<u>**APPENDICES – 'INFOTAINING CANADIAN POLITICS?'**</u>

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Robert Marinov, Paul Saurette
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<u>**Appendix 1 - Detailed Discussion of Methodology**</u>

<u>4.1 Infotainment Sub-Characteristics</u>
As discussed in section 4.1 of the article, we define Infotainment as a style that (to varying degrees) has three main characteristics: Personalization; Sensationalization; and Decontextualization. There are, however, a number of ways that each of these three main characteristics can appear in a news item. We call these the 'sub-characteristics' of the main characteristics. In our coding, we therefore investigated the presence/absence and intensity of not only the main characteristics, but also the sub-characteristics. The specific sub-characteristics for each main characteristic are as follows:

Personalization: news coverage can be rendered 'personalized' if a news item:
- Focuses either on the private lives of politicians or the private, individual implications of policies, rather than broader public or social implications - for instance, scandals in politicians' private lives (see Jebril et al., 2013; Hallin & Mellado, 2018; Carillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013; Van Elteren, 2013).
- Presents politicians or candidates as celebrity-like individuals, notably through a focus on "charisma, beauty, and fame" (see Lofton, 2012: 426).
- Focuses on politicians as individuals, notably through emotional or empathetic appeals, or appeals/references to their virtues/values, failures/shortcomings/successes, or a focus on looks, personal characteristics, performance, or style, rather than focussing on them as public figures/representatives, experts, professionals, and so forth – the politician becomes "the main anchor of interpretation and evaluation in political reporting," rather than the policies or actual substance of politics (Otto et al., 2017: 143).
- Quotes or references personal social media communications as a form of 'news,' notably with the use of negative campaigning material or sensational, fiery statements (see Manucci, 2017; Walter & Vliegenthart, 2010).

Sensationalization: news coverage can be rendered 'sensational' if a news item:
- Presents information through the use of emotional appeals, primers, or narrative structures, including through human-interest perspectives (see Brants & Niejens, 1998; Castells, 2009; Graber, 1994; Graber & Holyk, 2011; Hallin & Mellado, 2018; Just, 2011; Patterson, 2000; Thussu, 2007).
- Focuses on a scandal in a sensational or dramatic, rather than analytical, investigative, or contextualized manner (see Brants & Niejens, 1998; Hallin & Mellado, 2018; Jebril et al., 2013; Thussu, 2007).
- Focuses on a political conflict sensationally, or as a form of political campaigning - for instance, non-substantive conflict deriving from politicians and the campaign themselves, rather than substantive conflict over policies, public scandals, platforms, ideologies, and so forth (see Tue Petersen, 2014; Walter & Vliegenthart, 2010).
- Presents stories/events as exciting or dramatic when it is not clear that the events/discourses represented are indeed of such a nature (see Brants, 2008; Brants & Neijens, 1998; Brewer & Cao, 2006; Castells, 2009; Graber, 1994; Patterson, 2000).
- Presents stories with any other identifiable forms of sensationalization or sensationalistic devices/strategies, for example (over)simplifying issues and political discourse in order to make a story more entertaining or comprehensible, rather than informative or making an attempt to teach the audience

about real-world political complexities; the use of surprise to shock the audience; and the use of ambiguity to create drama or suspense (see Carrillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013).

Decontextualization: news coverage can be rendered 'decontextualized' if a news item:

- Covers or helps to produce a "pseudo-event" or "news reality frame" that is created by the media as a newsworthy phenomenon (Kent, Harrison, & Taylor, 2006; Bennett, 2005).
- Utilizes or produces a "candidate challenge," for example by citing unsourced criticisms or challenges to politicians to see how they respond and handle themselves (for example, bringing up a rumor that is unsubstantiated as a test to the politician), thus creating a challenging, dramatic test with sensational appeal akin to some reality television shows and competitions (see Bennett, 2005).
- Offers opinion and speculation on developing events/stories, rather than a discussion of known facts, analytical accounts/evidence/ideas, or contextualizing materials (see Carillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013; Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001; Fenton, 2011; Graber & Holyk, 2011; Thussu, 2007).
- Covers or presents ambiguous information without making attempts to clarify or question it (see Carillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013; Edelman, 1988).
- Covers political/public conflicts (non-personalised conflicts) by providing adversarial, negative content, without contextualizing, investigating, or analyzing them - for example when "most of the negative content [in the contemporary news] is supplied through journalists' use of sources rather than deep investigation. *When a politician makes a statement or takes action, reporters turn to adversaries to attack it. The critical element is supplied, not by a careful assessment of the claim or action, but by the insertion of a counter-claim*" (Patterson, 2000: 12). This is also known as the "pro et contra" format of news reporting (see Šori & Vanya, 2017).
- Presents political coverage or other information through a "strategic game" frame in a way that decontextualizes the coverage of politics, including "news focused on (1) winning and losing as the central concern; (2) the language of wars, games and competition; (3) a story with performers, critics, and audience (voters); (4) centrality of performance, style, and perception of the candidate; (5) heavy weighing of polls and the candidates' standing in them" (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997: 33; see also Tue Petersen, 2014).
- Frames the story/information according to a logic of 'episodic framing', which is event-oriented, rather than according to a logic of thematic framing, which is more contextual, historical, and linked to broader discourses, issues, themes, and social implications (see Otto et al., 2017).

As should be clear, these characteristics (and sub-characteristics) are not mutually exclusive: a news item might embody many of them within the same article. Equally important, however, is the fact that not all of these characteristics and sub-characteristics need to be present for a discourse to qualify as infotainment. Rather, depending on the context, it is entirely possible that an article would qualify as exhibiting at least some degree of infotainment if it were to embody even just one characteristic.

Relatedly, an infotainment style of communication might coexist alongside other unrelated, or even opposing, forms and strategies of communication. For example, infotainment is often presented as the opposite of what we refer to as the Golden Age style (often presented as the ideal, gold standard style of modern journalism - and particularly hard news coverage - to which all news coverage should aspire - see Krause, 2011; Schiller, 1979; Schudson, 2015). Previous studies, however, have suggested that rather than being mutually exclusive, both infotainment and Golden Age style attributes are often intermixed in news coverage. Thus, many infotainment scholars suggest that we should see the two more as a continuum rather than a dichotomous categorisation (see Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001). This means that as researchers we cannot simply track the presence/absence of the characteristics of one style or another. Rather, researchers need to track the relative *prevalence/intensity* of each style (and their characteristics) and then make judgments about where the relative balance lies between the two.

