

Challenging the Citizen– Consumer Journalistic Dichotomy: A News Content Analysis of Audience Approaches in Chile

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Abstract

Transformations in media and society have forced journalists to reconsider their relation to the audience. In this article, we argue that due to these changes, a new conceptualization is needed of the way journalism addresses the audience, which goes beyond the traditional consumer–citizen dichotomy. Results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses with three samples of Chilean news ($N = 1,988$; $N = 795$; $N = 812$) support the hypothesis that audience approaches in journalism are best represented by a three-factor solution: the infotainment, the service, and the civic models. The data also show that approaching the audience as consumer or as citizen are not two poles of one continuum, and that approaching the audience under a consumer-orientation consists of two approaches: providing service and providing entertainment.

Keywords

audience approaches, journalism, confirmatory factor analysis, content analysis

The current tension between journalism as a social institution, the news media, and the “new public” has forced news professionals to reconsider their roles, ideals, and purposes, as several expectations that often have been granted universal status about the democratic function of journalism are being systematically challenged by the rise of

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different practices. All these transformations have forced journalists to reconsider how to respond to the needs of the audience (Brants & de Haan, 2010).

Journalism research knows a long tradition of examining how journalists see the “imaginary reader” who they write for (e.g., Donsbach, 1983; Gans, 1980; Hanitzsch, 2007). Audience approaches is one of the main perspectives from which the role of journalism in society is studied, next to the relation between journalists and power holders (e.g., the watchdog role), and the level of implication of the journalists in news content (e.g., the degree of objectivity; Donsbach, 1983). Compared with the other two perspectives, the audience’s approaches shifts the focus away from the narrow focus on the role of journalism in institutional politics. The audience perspective is therefore better suited to assess the changing functions which journalism fulfills in society and the roles it enables the public to play in social life. According to Donsbach (1983, p. 19) “the relationship between journalists and their publics are significant indicators of the condition of a communication system.”

Previous research into audience approaches has mainly looked at how the journalism profession sees its ideal—typical relation with the audience (role conception; for example, Hanitzsch, 2007; Weaver & Willnat, 2012). Professional roles in journalism have mainly been defined from a functionalist perspective (Hellmueller & Mellado, 2015; Vos, 2005), which considers roles as discrete and fixed components (Lynch, 2007, p. 380). Recent discussions on role theory have moved to a more interactionist perspective, which consider roles as adaptives, and as outcomes of dynamic social negotiations (Lynch, 2007; Mellado, 2015). From this perspective, a “gap between ideals and practice is inevitable, since the constraint to which journalists are exposed put different limits to the possibility of living up to their normative standards” (Mellado & Van Dalen, 2014; Vos, 2005).

In this article, we therefore study how audience’s approaches materialize in the news product that is made known to the public (role performance). Whereas role conceptions apply at an abstract level, role performance deals with the manifestation of professional ideals in practice (Biddle, 1979; Burke & Reitzes, 1981). The role journalism performs in society is then the collective outcome of the news-making process (Mellado, 2015) influenced by internal and external factors that potentially inhibit but can also enable the practice of journalism (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Conceptualizations of the way in which journalism approaches the audience are traditionally based on a distinction between the audience as citizens, and the audience as consumers (Lewis, Inthorn, & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2005). Quantitative content analyses of different reporting styles generally rely on such a dichotomy (see Reinemann, Stanyer, Scherr, & Legante, 2012).

Recently, several theoretical discussions and case studies have proposed new heuristic models for the relation between journalism and the public (Brants & de Haan, 2010; Eide & Knight, 1999; Mellado, 2015). They argue that transformations in communication, mass media, and society have forced journalists to reconsider their relation to the audience. At the same time, new ways of expressing citizenship have emerged. Therefore, to understand these new journalistic styles and new ways of

reconnecting with the public, a conceptualization of audience approaches is needed that goes beyond the citizen–consumer dichotomy.

Challenging the citizen–consumer dichotomy, we argue that audience approaches in the news can better be presented in a three-dimensional model, consisting of civic, infotainment, and service approaches. This is tested on three independent samples of Chilean news stories. By using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), we examine whether the model has construct validity and whether the factor structure remains invariant between the quality and popular press. This leads to the development of a scale which can be used in future research. In a research area where normative and empirical arguments are constantly blurred (see Hallin & Mancini, 2004), content analysis using reliable and validated scales is a necessity.¹ A content analysis of audience approaches in both popular and quality press also challenges some commonly held assumptions about the way audiences are approached in these two types of outlets.

Redefining the Audience

Implicit in the way news is presented is the understanding of the audience for whom it is made (Reinemann et al., 2012). The citizen–consumer distinction has long dominated conceptualizations about the way journalists approach the audience. Approaching the audience as citizen or consumer are competing heuristic models. Following this distinction, the audience can, on one hand, be approached as rational and informed news followers, who should be provided with the information they need to make democratic decisions. The audience as consumers, on the other hand, mainly wants to be entertained, and should be served with the information they want for relaxation. Scholars who have worked on the distinction between approaching the audience as citizens and as consumers tend to match these two options with the differentiation between hard and soft news (Boczkowski, 2009), quality and the popular press (Franklin, 1997), or the journalistic roles to inform or to entertain (Sparks & Tulloch, 2000).

In news content, approaching the audience as citizen or consumer has often been conceptualized as mutually exclusive. First, these two ways of approaching the audience have been treated as a discrete categorization, implying that when one is present, the other is not. Most studies also classify news stories a priori based on the format and topic (Grabe, Lang, & Zhao, 2003; Reinemann et al., 2012). Similar categorizations have been applied at the news outlet level, where the quality press is a priori classified as addressing audiences as citizens, and the popular press as addressing audiences as consumers (see Örnebring & Jönsson, 2004). Second, several scholars have analyzed the audience as consumer and as citizen as two poles of one *continuum*, where the more one approach is present, the more the other is absent. Brants and Neijens (1998), for example, study election news with an Information–Entertainment Scale. Similarly, Yang and Oliver (2004) study news articles with a 7-point scale from 1 (soft news) to 7 (hard news). A continuum between the audience as citizen and the audience as consumer has also been the basis of journalism surveys.

