audiences?
 - What motivates you to interact?
 - Do you read and respond to comments?
 - What sort of comments do you get and respond to?
 - How do you feel if audiences respond negatively to your work?
 - Do you rely on web analytics data? What do you get out of it?
 - To what extent does it shape news story selection / editorial decisions?
- **Are you able to deliver on audience expectations?**
- **How do you contribute to the lives of your audiences on a daily basis? What purpose do you think you serve?**
 - Do you think your audiences would agree with you on that?
 - How would you characterise your relationship with your audience?
 - Do your audiences affect how you see yourself as a journalist?
 - Do you feel a responsibility towards your audiences?
 - How much do audiences influence editorial decisions?
- **What do you expect from them? What role do they play in your work?**
 - Do your audiences play any part in the stories you produce?

RQ 5: How does each group believe the other imagines them and their roles/expectations? What factors may be contributing to incongruence (if found)?

- **If we asked your audience to describe you, what would they say? How do you think audiences imagine you?**
 - Why do you think they have this impression of you?
 - How accurate is this description of who you are?
 - Does this make you feel you need to change?
- **When you yourself consume news, do you get what you expect?**
 - Anything you would change about the coverage?

- I recently asked a group of audiences what they expect from journalists in South Africa, and they said (...) – how do you feel about this?

RQ 6: How does awareness of audience expectations inform the journalists' understanding of their roles in society?

- **How does knowing the expectations audiences have of you make you feel?**
 - Would you reconsider your earlier responses about how you imagine your audiences?
 - Do these expectations make you feel you need to change your mission or purpose as a journalist?
 - If you could create the ideal audience for your work, who would they be?

HABITUS (Personal)

RQ 7: Who is a journalist in South Africa?

- **How would you describe yourself as a person? What is your life background?**
 - Where did you grow up? Go to school?
 - What kinds of expectations did you have of yourself, growing up?
 - What expectations did your parents have for you?
 - What experiences in your life have had most influence in shaping you as a person?
 - From where or whom did you receive most support throughout life?
- **What would you say is the difference between how you understand yourself when you are a journalist (at work) and when you are -name of journo- (outside of work)?**
 - How much do you feel your personal life seeps into your work?
 - Which of your characteristics emerge more strongly at work, and which at home?
 - Do you feel your personal background and experiences suit the demands of being a journalist?
 - What does your typical day look like, from the moment you wake up, get to work, and go to sleep?
- **How much do you think your personal life (and your socio-demographic background) inform your ideas about who you are as a journalist and your identity?**
 - In your daily work, do you feel or experience any sense of privilege as a journalist?
- **What is your understanding of inequality in South Africa?**
 - what does social class look like here?
- **How do you feel if I say that gender, race and class are social roles?**
 - Have you experienced this yourself in South Africa?

Final questions:

- **If you could change one thing about journalism in South Africa, what would that be?**
- **Is there anything else you'd like to share that I haven't asked about?**

AUDIENCE FOCUS GROUPS - LIFESTYLE

HABITUS (Personal/Societal)

RQ 1: Who is an audience in South Africa?

- **Tell me a little bit about yourself as a person? What is your life background?**
 - Where did you grow up? Go to school?
 - What kinds of expectations did you have of yourself, growing up?
 - What influence did your parents have on you? / What expectations did your parents have for you?
 - What experiences in your life do you feel have had most influence in shaping you as a person?
 - From where or from whom did you receive most support throughout life?
- **What does your typical day look like, from the moment you wake up and go to sleep?**
 - How much do you feel your personal circumstances influence the quality of your daily life in South Africa?
 - Which of your characteristics emerge more strongly at home, in comparison to in public spaces (work, school etc.)? Any overlapping characteristics?

ROLE CONCEPTIONS OF AUDIENCES (Personal/Societal)

RQ 2: What do audiences understand to be their roles or expectations for themselves in society?

- **What is the purpose or mission of a person living in South Africa? What are people trying to achieve?**
 - What kind of values do you uphold in your everyday life? (*Rokeach's Value system*)
 - What is your responsibility to those closest to you? (*personal roles/expectations*)
 - What do they expect from you?
 - Are you able to fulfil these values and responsibilities? Does anything prevent you from doing so?
 - What is your responsibility in society? (*societal roles/expectations*)
 - What makes these values important for South Africa's society?
 - What do you think society expects from you?
 - Are you able to fulfil these values and responsibilities? Does anything prevent you from doing so?
 - Describe your relationship to those in power - (*political, business, religious, court, police*)

ROLE EXPECTATIONS OF LIFESTYLE JOURNALISTS (Occupational/Societal)

RQ 3: Who do audiences imagine lifestyle journalists to be, and what do audiences understand to be the role of lifestyle journalists in South Africa?