 As such, in addition to tracking infotainment, we also tracked the presence and nature of the Golden Age style in our dataset as a way of contextualizing our findings on infotainment. We therefore began by

analyzing the existing infotainment literature (and beyond) in order to create an overarching definition of the Golden Age style and its key characteristics. On the whole, the existing relevant literature defines the Golden Age style as characterized by a number of key features including a "strong orientation toward an ethic of public service" (Krause, 2011, p. 96), the localized production of news, investigative journalism, a 'serious,' 'objective,' or analytical style, and a critical approach to or "professional distrust of sources" (Schiller, 1979, p. 56), especially governmental, corporate, and PR sources. Examples of the Golden Age style include if the news item:

- Offers information in an 'objective', dispassionate, investigative, and/or analytical style (Brants & Neijens, 1998; Just et al, 1996; Krause 2011; Schiller 1979).
- Discusses and presents substantive information that is informative and socially/politically relevant and that includes "more direct and factual content aspects. Examples are stories about the fundamentals (ideology and electoral program) of the competing parties in an election and stories about policy, political issues, and party political disagreements. Politicians would be discussed with respect to their expertise or political involvement, as policymakers or experts" (Brants & Neijens, 1998: 152).
- Covers political conflicts as debates over competing options/policies/worldviews, rather than between politicians or competing parties in a personalized or competitive frame (see codebook in the appendix for a more detailed discussion of different ways of covering conflict)
- Covers information that is typical of what Hallin & Mellado (2018) term the journalistic "watchdog role." These roles include questioning on the part of the journalist/others; criticism on the part of journalists/others (when substantive, not conflictual as a lack of investigative reporting); charges of wrongdoing expressed by the journalist/others (when substantive, not conflictual as a lack of investigative reporting); reporting of legitimate external investigations/conflict; investigative reporting (see Hallin & Mellado, 2018).
- Covers information that is typical of what Hallin & Mellado (2018) term the journalistic "civic role", including citizen perspective (when substantive, rather than used for emotional appeals, human-interest reporting, or personalization – see above); reporting citizen demands; education on duties and rights; providing background and context; reporting on local impact (but still a social, not individual perspective) (see Hallin & Mellado, 2018)

4.2 Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis - Case Selection and Dataset

One of the major methodological decisions in any mixed-methods discourse analysis research is the choice of the discursive object or site (type of discourse) and the specific characteristics of the dataset to be analyzed. Since infotainment is a phenomenon that stretches across a variety of media, subject matters, and spheres, one could examine a multitude of different data sets to test for the presence and intensity of infotainment in Canada. One common way to narrow down potential datasets is to begin by choosing a case (often a subject or event) which the studied discourse treats and is organized around. Given our interests, we wanted a case that would be clearly 'political' in nature, recent, and as nationally representative as possible.

These criteria (and the timing of our dataset collection process) led us to choose the 2019 Canadian federal election as our specific case study. While infotainment characteristics can exist across news coverage of diverse subject matter and events, the 2019 federal election offers a particularly legitimate and fruitful case for analysis. Firstly, the use of election campaigns (and the news media's coverage of those campaigns) as case studies for the analysis of political infotainment (and communication styles more generally) is common throughout much of the literature (see Alonso, 2016; Baum, 2005; Carillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013; Onusko, 2011).

Secondly, we believe the 2019 campaign was a particularly strong case for analyzing the relative presence/prevalence of infotainment and Golden Age styles in news media. On one hand, it was a competitive election with three newcomers as party leaders (Jagmeet Singh of the New Democratic Party, Andrew Scheer of the Conservative Party of Canada, and Yves-François Blanchet of the Bloc Québécois) and the emergence of one new party (the rise of Maxime Bernier's newly-founded populist People's Party of Canada). Moreover, throughout the 41-day campaign the parties articulated a variety of very clear policy differences on a wide range

of contentious policy issues (such as housing, pipelines, climate strategy, and taxes/affordability). On the other hand, the build-up to, and campaign itself, were also framed by several salient high-profile scandals (including the SNC-Lavalin corruption scandal implicating prime minister Justin Trudeau and Liberal cabinet members), a series of smaller-profile scandals (involving candidates' past offensive social media posts), and, in a surprising turn of events, the revelations of Justin Trudeau's 'blackface/brownface' scandal. As such, the key 'substantive' content of the election campaign provided ample material that might be seen as being 'naturally' conducive to both the Golden Age and infotainment styles. And this, in turn, means that there is little danger that the substantive content of the election campaign itself 'biased' the dataset by making one style more likely to be used than the other.

Given that the Canadian hard news ecosystem includes substantial news coverage not only in English and French, but also in a multitude of other languages, we also had to determine the linguistic parameters of our study. For our study, we decided to limit our focus to English-language media since (a) the size and breadth of English-language media in Canada is worthy of attention in its own right; (b) it is reasonable to believe that, when it comes to infotainment, there might be quite different trends characterizing French-language (and other language) media in Canada (which means they merit their own studies); and (c) the size of any potentially representative dataset for English-language media was already so large that it was not feasible to add another language dataset for this project.[1]

Similar questions also emerged when considering the medium. We wanted to choose a medium that was highly relevant to contemporary news consumption by (English-speaking) Canadian citizens. We therefore canvassed the literature on how and from where Canadians consume their news today. Canadians consume their political news and information through an array of media platforms and technologies, but despite increased media fragmentation and the growth of social media as aggregators (and increasingly, content generators), legacy media outlets certainly still dominated the Canadian news media landscape in 2019 – commanding higher overall levels of trust than general online, search engine, and social media sources (see Leclair & Charlton, 2019: 3-4; Newman et al., 2020: 90). Moreover, TV, radio, and print news still received higher overall consumption than other formats (Newman et al., 2020: 90) in 2019. Furthermore, Canadian newspaper readership has actually increased when accounting for both print and online versions thereof (Ladurantaye, 2013). Accordingly, the overall importance and relevance of Canada's legacy media outlets remained strong for the period of our study. For this reason, we decided that the news coverage of the 2019 federal election in CEL newspapers would represent a legitimate, relevant, and important case study - and thus we collected data from both print *and* digital versions of CEL newspaper publications.