The conceptual distinction between the audience as consumers and citizens has been useful for normative discussions. It has helped broaden the understanding of what journalism is and how it interacts with society, by acknowledging that there is more than news oriented to the public as citizens, and that the audience consists of more than the well-informed readers alone. However, developments in the media and society have led to new audience approaches that challenge the citizen–consumer distinction.

First, journalism and news media have explored new ways to approach the public due to increased commercialization and competitive pressures (Brants & de Haan, 2010). Competition has forced journalism to provide news in a more enticing way, to keep the interest of readers and viewers, who still want to be informed about relevant development, but do not want to be bored by a dry, factual reporting style (Brants & de Haan, 2010). Tabloidization has blurred the distinction between hard and soft news. This has resulted in more hybrid forms of news (Kristensen & From, 2012) and the combination of different approaches.

Second, roles are situational, specific to historical contexts and can co-occur, as different perspectives from role theory research have suggested (Lynch, 2007; Turner, 2006). The performance of roles may change or evolve as a consequence of changes in society. Likewise, roles can be adapted and negotiated constantly depending on the needs of specific reference groups. In other words, multiple roles are a common part of the modern society (Lynch, 2007). Therefore, it is not surprising to see that the societal role of citizens and consumers has changed as new ways of expressing citizenship have emerged. Scholars in cultural studies (Garcia Canclini, 2001), sociology (Baudrillard, 1998; Bauman, 2000), and communication science (Deuze, 2007) have observed that the consumer and the citizen are nowadays two interrelated identities that co-occur and reinforce each other. Garcia Canclini (2001) analyzed how changes in consumerism have affected the possibilities of being a citizen. Others have observed that it is no longer possible to draw a clear distinction between private, public, and commercial spheres (Bauman, 2000; Featherstone, 2007). In the same vein, Eide and Knight (1999) challenge the dichotomy between citizenship and consumerism, as consumerism can be a way to express citizenship. Due to the growing complexity of society, audiences have a growing need for orientation (Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2013). This has formed the basis for a growing popularity of non-mainstream journalistic styles, such as lifestyle journalism (Fürsich, 2012) or service journalism (Eide & Knight, 1999). In sum, to understand audience approaches in journalism, we need to go beyond the citizen–consumer distinction.

Approaching the Audience: A Three-Dimensional Model

Different models have been proposed to reconceptualize audience approaches as a response to the described changes in communication and society and their impact on journalism, each from a distinct perspective on the way audience are approached by the media (e.g., Atkinson, 2011; Brants & de Haan, 2010; Costera Meijer, 2003; Eide & Knight, 1999). Eide and Knight (1999) take their starting point as Habermas' public

sphere theory and discuss how new journalistic genres address the audience as a hybrid social subject. Costera Meijer (2003) argues that extending the professional repertoire of journalists beyond the quality versus popular distinction could lead to news which better connects with the everyday life of the viewers. Brants and de Haan (2010) propose a heuristic model of audience approaches, with three competing and sometimes overlapping ways in which journalists can be responsive to the audience. Atkinson (2011) distinguishes what he calls “three-template” dimensions of audience approaches, based on underlying conceptions of the public interest. We base our conceptualization and operationalization of audience approaches on a review of this literature and will test its validity with empirical data.²

The first aspect that these different ways of conceptualizing the audience have in common is that they challenge the citizen–consumer distinction, but do not abandon these concepts. Brants and de Haan (2010), for example, distinguish civic responsiveness as one way of responding to the needs of the audience. Here, the public is approached as a citizen and news media follow the citizen agenda using an informative/cognitive journalistic style. Atkinson (2011) distinguishes an ethical dimension of journalistic performance, which is close to the liberal democratic function of serving citizens, focusing on collective needs and inclusive rights, as well as providing benefits for the society. This way of approaching the audience also comes back in what Costera Meijer (2003) labels the conventional approach to news.

Similarly, we find another model which is more motivated by a commercial and market-driven logic. In this context, Brants and de Haan (2010) talk about strategic responsiveness, a way of approaching the audience which is motivated by commercial interests, where the goal is to attract and arouse the public. Within this model, journalism mixes entertaining and human interest stories, using a sensational and entertaining presentational style (Grabe et al., 2003; McManus, 2004).

Meanwhile, the commercial dimension of journalistic performance by Atkinson (2011) focuses on market research and on cost cutting to maximize productive efficiencies in selling audiences to advertisers. This model approaches the public as consumers of goods and services. This resonates with what Costera Meijer (2003) calls the popular approach to news, where success is measured by viewer ratings, newsworthiness is defined by what is interesting, and spectacular and sensational images are shown.

These scholars thus do not abandon the citizen or consumer approaches to the audience. However, it becomes clear that these approaches should be conceptualized as two distinct dimensions, rather than as a continuum or a trade-off, recognizing that news may be a mix of these approaches. As Mellado (2015) indicates, news content may present attributes of different journalistic models at the same time, in that models of journalistic performance are not discrete. This is the second aspect which these conceptualizations have in common and informs our model.

A third aspect that these new ways of conceptualizing audience approaches have in common is that they add a third model of audience approach to complement the citizen and the consumer models. In this third model, the vision on what constitutes relevant information for the public is extended. Eide and Knight (1999) introduce the concept of the

client–professional relationship to describe the new relation between audiences and the media inherent in service journalism, “since the role of the professional is premised on advising and helping the client resolve/or prevent the problems of everyday life” (p. 539). This resonates with Brants and de Haan’s (2010) emphatic responsiveness model, where journalists take the side of the audience, try to solve its problems and assist it in battles against bureaucracy; thereby turning individual problems into political, socially relevant topics (Brants & de Haan, 2010). Similarly, Costera Meijer’s public approach to news expands the idea of democratic citizenship, where the audience gets clear information about problems that affect them in a multidimensional way, including ordinary and personal aspects of their lives. Costera Meijer (2003) also includes service news under this model.³

These different ways of conceptualizing audience approaches are inductive, heuristic, or conceptual models which do not have the measurement of their presence in the journalistic product as their primary goal (Brants & de Haan, 2010).