- **What do you think of when I say lifestyle journalism?**

- **What kinds of lifestyle topics interest you? Where do you find lifestyle content most often – Print magazine? Online? Any others?**
 - Local lifestyle content or international?
- **Who is a lifestyle journalist in South Africa? Describe them.**
 - Personal characteristics / professional-occupation characteristics
 - What do you think motivates someone to become a lifestyle journalist?
 - Where do they work? (*institutional/traditional vs. peripheral/alternative*)
- **What is the purpose or mission of lifestyle journalists in South Africa? What are they trying to achieve?**
 - **What do you think lifestyle journalists should be doing?**

○ <i>entertaining</i>	○ <i>connecting you to community/society</i>
○ <i>trend-setting</i>	○ <i>managing your emotional well-being</i>
○ <i>marketing</i>	○ <i>being your friend</i>
○ <i>(products/experiences)</i>	○ <i>inspiring you (products, experiences)</i>
○ <i>providing advice</i>	○ <i>being a guide of everyday life</i>
○ <i>initiating public discourse</i>	
 - Do you think they are able to fulfil these goals in their work?
 - What might prevent them from doing so? (*newsroom structures, editorial influence, ownership*)
 - Is their work important for South Africa's society? Why/not?
 - Does lifestyle journalism play a democratic role in any way?
 - What kind of values or principles do you think guide lifestyle journalists? Any dilemmas they face?
 - *objectivity, public service, truth, autonomy, delivering news quickly*
 - Does Ubuntu have any relevance in lifestyle journalism?
 - Are lifestyle journalists good listeners?
- **What do you think lifestyle journalists do on a regular work day?**
 - Who selects stories? How do they select a story? Angle of the story?
 - Who or what do you think might influence their decisions in this regard?
 - Other colleagues and editors
 - Public relations, advertising, lifestyle industries (travel, fashion...)
 - Do you think they receive any freebies / special benefits?
 - How do these influences impact their work?
 - What percentage of the story they initially produce is published as final product?
 - Have you ever interacted with a lifestyle journalist in person?
 - Where do your impressions of lifestyle journalists come from?
- **How would you compare South African lifestyle journalists to those in other countries? E.g. USA, UK etc.**
 - Do you consume international lifestyle content from and about other countries?
 - What are the differences or similarities between lifestyle journalists in South Africa and other countries – What makes South African lifestyle journalists specific?

- **Would you say that lifestyle journalists are different from journalists who work in other beats or areas? (e.g. political journalism)**
 - In what way are they different?
- **Do you follow any lifestyle bloggers, YouTube personalities and Instagrammers? On what topics? (travel, fashion, food, health etc.)**
 - How would you describe these content creators? What is their function in society? Why do you think they do this?
 - What do you do while you are on these platforms?
 - What sort of characteristics do these content creators need to have for you to follow them? (*authenticity/personality; professionalism/quality of product*)
 - Do you feel connected to them in any way?
 - Do you feel you know them?
 - Do you think they know you?
 - How do they compare to lifestyle journalists who work for magazines?
- **Do you think lifestyle journalists in South Africa are happy? Why? Why not?**
 - What kind of frustrations or challenges might they experience? (*personal/occupational*)

RQ 4: What do audiences expect to be the role of lifestyle journalists in South Africa?

- **What do you expect from lifestyle journalists?**
 - Do they meet these expectations? If not, what do you think is preventing them?
 - If you feel upset or disagree with something a lifestyle journalist has produced, what do you do? How do you react? (*sanctions*)
- **How do lifestyle journalists contribute to your life on a daily basis? How do they affect your life?**
 - Do you think they would agree with you on that? They feel the same way?
 - Do lifestyle journalists affect how you see yourself as a person?
 - Do lifestyle journalists affect how you see yourself in society?
 - How much do lifestyle journalists influence your decisions?
 - How would you describe your relationship with lifestyle journalists?
- **How do you feel when you engage with lifestyle content?**
 - What is going through your mind? – emotionally affected?
 - When you flip through a magazine? Or online article?
 - Scroll through Instagram?
 - Watch a YouTube Video
 - Does this kind of content reflect your life?
- **Do you ever purchase products or services you have seen in lifestyle stories?**
 - Have you ever travelled to a destination you saw in a story?
 - Have you ever bought any kind of fashion items (clothes, shoes) you saw in stories?
 - Do you ever buy beauty products or services you see in stories?
 - Have you ever bought any products or services related to health and wellness?
 - Have you ever gone to a restaurant or bought food?