Finally, we needed to decide what type of news coverage within CEL newspapers we would focus on. Obviously there are a wide range of what we might call different 'genres' within a single newspaper - each with their own stylistic tendencies and norms. For example, we would expect that 'Lifestyle', 'Arts and Culture', 'Business' or 'Sports' type articles (which, since they are often organized in different sections of the newspaper and, we would argue, clearly represent different genres of writing) would have very different stylistic tendencies (even when discussing political topics) than those included in the 'News' or 'Politics' section. Moreover, even within the 'News/Politics' section, there are often different genres, each with their own stylistic patterns and norms. The genre of 'Op Eds' and pundit columns, for example, usually operates according to very different stylistic (and content, for that matter) rules than news items that purport to be of a more traditional journalistic reporting style. And even within journalistic news reporting there are a wide variety of sub-genres (for example, hard news, soft news, investigative reporting, and so forth), each of which embody certain stylistic patterns and tendencies.

For our study, we wanted to choose a genre that would be perceived to be a 'difficult case' rather than an 'easy case' (that's to say, a site of discourse where the presence of infotainment would not normally be expected) so that if our study did find evidence of infotainment, the broader relevance of these findings (and the degree to which our findings also suggest that infotainment might reasonably be expected to be found in other

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[1] As such, while our study addresses an important gap regarding infotainment in English political hard news coverage in Canada, we do not claim that our findings should be assumed to necessarily hold true for political hard news in other languages, as additional studies will be required to fully explore the presence and nature of infotainment in other languages in Canada.

sites of news discourse) could not plausibly be discounted as due to the fact that our dataset was composed of news discourse that was already predisposed to an infotainment style. As such, we decided to focus exclusively on articles that fell into the genre of 'hard news' reporting - since most observers and scholars would argue that these articles would be both most likely to be characterized by the Golden Age style, and least likely to be characterized by an infotainment style.

In terms of our specific dataset, given the above criteria, we collected hard news articles from a selection of six national and regional broadsheet newspapers from across anglophone Canada. Our choice of newspapers was guided by the goal of creating a representative group that would include the newspapers with the largest reach (based on distribution numbers as well as their 'agenda-setting' status) but also offer a breadth of regional and ideological representation (across CEL newspapers). Given these criteria, the following newspapers were chosen for analysis: *The Globe & Mail* (national, with some regional coverage); *The National Post* (national, with some regional coverage); *The Toronto Star* (both national and regional coverage); *The Montreal Gazette* (primarily regional coverage, some reprinted national stories); *The Calgary Herald* (primarily regional coverage, some reprinted national stories); and *The Vancouver Sun* (primarily regional coverage, some reprinted national stories). While this list is obviously not exhaustive of major English newspapers in Canada, together these make up a highly representative sample of nationally-relevant CEL newspapers. Also important to note is that the *NP*, *MG*, *CH* and *VS* are all owned by Postmedia and often share coverage and articles between them. As such, our macro analyses group all of these papers together under the banner 'Postmedia'.

Articles were collected from the Dow Jones *Factiva* database for each day of the official election campaign (spanning 41 days, from 11 September to 21 October) using a variety of search terms including the names of mainstream political parties, their leaders, and terms related to the federal election itself. They were then manually sorted and any article that failed to embody the following three key criteria were removed: (1) The article represented regular 'hard news' articles, features, or interviews on the election, candidates/parties, or other subject matter relevant to the election, rather than opinion pieces, columns, or letters to the editor; (2) The article discussed the topic of the federal election more than tangentially; and (3) The length of the article was sufficient to offer a substantial enough analysis that all retained articles would be relatively comparable in terms of the amount of information shared (and thus could be accurately evaluated by our coding process).[2]

Our original search identified a total of 4370 items. After eliminating duplicates and any news items that did not meet the three criteria discussed above, 969 separate and distinct news items were retained for the final dataset. While many mixed methods studies would use some sort of additional 'sampling' criteria to further reduce the dataset (in order to reduce the time required to code them), we decided to analyze all of them. As such, our dataset represents an extremely large and robust dataset for this type of study. Moreover, the impact of these articles is arguably even larger than it would first appear, since many of them were reproduced in other newspapers across Canada (in our analysis, at least 271 of the 969 articles were reprinted in at least one other newspaper across Canada). A detailed breakdown of the dataset can be found in the below table.

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[2] We enacted the third criteria by reviewing all articles that were less than 250 words to ensure and retain only those that offered enough substance to undertake a meaningful 'infotainment analysis' on the article.

Newspaper	Publication Group	Total Items Collected (Factiva Database)	Duplicates	Final Numbers for Analysis (after manual filtering)
Globe & Mail	Globe & Mail	956	0	234
Toronto Star	Toronto Star	1347	0	396
National Post	Postmedia	610	0	163
Calgary Herald	Postmedia	535	92	48
Montreal Gazette	Postmedia	434	75	67
Vancouver Sun	Postmedia	488	104	62
Total		**4370**	**271**	**969**

<p style="text-align: center;">**Appendix 2: Detailed Codebook**</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">**I - Coding Questions for Infotainment Characteristics:**</p>

A. Personalization

Privatization:
- *1a: Does the news item present information in a privatized manner*?
  - Y/N
- *1b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition**: A focus either on the private lives of politicians or the private, individual implications of policies, rather than broader public or social implications. This can include scandal in politicians' private lives.
- **Justification:** Researchers such as Jebril et al. (2013), Hallin & Mellado (2018), and Carillo & Ferre-Pavia (2013) have argued that privatization is an important element of infotainment and have included it in their own analyses. Moreover, Van Elteren (2013) argues that information from the private sphere or politicians' private lives is increasingly used within political communications and media framing strategies to help win support through emotional attachment. As such, privatization is an important element of infotainment, one falling more broadly within the category of personalization, as it serves to shift the focus of political discourse onto the individual, rather than more publicly-relevant or substantive policies, debates, ideas, and so forth.