Based on this review of recent theoretical perspectives, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: The infotainment, the service, and the civic dimensions can be distinguished in the news of the popular and the elite press as three independent factorial structures.

That is, the citizen and consumer approach to the audience are two distinct dimensions. Likewise, approaching the audience under a consumer-orientation actually consists of two independent journalistic models: providing service and providing entertainment.

Following the *civic* approach, the public is addressed as a *citizen*, focusing on the connection between journalism, citizenry, and public life. Journalism that adopts these ideas is concerned with educating the common citizen on complex and controversial topics, encouraging the readers or viewers to take part in public debate, and to participate in social, political, and cultural activities. In news content, this leads to giving voice to the public, reporting from the perspective of the citizens, discussing their demands, and addressing their concerns and the local impact of political decisions, educating the audience about duties and rights, and informing on citizen activities.

Following the *infotainment* approach, the audience is addressed as a *spectator*, where specific narratives and stylistic discourses are used to provide the audience with relaxation and emotional experiences. Emotions and human interest stories are an important part of this journalistic approach (Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000). The infotainment approach is differentiated from other journalistic approaches by specific topics and style (e.g., Brants & Neijens, 1998; Norris, 2000). Typical topics are a focus on private life (Van Zoonen, 1998), the personal skills and backgrounds of public figures (Van Santen, 2009), or reporting of scandals (Thompson, 2000). An emphasis on emotions (Aust, 2003), sensationalism (Graber, 1994), and morbidity (Hanusch, 2013) are typical style elements of this journalistic approach.

Following the *service* approach, the audience is addressed as a *client*. The news provides information, knowledge, and advice about goods and services that the

audience can use in their everyday lives. This dimension entails a client–professional relationship with the audience. The service approach is different from the civic approach, in that the focus is not on the connection between the audience and the broader public sphere, but rather on information that has an impact on personal life, tips, and practical advice to improve day-to-day life, and consumer advice.

We assume that audience approaches are not discrete categories as in practice, professional roles are situational (Lynch, 2007; Mellado, 2015; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Journalists can combine different roles (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2007) and public identities of audiences are adaptable (Bauman, 2000; Featherstone, 2007). Although the three dimensions of audience approaches may overlap in practice, we expect that these dimensions can be distinguished in the news as three independent factorial structures.

Research Design

To test our hypothesis, we first analyzed a sample of coded news stories to explore which specific content indicators make up the three hypothesized audience approach dimensions. Second, we modified and confirmed the three-dimensional model in second and third samples. Finally, we tested whether our model was invariant across different types of news outlets and illustrate its use by comparing the audience approaches in the Chilean quality and popular press. Whereas the quality press is commonly related to content closer to the public interest, the popular press is commonly related to a commercial-oriented model (Beam, 2003). Despite tabloidization trends in quality newspapers (Esser, 1999), previous research has shown that journalistic values and reporting practices worldwide still differ between the popular and quality press (Skovsgaard, 2014; Strömbäck & Van Aelst, 2009).

Chile provides a suitable case to study different audience approaches in news content, given the recent changes in Chilean journalism and society which challenge the citizen–consumer distinction. Like many other countries in Latin America, Chile has experienced economic growth and gradual political reform after the fall of the military dictatorship in 1990 (Leon-Dermota, 2003). Civic life has become more important in Chilean society, where citizens empowerment and participation have growth (e.g., student protest, transportation system, indigenous rights and the environment; Ruiz, 2012; Teichman, 2011). At the same time, media systems in Latin America have been transforming from a rather strict model to a more liberal one, affected by growing commercialization and competition. Some authors have emphasized the longer-term impact of commercialization in the shift from civic and watchdog journalism toward forms of entertainment journalism in the region, as well as the search for economic profit over the sense of public service and the strengthening of democracy (Waisbord, 2000).

Content Analysis

A content analysis was carried out in three independent samples of news. Five general-interest Chilean printed-media outlets with national circulation in 2010, and four in

2011 were content analyzed: *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, and *La Nación* as quality newspapers, and *Las Últimas Noticias* and *La Cuarta*, as popular newspapers. The distinction between the quality and the popular press in Chile is based on market orientation and audience targeting. The newspapers analyzed in this study represent different journalistic approaches, as the Chilean newspapers are segmented into separate markets for popular and quality press, each aimed at different audiences. *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* are the two main quality newspapers in Chile. *El Mercurio* is a conservative newspaper, associated with the Chilean elite and the right wing of politics, whereas *La Tercera* has tried to set itself apart by being more liberal/center-right. *La Nación* was a quality newspaper primarily owned by the government. It maintained a pro-government characteristic until its disappearance by the end of 2010. However, *Las Últimas Noticias* (LUN) and *La Cuarta* assume a strong commercial model.

Using the constructed week method, a stratified-systematic sample of each newspaper was selected (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). Within each media outlet, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday editions were selected for each half of a year, making sure that every month of the year was represented by at least 1 day, and in that way, assuring no overrepresentation of a particular period. Because daily and monthly variations are important factors to consider when conducting a news content analysis, we will divide each year into two sets of 6 months (January 2 to June 30, and July 1 to December 31), randomly selecting a starting date for each period. From the random starting date, we selected each subsequent day of the week (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) using alternating 3 and 4 week intervals. For example, starting on a Monday, we selected a Tuesday three weeks from the random start date, then Wednesday four weeks from the previous Tuesday, and so forth. When we arrive at the end of the half-year, we start again at the beginning. In this way, we can include 7-week days with regular intervals—three and four—between the weeks, avoiding periodicity.⁴

For the first sample, two constructed news weeks of 2010 were randomly selected per each newspaper. For the second and third samples, one constructed news week of the first and second half of 2011 was sampled, respectively, per newspaper.

The unit of analysis was the news story. A news story was understood as the group of continuous verbal and visual elements that refer to the same topic. Within each selected sample, all news stories published in sections associated to the National Desk (politics, economy and business, police, crime and judicial, social affairs, and general national news) were coded. In total, 1,988 news stories were coded for the first sample, 795 news stories for the second sample, and 812 were coded for the third sample.⁵ Although our data do not deal with political news only, but also economy and business, police, judicial, and social affairs, our analysis is concerned with the contribution of journalism to democracy and the public life in the broadest sense.