- **How do you feel if you realize that you cannot afford the things lifestyle journalists present in their stories?**
 - What do you do?
 - Do you rebel against the mainstream vision of lifestyle? How?
- **Do you trust lifestyle journalist ... more than other types of journalist? (e.g. political journalists? Why?**
- **How do you feel about advertising and sponsored content in lifestyle content?**

RQ 5: How do audiences express their expectations of journalists?

- **How do you express your expectations to lifestyle journalists?**
 - How do you interact with lifestyle journalists? (*online social media – twitter, Facebook, comments...*)
 - What motivates you to interact?
 - Do you write comments under news stories / Twitter / Facebook? Why/not?
 - What sort of comments do you write / or respond to other comments?
 - Do lifestyle journalists ever respond? How does that make you feel?
 - Do you ever stop yourself from posting a comment?
 - Do you ever post critical comments on news stories?
 - Does this interaction between you and journalists make you trust or value journalism more or less?
 - Do you feel that your interaction with journalists influences how they do their work?
 - Do you think your expectations influence how they do their work?

RQ 6: How does each group believe the other imagines them and their roles/expectations? What factors may be contributing to incongruence (if found)?

- **If we asked lifestyle journalists to describe you, what would they say? How do you think they imagine you?**
 - Why do you think they have this impression of you?
 - How accurate is this description of who you are as a person?
 - Do you think that how much money you have is important to lifestyle journalists when they think about their audience?
 - Do you think that your education and interest in cultural things is important to lifestyle journalists when they think about their audience?
 - What is important / of interest to you culturally?
- **What do you think journalists expect from you?**
- **I recently asked some lifestyle journalists to describe their audiences, and this is what they said (...) – how do you feel about this?**
- **If you could create the ideal lifestyle journalist, who would they be?**
 - What kind of personal characteristics would this person have?
 - What sort of values would drive their work?
 - What would be their mission in South Africa?
 - What would their relationship with audiences be like?

FINAL QUESTIONS:

- **If you could change one thing about lifestyle journalism in South Africa, what would that be?**
- **Is there anything else you'd like to share that I haven't asked about?**

AUDIENCE FOCUS GROUPS - POLITICAL

HABITUS (Personal/Societal)

RQ 1: Who is an audience in South Africa?

- **Tell me a little bit about yourself as a person? What is your life background?**
 - Where did you grow up? Go to school?
 - What kinds of expectations did you have of yourself, growing up?
 - What influence did your parents have on you? / What expectations did your parents have for you?
 - What experiences in your life do you feel have had most influence in shaping you as a person?
 - From where or from whom did you receive most support from, throughout life?
- **What does your typical day look like, from the moment you wake up and go to sleep?**
 - How much do you feel your personal circumstances influence the quality of your daily life in South Africa?
 - Which of your characteristics emerge more strongly at home, in comparison to in public spaces (work, school etc.)? Any overlapping characteristics?

ROLE CONCEPTIONS OF AUDIENCES (Personal/Societal)

RQ 2: What do audiences understand to be their roles or expectations for themselves in society?

- **What is your purpose or mission as a person living in South Africa? What are you trying to achieve?**
 - What kind of values do you uphold in your everyday life? (*Rokeach's Value system*)
 - What is your responsibility to those closest to you? (*personal roles/expectations*)
 - What do they expect from you?
 - Are you able to fulfil these values and responsibilities? Does anything prevent you from doing so?
 - What is your responsibility in society? (*societal roles/expectations*)
 - What makes these values important for South Africa's society?
 - What do you think society expects from you?
 - Are you able to fulfil these values and responsibilities? Does anything prevent you from doing so?
 - Describe your relationship to those in power - (*political, business, religious, court, police*).

ROLE EXPECTATIONS OF JOURNALISTS (Occupational/Societal)

RQ 3: Who do audiences imagine journalists to be, and what do audiences understand to be the role of journalists in South Africa?