Celebrification:
- *2a: Does the news item reference the celebrity status, fame, recognition, or image of politicians, or present politicians through a celebrity lens?*
  - Y/N
- *2b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** Presenting politicians or candidates as celebrity-like individuals, notably through a focus on "charisma, beauty, and fame" (see Lofton, 2012: 426). If a politician's charisma, beauty, fame, or popularity are referenced, it will be coded as celebrification (as opposed to covering politicians as experts, professionals, public representatives, etc. in a non-fame- or celebrity-oriented manner). Alternately, celebrification may include when politicians or candidates are discussed alongside celebrities or other famous individuals, for example in cases of celebrity endorsements.
- **Justification:** As seen in the celebrity politics literature, celebrification occurs largely through personalization and privatization. However, authors such as Lofton (2012) have highlighted that celebrification often occurs through a focus on "charisma, beauty, and fame" (426). Rojek (2012) also explains that descriptions of celebrity politicians (for example, Barack Obama, David Cameron) as "bold," "charismatic visionaries," and other fame- or celebrity-evoking phrases are used often in the media without analysis, explanation, or deeper consideration of their truth and meaning. As such, the celebrification and uncritical focus on fame, beauty, popularity, and so forth is a clear example of the personalization of the news (and politics), and thus characteristic of the infotainment style.

Personalization:
- *3a: Does the news item present information in a personalized manner*?
  - Y/N
- *3b: If yes, how so?*

- o Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition**: A focus on politicians as individuals, notably through emotional or empathetic appeals, or appeals/references to their virtues/values, failures/shortcomings/successes, or a focus on looks, personal characteristics, performance, or style, rather than focussing on them as public figures/representatives, experts, professionals, etc. – the politician becomes "the main anchor of interpretation and evaluation in political reporting" (Otto et al., 2017: 143), rather than the policies or actual substance of politics. Other elements include:
    - o A focus on party leaders rather than parties themselves, or individual politicians rather than parties, when the story is relevant to their ridings.
    - o The presence of (a) a human example or human face to the story in order to illuminate developments in politics or society (for instance, by explaining an event/policy through providing the experience of a citizen). This may be understood as a form of *personalized-episodic framing*, wherein the episodic framing is focused on an individual (a politician/candidate, a citizen, an employee) and their story, detached from broader contexts.
    - o Explicit references to feelings or sentiments of individual politicians.
    - o The use or coverage of negative campaigning that is targeted at individual politicians in a personalized way, rather than at their ideas, positions, policies, party, and so forth (for example, personalized negative campaigning).
- **Justification:** Personalization is widely recognised in the literature as a central aspect of infotainment. Researchers including Brants & Niejens (1998), Carillo & Ferre-Pavia (2013), Jebril et al. (2013), Hallin & Mellado (2018), Patterson (2000), Castells (2009), Otto et al (2017), and Manucci (2017) have all recognized the importance of personalization to the infotainment style, and used it within their own analyses. As well, Van Elteren (2013) argues that personalization is encouraged and increasingly used as a political communications strategy for connecting more personally with voters. Accordingly, this category takes definitions and operationalizations directly from these various researchers to cover what is the base or commonly-accepted understanding of the term 'personalization.'

Use of (politician's) Tweets & Social Media:
- *4a: Are politicians' (or others') personal or political communications on social media (for example, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) used and commented on as a form of news?*
    - o Y/N
- *4b: If yes, how so?*
    - o Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** The use of Tweets and other personal social media communications as a form of 'news,' notably with the use of negative campaigning material or sensational, fiery statements (see Manucci, 2017; Walter & Vliegenthart, 2010).
- **Justification:** The use of politicians' political communications on social media as the basis of news stories is argued to personalize the political process by generating political news based on the statements of individual politicians, rather than investigative, analytical coverage, or otherwise politically-substantive and socially-relevant information on policies, platforms, and so forth (see Gross & Johnson, 2016; Manucci, 2017; Walter & Vliegenthart, 2010).

Overall Personalization:
- *5a: Based on questions 1-4, what is the overall prevalence of "Personalization" as a form of infotainment in the news item?*
    - o (little to no personalization) 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (highly personalized)

B. Sensationalization

Emotional appeals and narratives:
- *6a: Does the news item present information through the use of emotional appeals, primers, or narrative structures, including through human-interest perspectives?*
  - Y/N
- *6b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** This category applies notably through human-interest perspectives (presenting people and their stories in a personal, emotional way, such as their problems, struggles, complaints, achievements, and so forth, so as to arouse empathy, motivation, and other emotions among readers), but generally any emotion-laden appeals and narratives that are offered to connect with or draw the attention of the audience, especially when information could be offered in a more analytical or 'objective' manner.
  - One important narrative structure here is the Hero-Villain-Victim narrative, but also personalized narratives more generally that focus heavily on individuals, rather than broader political perspectives and substance: these tend to be constructed "as close as possible to tales of intrigue, sex, and violence. Naturally, while maintaining noble themes about democracy, patriotism, and the well-being of the nation on behalf of the common folk (the man in the street, this mythical creature who has replaced citizenship in the media world)" (Castells, 2009: 203).
- **Justification:** Numerous scholars (Brants & Niejens, 1998; Castells, 2009; Graber, 1994; Graber & Holyk, 2011; Hallin & Mellado, 2018; Just, 2011; Patterson, 2000; Thussu, 2007) have recognized sensationalism as a key element of infotainment (indeed, it is, for many, a definitional prerequisite for infotainment to exist at all). Moreover, they have recognized emotional appeals, narratives, and human-interest perspectives as key to such sensationalism, as they present stories/events/politics in a manner that is often far more sensational and entertaining than the real events (which are often far more mundane), in part by gripping the interest and emotional connection or sympathy of the viewer. Castells (2009) has also highlighted the importance of emotion-laden narratives, notably the Hero-Villain-Victim narrative but also others, in generating such emotional appeals. Indeed, as Altheide has argued, the infotainment style is an inherently *narrativized* format: "The 'infotainment' news perspective holds that, for practical reasons, any event can be summarily covered and presented as a narrative account with a beginning, middle, and end" (2004: 294).