The measures tested by this study are derived from the models of role performance proposed by Mellado (2015) to measure the manifestation of professional roles in news content. To select these indicators, Mellado first looked for the main roles that have been empirically studied in different settings from a role conception perspective, based on both conceptual literature and surveys. Then, a large body of news content studies and media sociology research was analyzed to develop content indicators that reflect

professional roles in practice. Indicators that match with the chosen roles were included, resulting in a total of 19 indicators for audience roles (references for each indicator can be found together with the operationalization of the indicators in the appendix).

Each indicator was measured on a presence–absence basis. Four indicators were included to measure the *service* approach: impact on everyday life, tips and advice (grievances), tips and advice (individual risks), and consumer advice (Eide & Knight, 1999; Hanusch, 2012). Six indicators were included to measure the *infotainment* approach: personalization, private life, sensationalism, scandal, emotions, and morbid (Hanusch, 2013; Thompson, 2000). Nine indicators were included to measure the *civic* approach: citizen perspective, citizen demand, credibility of citizens, support for citizen movements, education on duties and rights, background information, information on citizen activities, and local impact (Lambeth, 1998; Voakes, 2004). Coding instructions and descriptive statistics of the final model can be found in the appendix of this article. Four coders were trained for 40 hours in total—over a period of 12 weeks—in the application of a common code book containing operational definitions for each variable. During these training sessions, we monitored coding with several intercoder reliability tests. Actual coding did not start until coding tests were satisfactory. The coding of stories from the three samples was done manually between January and June 2012. To avoid biases, coders were randomly assigned to the selected news items, so that each of them will analyze a similar amount of content from each of the media outlets. Likewise, the coding was continuously monitored to improve intercoder agreement. When the coding was completed, a new coding on a randomly selected 10% of the three samples was carried out to determine intercoder reliability. Based on Krippendorff's formula, overall intercoder reliability between coders was .81. Reliability scores ranged from 0.73 (Tips and advice) to 0.88 (Emotions; see intercoder reliability scores of each item in the appendix).

Data Analysis

As a first step, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The items were analyzed using Mplus' weighted least squares means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimator and the Geomin oblique rotation.

An EFA can assist in evaluating the dimensionality of a given set of items. In that regard, the first content analysis we conducted served as an initial stage for the specification of the models of audience approaches in news. As a second step, we tested our hypothesized model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Specifically, two CFAs were conducted to empirically test three competing measurement models: a unidimensional structure, a two-dimensional structure, and a three-dimensional structure (Brown, 2006). As Vandenberg and Lance (2000) suggest, measurement invariance across groups is “a logical prerequisite to conducting substantive cross-group comparisons” (p. 4). Within that logic, we conducted a multi-group analysis of measurement invariance between the popular and the elite press, as journalistic models may be approached differently in news content by media outlets that differ in the strength of their market orientation (Boczkowski, 2009; Strömbäck & Van Aelst, 2009).

Both EFA and CFA were performed using Mplus 7.0. The model fit was assessed using the following criteria: chi-square value (χ^2), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; $<.05$), the comparative fit index (CFI) value (greater than $.90$), the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) value ($>.90$), the standardized root mean square of residual (SRMR) value ($<.10$), and the weighted root mean square residual (WRMR; <1.0 ; Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006; Yu & Muthén, 2002).⁶

One key aspect to consider in identifying relationships among latent factors and observed indicators is the need to justify the choice of the measurement model—reflective or formative—with the objective of avoiding the lack of validity of the analyzed constructs (Coltman, Devinney, Midgley, & Veniak, 2008). In a reflective model, items are manifested by the underlying construct, share a common theme, and they have positive and, desirably, high intercorrelations (Borsboom, Mellenbergh, & Heerden, 2003; Coltman et al., 2008). Our study takes this choice, based on previous research.⁷ We consider the service, the infotainment, and the civic journalistic approach as reflective measurement models, where the three approaches exist independent of the measures used, where the variation in item measures does not cause a variation in the construct, and where adding/dropping an item does not change the conceptual domain of the construct (Wirth & Kolb, 2012).

Results

Identifying the Model

The first sample included 1,988 news stories, 76.1% from the quality press and 23.9% from the popular press. Each news story was coded using 19 indicators. Taking accepted standards in structural equation modeling (SEM) as criteria, the fit indices suggest that a three-factor solution—service, infotainment, and civic—describes the data with a satisfactory model fit: $\chi^2(63) = 78.12$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = $.011$, 90% CI = $[.002, .0018]$, CFI = $.993$, TLI = $.988$, SRMR = $.072$.

Four indicators were excluded as they did not fit clearly with any of the factors, or their factor loadings were non-acceptable (“scandal,” “support of citizen movements,” “citizen questions” and “educating on duties and rights.”).⁸

Table 1 shows the results of EFA that reveals the structure of the data. Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 method for dichotomous data was used to measure the internal consistency of the factors, and the analysis showed acceptable internal reliability for each factor (see Table 1). This analysis served as a first step to select the relevant indicators to measure audience approaches and gave preliminary support for our hypothesis.

Testing the Model

To validate the model, we extended these results by subjecting the model to CFA on a second sample of 795 news stories, 25.7% from the popular press and 74.3% from the quality press. CFA is a statistical analysis that tests data deductively against a theoretical factor structure previously specified. To test our hypothesized three-factor model,

Table 1. Factor Loadings of Content Indicators on Three Dimensions of Audience Approaches in News (EFA).