- **Who is a journalist in South Africa? Describe them.**
 - Personal characteristics / professional-occupation characteristics
 - What do you think motivates someone to become a journalist?
- **What is the purpose or mission of journalists in South Africa? What are they trying to achieve?**

- What kind of values do you think they uphold in their daily work? (*objectivity, public service, truth, autonomy, delivering news quickly...*)
- Do you think they are able to fulfil these values in their work? What might prevent them from doing so? (*newsroom structures, editorial influence, ownership*)
- What makes their work important for South Africa's society?
- What kind of ethical principles do you think guide lifestyle journalists? Any dilemmas they face?
 - o Does Ubuntu have any relevance in lifestyle journalism?
 - o Are lifestyle journalists good listeners?
- **What is your impression of the current state of democracy in South Africa and the way in which journalists have been covering it?**
 - What is the purpose of journalists in relation to democracy?
 - How are journalists covering societal issues? (*poverty, unemployment, inequality, racism, xenophobia, violence...*)
 - If you could envision a fictional democratic model for South Africa, what would it look like? What does democracy in South Africa need to look like to work?
 - What would journalism look like in this system?
- **How would you describe the relationship that journalists have with those in power in South Africa?**
 - Do you feel it is part of their responsibility to support national development? (*political, business, religious, court, police*)
 - What about civil society groups, NGOs?
- **How would you describe a day in the life of a journalist?**
 - How do they select a story? Angle of the story?
 - How do they interact with their colleagues and editors?
 - What percentage of the story they initially produce is published as final product?
 - Have you ever interacted with a journalist in person?
 - Where do these impressions about journalists come from?
- **How would you compare South African journalists to those in other countries? E.g. USA, UK etc.**
 - Do you consume international news from and about other countries?
 - What are the differences or similarities between journalists in South Africa and other countries – What makes South African journalists specific?
- **Do you think journalists in South Africa are happy being journalists? Why? Why not?**
 - What kind of frustrations or challenges might they experience? (*personal/occupational*)

RQ 3: What do audiences expect to be the role of journalists in South Africa?

- **What do you expect from journalists?**
 - Do journalists currently meet these expectations? If not, what is preventing them?
 - If you feel upset or disagree with something a journalist has produced, what do you do? How do you react? (*sanctions*)
- **How do journalists contribute to your life on a daily basis?**
 - Do you think journalists would agree with you on that?
 - Do journalists affect how you see yourself as a person?
 - Do journalists affect how you see yourself in society?
 - How much do journalists influence your decisions?

- How would you describe your relationship with journalists?
- **If you could create the ideal journalist, who would they be?**
 - What kind of personal characteristics would this person have?
 - What sort of values would drive their work?
 - What would be their mission as a journalist in South Africa?
 - What would their relationship with audiences be like?

RQ 4: How does each group believe the other imagines them and their roles/expectations? What factors may be contributing to incongruence (if found)?

- **If we asked journalists to describe you, what would they say? How do you think journalists imagine you?**
 - Why do you think they have this impression of you?
 - How accurate is this description of who you are as a person who consumes news?
 - Does this make you feel you need to change in any way?
- **What do you think journalists expect from you?**
- **I recently asked some journalists to describe their audiences, and they said (...) – how do you feel about this?**

TECHNOLOGY AND PARTICIPATION

RQ 5: How does technology shape the way audiences express their expectations of journalists?

- **How do you express your expectations to journalists?**
 - How do you interact with journalists? (*online social media – twitter, comments...*)
 - What motivates you to interact?
 - Do you write comments under news stories / Twitter / Facebook? – If not, why not?
 - What sort of comments do you write / or respond to other comments?
 - Do journalists ever respond? How does that make you feel?
 - Do you ever stop yourself from posting a comment?
 - Do you ever post critical comments on news stories?
 - Do you feel that your interaction with journalists influences how they do their work?
 - Does this interaction between you and journalists make you trust or value journalism more or less?

BOUNDARIES OF JOURNALISM

RQ 6: How do audience perceive the boundary between traditional journalists and other atypical journalistic actors?

- **How would you define journalism?**
 - Is journalism a profession? Why?
- **Do you get your news from any other sources, besides newspaper, TV and radio? (*online atypical journalists*)**
 - What do you think of bloggers and online news outlets? What is their function?
 - What do you expect from them?
 - How do you think they imagine you?

Final questions:

- **If you could change one thing about journalism in South Africa, what would that be?**
- **Is there anything else you'd like to share that I haven't asked about?**