Sensational focus on scandal:
- *7a: Does the news item focus on a scandal in a sensational or dramatic, rather than analytical, investigative, or contextualized manner?*
  - Y/N
- *7b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** If a scandal is focused on without being contextualized, scrutinized/investigated for its truthfulness, or discussed with substantive information and implications, but merely used as dramatic or breaking news, competitive campaigning, and so forth, it may be considered as a sensational use of/focus on scandal.
- **Justification:** Most infotainment researchers include coverage of or focus on scandal as a characteristic of soft news or infotainment (see Brants & Niejens, 1998; Hallin & Mellado, 2018; Jebril et al., 2013; Thussu, 2007). We have included private-life scandals under privatization (see above), although coverage of scandals may indeed be in the interest of citizens as it can often have political implications or help to uncover corruption and abuses of power. As such, we have chosen to incorporate scandal in a varied manner into the Codebook (namely, as a form of personalization when it is a private-life scandal with questionable public relevance; as a form of sensationalization when it is publicly/politically relevant but not contextualized, investigated, or discussed substantively and for its implications). If

scandals are covered in an investigative, challenging, or contextualized manner, they may be seen as important events to cover, rather than simply "newsworthy" sensationalism. If they are simply provided as dramatic or sensationalized coverage without attempting to be investigative, critical, skeptical, or educational, they will be coded as sensational and a characteristic of infotainment.

Conflict as a form of political sensationalism:
- *8a: Does the news item focus on a political conflict sensationally, or as a form of political campaigning (for instance, non-substantive conflict deriving from politicians and the campaign themselves, rather than substantive conflict over policies, public scandals, platforms, ideologies, and so forth)?*
  - Y/N
- *8b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** This form of conflict is found notably within negative campaigning, which is to say deriving *from politicians' statements*, *attacks, and so forth* in order to gain support or lower support for other parties/individuals (rather than a debate-style conflict over substantive views/issues/policies). More generally, however, non-substantive conflict may be focused on or emphasized as a means of sensationalizing the news (for example, charges that one party, leader, government, or otherwise is failing in their role or through their policies and actions, but with no substantive discussion of how they are failing and how it could be done differently). This may also include coverage of populist discourses/statements, which are found to be increasingly used as sensational devices within an infotainment format by commercial media (see Manucci, 2017).
- **Justification:** Conflictual negative campaigning is often focused on by the media during campaigns for its entertainment value (Tue Petersen, 2014; Walter & Vliegenthart, 2010). We have broken down conflict into a number of different forms for the Codebook, as there is also debate over whether or not the coverage of conflict represents a characteristic of infotainment (for example, Graber, 1994 codes emphasis on conflictual elements as a form of "populist/sensational" coverage, while Hallin & Mellado, 2018 consider it a function of the journalistic "Watchdog Role"). As such, we have included forms of conflict which are less informational, substantive, or socially/politically relevant as aspects of infotainment, while also including coverage of more informational, relevant, and substantively-based conflicts (over policies, laws, or ideas) under the Golden Age style of news coverage.

Framing stories as exciting or dramatic:
- *9a: Does the news item present stories/events as exciting or dramatic when it is not clear that the events/discourses represented are indeed of such a nature?*
  - Y/N
- *9b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** This broad category may apply when it is not clear that a story is indeed exciting or dramatic in reality, but clear efforts are made *on the part of the news outlet* to render it as such (for example, through the reporter's choice of language or narrative; through unverified or unsubstantiated claims, and so forth). Adjectives are especially relevant here.
- **Justification:** Brants (2008), Brants & Neijens (1998), Brewer & Cao (2006), Castells (2009), Graber (1994), Patterson (2000), and others all highlight the dramatic and exciting devices, framing strategies, and foci of coverage which are inherent to the infotainment style. The definitions and operationalizations of these devices/strategies differ across researchers and are often not clarified. As such, we include this category as a fairly openly-defined one, wherein it must be clear that some effort is made on the part of the news outlet to render the story more dramatic or exciting than its underlying socio-political reality would suggest, thus hinting towards an explicit form of sensationalism. While

many such instances will likely be covered by the "emotional appeals and narratives" coding question above, this broader characteristic allows for a more nuanced analysis in the case of unforeseen or unexpected material and discursive strategies.

Various Sensationalistic Devices:
- *10a: Does the news item present stories with any other identifiable forms of sensationalization or sensationalistic devices/strategies?*
  - Y/N
- *10b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** This category is openly-defined so as to capture any forms of sensationalization not expressly included in the Codebook. Some examples could include: (Over-)Simplification of issues and political discourse in order to make a story more entertaining or comprehensible, rather than informative or making an attempt to teach the audience about real-world political complexities; the use of surprise to shock the audience; the use of ambiguity to create drama or suspense; and so forth (see Carrillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013)
- **Justification:** Similar to "exciting and dramatic framing," this sub-characteristic allows for a more holistic analysis, as it accounts for unforeseen characteristics, as well as certain aspects of sensationalism that have been tested in the literature but which are not widely used nor included expressly within the Codebook (see Carrillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013 for some such examples).

Overall Sensationalization:
- *11: Based on questions 6-10, what is the overall prevalence of "Sensationalization" as a form of infotainment in the news item?*
  - (little to no sensationalization) 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (highly sensationalized)

C. Decontextualization

Production and coverage of pseudo-events/news reality frames:
- *12a: Does the news item cover or help to produce a "pseudo-event" or "news reality frame"?*
  - Y/N
- *12b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** A pseudo-event is an event that doesn't simply 'happen' in the world and become reported on by the media; it is an event that is created by the media as a newsworthy phenomenon: "News is no longer something that happens, news is what the media make happen" (Kent, Harrison, & Taylor, 2006). Quoting from the authors:

  > "According to Boorstin, a pseudo-event is a 'happening' that possesses four characteristics: (1) Pseudo-events are planned, planted, or incited events (not spontaneous)—an interview rather than a train wreck or an earthquake (1972, p. 11). (2) Pseudo-events are ''planted'' primarily (though not exclusively) for the immediate purpose of attracting media coverage and are arranged for the convenience of the media (p. 11). (3) Pseudo-events are ambiguous—they are not about reporting 'news' the way a reporter might cover a fire or an assault. The link between reality and the event is ambiguous. That is, pseudo-events (like interviews) are contrived— pseudo-events ''happen'' in the sense that an interviewer really talks to an interviewee, however, pseudo-events do not 'happen' in the way that a fire does (p. 11). And finally, (4) pseudo-

events are intended to be self-fulfilling prophecies (p. 12). The media creates reality by defining it into existence. As Boorstin suggests of a hypothetical hotel's 30th-anniversary celebration: 'by saying that the hotel is a distinguished institution, actually makes it one' (p. 12) in the minds of the public" (Kent, Harrison, & Taylor, 2006, p. 305).