	Service	Infotainment	Civic
1.1 Impact on everyday life	.58	-.22	.10
1.2 Tips and advice (grievances)	.53	.02	.10
1.3 Tips and advice (individual risks)	.49	-.18	.24
1.4 Consumer advice	.59	.03	.25
2.1 Personalization	-.12	.78	.24
2.2 Private life	.24	.66	.14
2.3 Sensationalism	.33	.65	.04
2.4 Emotions	.23	.48	-.02
2.5 Morbid	.01	.58	.32
3.1 Citizen perspective	.38	.02	.70
3.2 Citizen demand	-.01	-.36	.89
3.3 Credibility of citizens	.32	-.01	.83
3.4 Local impact	.08	.23	.43
3.5 Background information	.38	.19	.69
3.6 Information on citizen activities	-.09	-.19	.60
<i>M (SD)</i>	.09 (.16)	.06 (.07)	.03 (.10)
KR-20 (α)	.70	.83	.87
<i>N</i>	1,988	1,988	1,988

Note. EFA = exploratory factor analysis; KR = Kuder–Richardson coefficient of reliability. Factor loadings above .40 appear in bold.

items were allowed to load only on one of the three factors, whereas their loadings on the remaining factors were fixed at zero. Factor loadings of reference indicators for each factor were fixed to one. Latent variables were allowed to correlate freely, but residual variances of individual items were not allowed to correlate. The items were analyzed using Mplus’ WLSMV estimator.

The indices calculated for the postulated model provided an overall good fit to the data: $\chi^2(72) = 146.44, p < .001, RMSEA = .036, 90\% CI = [.028, .044], CFI = .943, TLI = .938, WRMR = 1.105$. Nevertheless, one of the observable indicators—impact on everyday life—was not satisfactory in terms of the size of its factor loading (see discussion). This indicator was eliminated from the model. The final 14-indicator model is shown in Table 2. The modified model highly satisfies fit indices criteria: $\chi^2(60) = 89.16, p < .005, RMSEA = .017, 90\% CI = [.011, .016], CFI = .973, TLI = .966, WRMR = .915$.

We tested this model against a single-factor model, and a two-factor model. The single-factor model tested the assumption of a unidimensional structure, and specified all items loading on one factor. The two-factor model assumed a bi-dimensional structure consisting of a nine-indicator consumer model, and a six-indicator civic model. To test this model, items were allowed to load only on one of the two factors, whereas their loading on the remaining factors were fixed at zero.

Table 2. Factor Loadings and Reliabilities of Indicators of the Three-Dimensional Model of Audience Approaches in News Content (CFA).

Factors and indicators	Second sample		Third sample	
	Factor loading	SMC	Factor loading	SMC
Service journalism				
1.2 Tips and advice (grievances)	.81	.65	.75	.60
1.3 Tips and advice (individual risks)	.55	.30	.49	.24
1.4 Consumer advice	.69	.48	.68	.46
Infotainment journalism				
2.1 Personalization	.83	.68	.79	.63
2.2 Private life	.63	.40	.65	.42
2.3 Sensationalism	.74	.55	.68	.46
2.4 Emotions	.77	.60	.73	.53
2.5 Morbid	.69	.50	.64	.40
Civic journalism				
3.1 Citizen perspective	.92	.85	.94	.88
3.2 Citizen demand	.85	.72	.86	.73
3.3 Credibility of citizens	.96	.91	.94	.89
3.4 Local impact	.58	.33	.45	.21
3.5 Background information	.62	.39	.66	.43
3.6 Information on citizen activities	.85	.71	.86	.75

Note. Factor loadings = standardized solution; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis; SMC = squared multiple correlation coefficients (indicator reliabilities).

Based on scores of the various fit indices, and consistent with our theoretical rationale, we identified the three-factor model as providing a better account of the data, than the bi-dimensional, $\chi^2(76) = 195.93$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .044, 90% CI = [.039, .047], CFI = .613, TLI = .549, WRMR = 1.369, and the unidimensional model, $\chi^2(77) = 300.07$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .078, 90% CI = [.064, .073], CFI = .576, TLI = .534, WRMR = 2.908. These results confirm our theoretical expectations. First, there is no trade-off between approaching the audience either as citizen or as consumer: Journalism can do both at the same time. Second, the infotainment and service approach are not the same: Approaching the audience as spectator or as client are different dimensions (see discussion).

Table 2 shows standardized factor loadings and indicator reliabilities of the items (see the appendix for final 14-item instrument). Interfactor correlations varied from .16 to .38. All standardized factor loadings of the three factors were high (range = .45-.94). Likewise, indicator reliabilities (squared multiple correlations) were overall satisfactory for the individual factors. Therefore, the hypothesis that a three-factor model can represent the different ways in which journalism approaches the audience could thus be supported.

Factor 1, the *service journalistic approach*, contains three indicators, and describes how journalism approaches the audience as a client, giving tips and advice on how to manage everyday problems, and information about the latest products and services that informs the purchases of the audience. Factor 2, the *infotainment journalistic approach*, comprises five indicators, and describes the way that journalism approaches the audience as a spectator, reporting about the personal backgrounds and private life of public persons, and reporting is sensationalistic in style with reference to emotion and morbid details. Factor 3, the *civic journalistic approach*, contains six indicators, and describes how journalism approaches the audience as citizens, reporting from the citizens' perspective by giving attention to the impact of political decisions on local communities and providing relevant background information. Following this approach, the media give credibility to the citizens, reporting on their demands and civic activities.

Validating the Model

Within the SEM framework, the data-driven procedure used in modifying models requires validation on an independent random sample (Millsap, 2011). As we made some data-guided specifications to our model, we needed to retest it in a new sample of news. The third content analysis encompassed 812 news stories, 25.7% from the popular press and 74.3% from the quality press. The postulated model composed by the service, infotainment, and civic approaches showed a satisfactory good fit with the data, $\chi^2(60) = 92.64$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .032, 90% CI = [.029, .033], CFI = .978, TLI = .956, WRMR = .963.

To assess the equivalence of our measures between the popular and the elite press, ensuring both that the factors were measured by the same indicators in both types of press and that the items that compose these factors had the same meaning in both groups, we also carried out different multi-group analyses to test for factorial invariance. Using Mplus' theta parameterization, we tested for measurement invariance following the two steps suggested by Muthén and Muthén (2012) for categorical outcomes. We used chi-square difference testing to assess measurement invariance.⁹

First, an unconstrained model was estimated that allowed the thresholds and factor loadings structure to vary across the popular and the elite newspapers; residual variances of items were constrained to one in all groups, and latent factor means were constrained to zero in all groups. Results point out that all 14 observable variables show the same factor structure, with an acceptable fit for both groups, $\chi^2(148) = 214.01$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .029, 90% CI = [.024, .030], CFI = .987, TLI = .971, WRMR = 1.020. Thus, we can support the idea that configural invariance exists between the quality and the popular press.

Second, thresholds and factor loadings were constrained to be equal across groups¹⁰; residual variances were fixed at one in one group and free in the others, and factor means were fixed at zero in one group and free in the others. By means of nested model comparison, results show that thresholds and factor loadings were not invariant across the popular and the quality press, $\Delta\chi^2(10) = 49.904$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .040, 90% CI = [.035, .046], CFI = .818, TLI = .791, WRMR = 2.011.

We then attempted to investigate whether partial measurement invariance could be established by constraining the thresholds and factor loading of only some indicators for each factor, while allowing the loadings of the remaining indicators to differ between both groups. When full invariance is impossible, partial invariance makes comparisons across groups possible that might otherwise be inappropriate (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). The postulated model is more restrictive than the unconstrained model, but less conservative than the strict model.

Based on residual analysis we found that indicators *tips and advice (grievances)*, *sensationalism*, *morbid*, *background information*, and *information on citizen activities* were not invariant across newspaper type. This implies that the underlying audience approaches manifest themselves differently in the quality and popular press for these items, which might be related to the differences in the presentation of the news and use of graphics in the two types of newspapers (Hanusch, 2013).¹¹ The best solution resulted from constraining the thresholds and loading the rest of the indicators so that they were equal in both types of newspapers. As compared with a model with no constraints, the model assuming equal thresholds and loadings for these nine observable variables did not negatively affect the fit of the model, $\Delta\chi^2(11) = 20.286$, $p = .23$, RMSEA = .039, 90% CI = [.031, .038], CFI = .971, TLI = .953, WRMR = .992.

Measuring Audience Approaches

After having established partial measurement invariance, we went on to investigate whether the popular and elite press were equally concerned with using the infotainment approach, the civic approach, or the service approach in covering the news. To illustrate the use of our three-dimensional model, we measured audience approaches in the popular ($N = 188$) and quality press ($N = 624$) using the third sample included in this study. This nuances the presumed dichotomy between the popular press, which addresses consumers, and the quality press aimed at citizens. Because the quality press mean in each factor was set to zero, positive values indicate a higher mean for the popular press and vice versa.

In the case of the infotainment model, we found significant (latent) mean differences¹² between the popular and the quality press, where infotainment is more present in popular than in quality news ($M_{\text{diff}} = 1.43$, $SE = .20$, $p = .001$). Likewise, the service approach is more present in the popular than in the quality press ($M_{\text{diff}} = 4.68$, $SE = 2.03$, $p = .001$). The results show that there is no trade-off between the infotainment and civic approach: The civic approach is as much present in the popular press as in quality newspapers, which is indicated by their levels of the latent variable ($M_{\text{diff}} = .48$, $SE = .56$, $p = \text{n.s.}$).

Discussion

The way journalists approach their audience is an important indicator of both the role the media fulfill in society, and of how journalists try to respond to the different needs of the public. Our analysis showed that journalistic audience approaches in news

content can be represented in a three-dimensional model consisting of the *civic*, the *infotainment*, and the *service* approaches, going beyond the traditional consumer–citizen dichotomy. Approaching the audience as consumer or as citizen are not two poles of one continuum. However, approaching the audience under a consumer-orientation consists of two approaches: providing service and providing entertainment. Based on the expanded idea of what democratic citizenship entails, we assumed that the service model is characterized by information that is relevant to the personal life of the public and deals with everyday problems. Our analysis showed that this alone is not enough: News has to *enable* the public to take action to address problems and face difficult situations in their personal life, by giving practical advice or helping them make consumer decisions.¹³

Whether audience approaches were better represented by a citizen–consumer distinction 20 or 30 years ago before transformations in media and society took place, remains an empirical question. At least in the second decade of the 21st-century news, the civic, the service, and infotainment approaches are not part of the same dimension and can thus be simultaneously present or absent from the news. This could be the result of media-internal changes over the last few decades, such as commercialization and competitive pressures which lead to the need to find new ways to address the audience for both online and traditional media. Simultaneously, demographic changes and the blurring of the identity of the consumer and the citizen could be part of the explanation.

Our results have important implications for content analyses. When researchers classify content as either having a civic service or infotainment approach, mixed forms of news are overseen. Thus, in future content analyses, these approaches should be treated as distinct dimensions.

Our results support the interactionist perspective on journalistic roles. As our data show roles are not discrete, nor mutually exclusive, can coexist and are situational, as Weaver et al. (2007) previously suggested in their study of role conceptions among American journalists. As journalists work for multiple platforms and cover news from different beats, they need to adjust their routines and the way they approach current hybrid audiences, especially in the new media environment.

As Lynch (2007) emphasizes “multiple roles are a common part of our modern, pluralistic culture” (p. 379). This does not only apply to the journalistic field, but also to the roles of the audience. Awareness of these hybrid audience approaches is particularly relevant in the increasingly high-choice media environment, not only in Chile but cross-nationally, where audiences self-select into political news seekers and political news avoiders depending on their political interest (Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre, & Shehata, 2013).

Mixes between these three audience approaches can be particularly important in this respect. News stories or outlets can have a strong presence of the civic approach, whereas the service and infotainment approaches are absent. This type of news will likely cater for the tastes and needs of the politically interested, who are already involved with politics in advance. However, these types of news will likely drive people with low political interest away. Alternatively, the infotainment approach might be

strongly present, without approaching the audience as a citizen or a client. Such news is likely to engage an audience with low political interest, but will not provide them with information which allows them to play a role in civic life or improve their everyday life. Another option is news which combines the infotainment, service, and civic approach. These types of news might not be appreciated by the political elite, who are turned off by the focus on emotions, personal experiences, tips, and sensationalism. However, it is more likely to engage less politically interested audiences, and provide them with civic and personally relevant information as an accidental by-product (Jebril, De Vreese, Van Dalen, & Albaek, 2013).