- This can include showing an event with no political substance or substantive political/societal importance, such as showing a politician in a celebrity-type role, or simply showing a campaign stop or other event with pre-scripted 'sound bites' (in essence, controlled communications) and presenting it uncritically as a real, rather than staged event (one commonly referred-to instance would be the famous Bush aircraft landing). "For example, reporting on the ways in which a typical campaign stop in Iowa is staged for the local news would only reveal the obvious, and leave many viewers with a 'So what?' reaction. After all, the beauty of television is the sense of being there without really being there. The campaign appearance pseudo event is the event, and there is simply no meaningful reality outside it" (Bennett, 2005: 371).
- To code, the article must frame the story or event in a way that clearly distorts some underlying reality or avoids discussing any significant *substantive* political content. (To be sure, this phenomenon requires a certain degree of background knowledge/context of political events/discourses on the part of the researcher in order to determine when certain news reality frames are being produced/driven to the neglect of other aspects of reality which would otherwise inform the story and its political/social substantiveness).
- It can also include taking a sound bite, a gaffe or miscommunication from a speech and detaching them from their broader context so as to produce an interesting, dramatic, or sensational news frame.
- A news reality frame is "a de-contextualized account based on a documented element of an event that becomes journalistically repackaged in a different story frame. The resulting news reality frame blurs the connection between the news reality and its original surrounding context" (Bennett, 2005: 370). A more detailed definition of the news reality frame can be found in Bennett (2005).

- **Justification:** Pseudo-events have been recognised as important media constructions used to produce attention-grabbing spectacles (Bennett, 2005; Kellner, 2003, 2009; Thussu, 2007). In light of declining news media audiences, this form of news product is argued to be widespread as a means of generating audience interest. As well, Marland (2012) explains that this sort of pseudo-event is often used by politicians or leaders as a communications strategy (pointing to the example of Stephen Harper in Canada), wherein control over media access and what is said, photographed, or videotaped is exercised by politicians and their teams so as to control the message, image, and affective cues associated with them. The uncritical or unchallenging coverage of such pseudo-events (when it is sufficiently clear that such manipulation of events/images is occurring and not challenged or investigated by the media, but rather accepted and represented) by the media can thus be considered an aspect of decontextualization inherent to the infotainment style.
  - ". . . what Daniel Boorstin (1961) referred to as "pseudo-events," in which people pay more attention to media-produced spectacles than to pressing concerns in the sociopolitical world and everyday life" (Kellner, 2003: 20).

Candidate challenges:
- *13a: Does the news item utilize or produce a "candidate challenge"?*
  - Y/N
- *13b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** The Candidate Challenge has been defined as the "preeminent *election news* reality frame" (Bennett, 2005: 365; emphasis added). However, the "candidate challenge" may be distinguished more specifically from regular news reality frames: When journalists cite unsourced criticisms or challenges

to politicians to see how they respond and handle themselves (for example, bringing up a rumor that is unsubstantiated as a test to the politician), thus creating a challenging, dramatic test with sensational appeal akin to some reality television shows and competitions (see Bennett, 2005). This can also include when the press prolongs a 'flip-flopper' story, challenging a candidate continually over an issue they may/may not have changed position on.

- **Justification:** Bennett (2005) argues that these decontextualized pseudo-events and challenging frames/tests mimic the logic of reality television shows such as *Survivor*, as they use decontextualized information and frames that distort the underlying reality which they claim to represent, as well as unsubstantiated or unverified allegations, questions, and concerns, all towards the end of producing an entertaining challenge for candidates – something which is "newsworthy" and entertaining, but which is ultimately a false representation and coverage of politics. We have distinguished this category from the more general "pseudo-events/news reality frame" category above because it is more directly focused on a challenge to candidates (something constructed and undertaken by the media itself) than on the coverage of pseudo-events that may not produced by the media outlet itself, but simply uncritically represented by them.

Opinion & Speculation:
- *14a: Does the news item use opinion and/or speculation?*
  - Y/N
- *14b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** When pundits, experts, or others offer opinion and speculation on developing events/stories, rather than a discussion of known facts, analytical accounts/evidence/ideas, or contextualizing materials. Especially with the use of tangentially-related information or unsubstantiated/unverified information as news stories develop but lack sufficient information for continual, meaningful, and interesting coverage.
- **Justification:** Hard news, as a medium for gaining a 'matter-of-fact' perspective on current events, is not a suitable platform for offering opinion and speculation (according to a quintessentially "golden age" conception of the news and journalism). As such, scholars have argued that increases in the use of 'expert' pundits to offer opinion and speculation, namely as a means of making up for cuts to investigative journalism and newsroom resources, constitutes an aspect of the shift towards infotainment in news reporting (see Carillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013; Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001; Fenton, 2011; Graber & Holyk, 2011; Thussu, 2007). Indeed, some use the admixture and lack of distinction between facts and opinion/speculation in the news as a definitional characteristic of infotainment (see Carillo & Ferre-Pavia, 2013; Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001).