Our three-dimensional model of audience approaches in news might provide a useful framework for journalists, which enables them to discuss more precisely how the audience should be approached and is approached in practice. First, it offers to journalists a terminology to discuss their work and the goals they pursue. The “imagined audience” of journalists can become more concrete when journalists label them as citizen, spectator, or client, who can be addressed with the corresponding audience approaches. Journalists can discuss which mix of the three audience approaches is most suited to live up to the different goals (both commercial and democratic) that the media organization may pursue simultaneously. This ideal mix of audience approaches can be discussed at the level of the news story, but also at the level of the whole newspaper issue or news broadcast.

The differences and similarities between the popular and quality press in Chile, challenges the idea that quality news is good for democracy and that popular news is bad for democracy. The strong presence of the service model in the popular press is positive from the perspective of participatory democracy, as it empowers readers. The finding that the civic model is as much as present in the quality as in the popular press is less positive as it indicates that quality press aims mainly at an elite audience, rather than facilitating the political emancipation of the population at large. In our view, this shows that audience approaches are an important indication of the condition of a media system, as it allows to assess the contribution which media make to democracy and the role it enables the public to perform.

An important question for future research is whether the different audience approaches manifest themselves in the same content features in countries with different journalistic cultures. We expect the same three dimensions of audience approaches to be present in news across countries. However, some content characteristics may be more important indicators of a specific dimension of performance in some countries than in others. For example, attention to private life could be a less relevant indicator of the infotainment approach in countries with strict privacy regulation or a culture of discretion. Also, the specific indicators belonging to the dimensions may vary from country to country depending on specific cultures or historical characteristics of the media and society. For example, it could be easier to identify consumer advice in countries with a free market tradition. Thus, it is fundamental that future studies test and validate these dimensions before applying them in comparative research, controlling for factorial invariance across cultures.

Following the same rationale, future research should also study audience approaches on different news platforms. Such studies should adapt the measures to the

characteristics of the different media, like audiovisuals and sound elements to make them comparable. In particular, the audience approaches in online news would be interesting to study, as audience analytics provide journalists with direct feedback about the preferences of the audiences. Following Boczkowski and Mitchelstein (2013), the scale can be applied to see which audience approaches are present in the stories which are most viewed, shared, or commented on by the audience. This would show for which audience approach preferences converge and for which approaches the gap between journalistic and public preferences is the largest. Gaps between audience and journalistic preferences can seriously limit the contribution of journalism to the democratic process (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2013). To address this gap, news stories which are often read, shared, and commented on and do not only approach the audience with an infotainment approach could be analyzed in depth. This would show what the right mix between the three audience dimensions is that can both inform the audience and engage them.

To our knowledge, this is the first content analytical model that is validated with CFA. We hope that this work will inspire the development and validation of more multi-indicator standardized scales for content analysis. At a time when the use of standardized coding instruments is becoming more common (see Esser, Strömbäck, & de Vreese, 2012), the development of validated, multi-item scales is a natural next-step toward more cumulative knowledge about news content around the world.

Appendix

*Coding Instructions for Indicators Measuring Audience Approaches in News Content**

Service

1.2 Tips and advice (grievances): The news story gives *tips* or practical advice to manage everyday problems that audience have with their environment, for example, how to face noisy neighbors, how to handle wrongful charges; for example, “How to detect abuses in the charges made by commercial companies” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .76$; S1 = 3.2%; S2 = 3.4%; S3 = .2.9%; Eide & Knight, 1999).

1.3 Tips and advice (individual risks): The news story provides *tips* or practical advice to solve personal problems that the audience could potentially face, that is, how to be a smart buyer and save money, how to invest or ensure savings and a safe retirement; for example, “In order to begin your vacations stress-free, bear in mind that you vehicle inspection must be up to date, your spare tire in good condition, and you should have a toolkit and a first-aid kit” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .73$; S1 = 2.9%; S2 = 4%; S3 = 3.3%; Hanusch, 2012; Patterson, 2000).

1.4 Consumer advice: The news story informs about the latest trends in products and services in the market, or helps the audience distinguish between products of different qualities, for example, “After one year in the market, coffee capsules have

become popular among consumers. Around \$400 pesos are paid for each cup of coffee made at home” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .76$; S1 = 4.3%; S2 = 4.9%; S3 = 4%; Hanusch, 2012).

Infotainment

2.1 Personalization: The news story centers on one or more persons and their different intellectual, physical, mental, or social characteristics or personal background, besides their names or their roles in the news story, for example, “The murderer—better known as MJ—is 34 years old, a married industrial engineer who works in the northern region of the country. The day of the trial, he arrived in dirty clothes and did not want to comment” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .75$; S1 = 12%; S2 = 12.2%; S3 = 15.1%; Van Aelst, Sheafer, & Stanyer, 2012).

2.2 Private life: The news story focuses on aspects of a person’s life that do not correspond to areas of public and/or collective interest, and that people normally prefer to maintain in their personal sphere, for example, “The senator has been separated from her husband for months now” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .77$; S1 = 4.5%; S2 = 3.5%; S3 = 4.6% Van Zoonen, 1998).

2.3 Sensationalism: Use of style elements or descriptions in the story (exaggeration, the use of dramatic superlative adjectives and metaphors) that highlight the *unusual, spectacular, or unexpected*, for example, “The ‘hard’ stance of the porn movie industry on the use of condoms. They threatened to dump California if actors are forced to wrap it up” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .85$; S1 = 13%; S2 = 14.6%; S3 = 13.4%; Graber, 1994).

2.4 Emotions: Explicit references to feelings or descriptions of the different emotions within the news story, for example, “The woman whose child was stolen suffered 22 hours of deep anguish, pain and uncertainty” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .88$; S1 = 14.3%; S2 = 15.2%; S3 = 18.7%; Aust, 2003).

2.5 Morbid: Exacerbation of the reader’s attention through the text, describing acts of violence, crime, or sex scenes/scandals within the news story in concrete detail, for example, “He dragged her out off the car at a deserted path, where he began to beat and ultimately strangle her, choking her with his bare hands, using all of his strength until he finally killed her” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .78$; S1 = 2.3%; S2 = 2%; S3 = 2.1%; Mason & Monckton-Smith, 2008).