Ambiguity:
- *15a: Does the news item cover or present ambiguous information without making attempts to clarify or question it?*
  - Y/N
- *15b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** If information is provided (statements, promises, or explanations) that is not clear, with no effort on the part of the news outlet to clarify or challenge it, it may be understood as decontextualized, non-informative material (this will often derive from statements or speeches by politicians/others).
- **Justification:** Carillo & Ferre-Pavia (2013), borrowing from Edelman (1988), argue that ambiguity is a propagandistic strategy which allows for the continual reconstruction of social/political events, issues, discourses, and individuals. Notably, it is argued to go against the journalistic ideal of accuracy and rigour in reporting known and verifiable facts/information. In light of the wealth of research on affective

heuristics and the use of emotions/affective appeals in political communications, we believe that the widespread use of ambiguity may be a highly important factor in contemporary politics, as ambiguous messages/promises can be powerful affective devices which do not require meaningful, substantive, or factual backing. Thus, the uncritical, unchallenging, or un-investigative use or coverage of ambiguity in the news can be seen as a form of decontextualization and lack of responsible, investigative news: in short, a characteristic of the infotainment style.

Conflict as a lack of investigative journalism ('pro et contra' reporting):
- *16a: Does the news item cover political/public conflicts (non-personalized conflicts) by providing adversarial, negative content, without contextualizing, investigating, or analysing them?*
  - Y/N
- *16b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** When political/public conflict is presented using contradictory, adversarial statements that seek to attack or defend from one another: "most of the negative content [in the contemporary news] is supplied through journalists' use of sources rather than deep investigation. *When a politician makes a statement or takes action, reporters turn to adversaries to attack it. The critical element is supplied, not by a careful assessment of the claim or action, but by the insertion of a counter-claim"* (Patterson, 2000: 12). This is also known as the "pro et contra" format of news reporting (see Šori & Vanya, 2017).
- **Justification:** This mode of covering or representing conflict is similar to conflict as a sensational device (see above), yet understood and analysed for different effects. Ultimately, the coverage of political conflict in a largely non-substantive, uninformative, and adversarial manner indeed constitutes a form of sensationalism, although it may also constitute a form of decontextualization at the same time. This is because this form of conflict is not only sensational and often amusing, but also takes the context and substance required to understand and evaluate political issues out of public debate and news coverage (thus rendering citizens' exposure to politics less informed and contextualized). As such, we have included this along with the other forms of conflict so as to conceptually clarify the analysis of conflict in news media and infotainment, and to ensure that the coverage of conflict in its various forms can be attributed each to their proper functions within the news item. See Patterson (2000) for more information on this form of conflict coverage.

Strategic Game Framing:
- *17a: Does the news item present political coverage or other information through a "strategic game" frame in a way that decontextualizes the coverage of politics?*
  - Y/N
- *17b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** "news focused on (1) winning and losing as the central concern; (2) the language of wars, games and competition; (3) a story with performers, critics, and audience (voters); (4) centrality of performance, style, and perception of the candidate; (5) heavy weighing of polls and the candidates standing in them. (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 33)" (see Tue Petersen, 2014: 902).
  - **To code under this sub-characteristic, the strategic game framing must have some noticeable impact on the coverage of political information** (for example, replacing substantive political information and coverage, and in so doing placing the competition and similar competitive/strategic aspects as the main anchors of interpretation for political events/discourses).
- **Justification:** Aalberg et al. (2011) argue that the strategic game frame (as defined above) has become dominant in much of the news, serving to replace substantive coverage of politics with a focus on

strategy, competition, and personality traits. They hold that the use of this frame represents, in part, an aspect of personalization, since it focuses on individual candidates and their competition strategies, what events means for them and their campaigns, and so forth, rather than focusing on broader, more substantive topics such as policy, ideology, party platforms, social implications, and so forth. This frame can thus be understood as a sensational device, a strategy for personalizing the news, and a form of decontextualization, all of which suggests a shift towards infotainment. Moreover, Tue Petersen (2014) argues that the strategic game frame is "inherently apolitical" (907) based on its area of focus, while Valentino, Buhr, & Beckmann (2001) have also found that the strategic game frame results in lower levels of substantive information retention among viewers. We have therefore included it under "decontextualization," and any sensationalistic or personalistic aspects will be coded under their respective sections.

Episodic Framing:
- *18a: Does the news item frame the story/information in an episodic manner?*
  - Y/N
- *18b: If yes, how so?*
  - Open question; recode into categories after

- **Definition:** Episodic framing, as opposed to thematic framing, indicates differences concerning the personal or societal focus of a journalistic depiction of a political issue (see Otto et al., 2017). Episodic framing is event-oriented, while thematic framing is more contextual, historical, and linked to broader discourses, themes, and social implications.
  - "Here, the focus of a news item as related to the accentuation of episodes or themes is coded. Episodically focused news items present an issue by offering a specific example, case study, or event oriented report, e.g., covering unemployment by presenting a story on the plight of a particular unemployed person. Thematically focused news items place issues into a broader context, e.g., covering unemployment by reporting on the latest unemployment figures and offering commentary by economists or public officials on the impact of the economy on unemployment." (Reinemann et al., 2012: 238). Also see Gross (2008).
  - If issues/events are framed in isolation from broader historical, institutional, organisational, and other political contexts, or in isolation from their social implications, patterns, and so forth, then they may be understood as episodic, rather than thematic. This is especially relevant in cases where an event/story is told by focusing on an individual and their specific place within the story, without considering the broader context (for example, of the institution(s) within which they operate).
- **Justification:** Otto et al. (2017) and Reinemann et al. (2012) find that episodic framing is an important aspect of soft news and infotainment. Reinemann et al. (2012) understand one important aspect of 'soft news' as its reporting in an episodic, personalized way, with a personal, individual, or private, rather than societal focus. Episodic framing is thus, by its very nature, a sub-characteristic of decontextualization (even if it also implicates trends in personalization).