Civic

3.1 Citizen perspective: The news story includes the vision of regular or organized citizens, showing how they perceive or are affected by different political decisions, for example, “The president of the Students federation was dissatisfied with the proposal by the Minister of Education” (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .83$; S1 = 6.5%; S2 = 6.5%; S3 = 6.7%; e.g., Voakes, 2004).

3.2 Citizen demand: The news story includes regular or organized citizens' demands or proposals on how different political measures/decisions should be handled, for example, "The neighbors ask for public works in exchange for having the jail put close to their houses. They want work such as paving and installment of sewage systems to be done" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .81$; S1 = 4.1%; S2 = 3.4%; S3 = 3.8%; Kurpius, 2002).

3.3 Credibility of citizens: The journalist gives credibility to what the citizens perceive, denounce, or demand, for example, "The spokesman for the residents has led the activities of the people who now demand to take part in the municipality's master plan, for many years. That is why he knows what he is talking about. The residents know that the current state of the area can cause a lot of damage to the environment and they have been consistent in the arguments which they have presented to local authorities" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .75$; S1 = 3.5%; S2 = 2.9%; S3 = 3.1%; Lambeth, 1998).

3.4 Local impact: The news story mentions the impact of political decisions on specific communities, for example, "A group of neighbors from Santa Barbara filed an injunction to restrain the municipality from setting up a dumping site near a pond in the vicinity" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .75$; S1 = 5.5%; S2 = 4.9%; S3 = 4.7%; Blazier & Lemert, 2000).

3.5 Background information: The news story provides the citizens with background information to make political decisions, for example, electoral processes, protests, citizen groups, participation/support of political parties; "Initially, only six senators were expected to vote in favor of the initiative. However, yesterday, two more senators who have traditionally had a tougher stance in favor of the death penalty joined the initiative" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .77$; S1 = 11.8%; S2 = 13.6%; S3 = 15.6%; Benson & Hallin, 2007).

3.6 Information on citizen activities: The news story gives information about citizen acts such as campaigns, collective actions, protests, commemorations, and demonstrations, for example, "The resident's association of the locality of Peñalolén organized a symbolic act, in which trees will be planted all along the route where the new metro line will pass" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .89$; S1 = 5.0%; S2 = 4.1%; S3 = 5.9%; Moscovitz, 2002).

*Indicators of the validated three-dimensional model. In parentheses, intercoder reliability of each item, as well as the percentage of articles for each of the three samples in which indicators appear (S1 = Sample 1; S2 = Sample 2; S3 = Sample 3).

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Notes

1. Although the use of validated multi-indicator scales is common practice in the field of communication using survey research (Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Yale, 2013), it is not common in the analysis of news content (Wirth & Kolb, 2012). Studies on journalistic discourses and reporting styles have so far mostly relied on single indicators, making reliability assessment impossible (Benson & Hallin, 2007; Blazier & Lemert, 2000; Kurpius, 2002; Lambeth, 1998; Voakes, 2004). A number of framing studies have applied multi-indicator scales (e.g., Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), but these have mostly relied only on exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to develop their scales.
2. These three dimensions were earlier examined by Mellado and Lagos (2014), although only using EFA.
3. Atkinson's third dimension of audience approaches (the theatrical dimension) has a somewhat different character. However, this dimension is more applicable to television news than print news.
4. For example, for the first half of 2012, the randomly selected starting date will be Wednesday, April 11; 3 weeks + 1 day later is Thursday, May 3; 4 weeks and 1 day later is Friday, June 1; 3 weeks and 1 day later is Saturday, June 23; 4 weeks and 1 day later is Sunday, January 22, and so on.
5. Overall, the sample comprised of roughly one-quarter popular press news stories and three-quarters quality press news stories. This is explained by the fact that in the Chilean case, the popular press includes far fewer news articles per issue.
6. One of the problems of relying only on χ^2 statistic test is that the χ^2 is sensitive to sample size. Indeed, with large samples, there is a danger of rejecting a valid model, as it will almost always result in a significant chi-square (Bagozzi, 2010; Brown, 2006). When large samples are used, authors tend to rely on the fit indices described here.
7. Previous studies have shown this indicator interchangeability as a key characteristic of the news. In the analysis of news frames, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) refer to a frame as latent content inherent in the text, which "causes" the indicators in the text. In other words: The frame which is determined by the different inputs—organizational pressure, ideologies, attitudes, and so on—determines the words used in the news (see Wirth & Kolb, 2012). In our case, the unit of interest is the journalistic text rather than the journalist. Several journalism scholars have indicated that the views of individual journalists are hard to assess from news content (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). As Mellado (2015) suggests, news is "the collective outcome of concrete newsroom decisions . . . influenced by different internal and external forces" (p. 597).
8. The reason why these items—which seem to conceptually represent the infotainment and the civic, respectively—do not fit well in the model, seems to be related to the passive stance of the Chilean press, with low levels of opinions, proposals, or judgments on the news. Indeed, previous studies have shown that the disseminator role is the most common in Chilean news associated to the national desk (Mellado & Lagos, 2014).
9. Mplus' DIFFTEST feature (Muthén & Muthén, 2012).
10. For categorical outcomes, equality constraints for thresholds and factor loadings for a variable should be imposed in tandem (Muthén & Muthén, 2012).
11. The items morbid and sensationalism might manifest themselves differently in the popular press because of the strong presence and often explicit nature of visuals (Hanusch, 2013). For the other indicators it might have to do with the use of text boxes in the popular press, where information is presented separately from the main text.

12. "Latent" means reflect differences in the mean level of the latent variable across groups.
13. The three items which make up the service dimension, all have an aspect of audience empowerment (enabling the audience to take action). This somewhat narrow understanding of the service model as only enabling the audience to take action rather than also informing the audience might explain why this approach can be measured with only three items. In the infotainment model, this empowering element is absent and the audience is addressed as a passive spectator. Studies of journalistic role conceptions have shown that journalists conceive infotainment and service as part of a single dimension (Hanitzsch, 2005; Scholl & Weischenberg, 1998). This may partly be due to the traditional wording of the question items, which is quite generic, but it may also indicate that journalists are not fully aware of the distinction between the passive infotainment approach and the activating service approach.

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