Overall Decontextualization & Pseudo-Events:
- *19: Based on questions 12-18, what is the overall prevalence of "Decontextualization & Pseudo-Events" as a form of infotainment in the news item?*
  - (little to none) 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (highly prevalent)

II - Coding Questions for "Golden Age" Standard

D. Presentation Style

'Objective' and analytical ('Golden Age') style:
- *20a: Does the news item offer information in an 'objective', dispassionate, investigative, and/or analytical style akin to the 'Golden Age' journalistic standard?*
  - Y/N
- *20b: If yes, how so?*

- **Definition:** As this style is merely an ideal-type conception, we use Brants & Neijens's (1998) definition of what, generally, to expect on the more 'informative' side of the news-entertainment continuum.
  - Informative side of the continuum: "In general, the style would be serious, from a certain professional distance, and meant to inform with a tone of objectivity. In interviews, the politician is confronted with differences of opinion (Just et al., 1996)."
  - "Politicians would be discussed with respect to their expertise or political involvement, as policymakers or experts" (Brants & Neijens, 1998: 152-3).
  - Moreover, we rely on elements of the quintessentially "golden age" standard of journalism and news product to define this style: the "golden age" or "high modernist" period of journalism is characterized by a "strong orientation toward an ethic of public service" (Krause, 2011: 96), the localized production of news, investigative journalism, a 'serious,' 'objective,' or analytical style, and a critical approach to or "professional distrust of sources" (Schiller, 1979: 56), especially governmental, corporate, and PR sources.
- **Justification:** Brants & Neijens (1998), in an early classification and study of infotainment, offer a classification of the sort of style that is traditionally expected on the more 'serious' or informative side of the "entertainment-information continuum." This style is a summary of the quintessentially "golden age" form of journalism (see also Krause, 2011; Schiller, 1979). We thus use it as a standard by which to analyse 'serious' or informational reporting styles. While some might object to an analysis that seeks out a "golden age" standard of news in an era wherein such standards are no longer firm or necessarily commonplace, we believe that it is an ideal counterpart to the analysis of infotainment characteristics as it may help to display the degree to which infotainment trends have or have not driven out other journalistic standards and norms within Canadian news coverage of politics.

Overall 'Golden Age' Presentation Style:
- *21: Based on question 20, what is the overall prevalence of "Golden Age" reporting styles in the news item?*
  - (little to none) 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (highly prevalent)

E. Substance/Information Covered

Topic & Content:
- *22a: Does the news item discuss and present substantive information that is informative and socially/politically relevant?*
  - Y/N
- *22b: If yes, how so?*

- **Definition:** Informative side of continuum: "one could expect more direct and factual content aspects. Examples are stories about the fundamentals (ideology and electoral program) of the competing parties in an election and stories about policy, political issues, and party political disagreements. Politicians would be discussed with respect to their expertise or political involvement, as policymakers or experts" (Brants & Neijens, 1998: 152).
  - Clear definitions of what constitutes "substantive information" in the news are generally missing from the literature, perhaps due to the inherent difficulty with defining such a concept in an

'objective' manner. For our purposes, *we understand substantive information to include concrete information on the details of policy options, the competing perspectives on concrete political issues, debates, policy options, party platforms or ideologies, and so forth, as well as contextualizing information necessary to inform the audience of the details and complexities of socio-political life, issues, and events. This may also include credible discussions of potential problems, outcomes, or implications of policies and other political debates/issues/proposals (for example, discussions from an expert, researcher, or professional in the field, when substantive and discussing details and concrete information (not strategic framing, for example) – and when such discussions are not mere speculation and opinion, but credible knowledge on a subject).*

- **Justification:** Brants & Neijens (1998) also offer a summary of what content features to expect in a more 'serious' or informative news coverage. The general content of such "golden age" news standards is also very similar to the definitions of other researchers, such as Hallin & Mellado (2018) and Patterson (2000). From an historical perspective, we can also see that these general content expectations are widely recognized: By the post-war era journalism had reached its "golden age" or "high modern" period with a stark increase in regulations and "a strong orientation toward an ethic of public service" and impartiality (Krause, 2011: 96). Meanwhile, journalistic standards of objectivity also changed to become more investigative, critical, and contextualized, shaped by a mix of economic, professional, and socio-cultural developments to the journalistic field (Schiller, 1979; Schudson, 2015). This sub-characteristic and the others within "Substance and Information Covered" are thus based on this historical perspective and the quintessentially "golden age" standard. (Also see Zaller, 2003 and Barkho, 2016 for interesting discussions of what constitutes substantive, sufficient forms of information for the public-interest and a well-informed citizenry).

Conflict as a natural debate over competing options:
- *23a: Does the news item cover political conflicts as debates over competing options/policies/worldviews/and so forth, rather than between politicians or competing parties in a personalized or competitive frame?*
  - Y/N
- *23b: If yes, how so?*

- **Definition:** When conflicts are covered that are not personalized, sensationalized, nor focused on political campaigning or the political competition itself (essentially, substantive conflicts over policy options, platforms, reforms, ideas, and responses to crises or issues, and so forth).
- **Justification:** While researchers approach the coverage of conflict differently (and often with little conceptual clarity), we have broken it down into various types. This particular sub-characteristic accounts for the coverage of *substantive* political conflicts/debates that are of social/political importance, and which constitute the basis of the democratic process. By contrast, conflicts that are personalized, focused solely on the political campaign/race, and not contextualized or substantive are coded as characteristics of infotainment (see above).

Watchdog Role (see Hallin & Mellado, 2018):
- *24a: Does the news item cover information that is typical of the journalistic "watchdog role"?*
  - Y/N
- *24b: If yes, how so?*

- **Definition:** According to Hallin & Mellado (2018), the journalistic Watchdog Role includes:
  Questioning on the part of the journalist;
  Questioning on the part of others;
  Criticism on the part of journalists;

Criticism on the part of others (when substantive, not conflictual as a lack of investigative reporting – see above);

Charges of wrongdoing expressed by the journalist;

Charges of wrongdoing expressed by others (when substantive, not conflictual as a lack of investigative reporting – see above);

Reporting of external investigations

Reporting of conflict (see above)

Investigative reporting

- **Justification:** This list of traditional watchdog functions for journalists helps encapsulate many of the quintessentially "golden age" journalistic norms. This journalistic role (along with the Civic Role below) is thus helpful for defining and coding a more 'Golden Age' news standard. Where aspects of Hallin & Mellado's (2018) definition are unclear or potentially contradictory with other sub-characteristics in the Codebook, they are clarified/specified in brackets (see above).

Civic Role (see Hallin & Mellado, 2018):
- *25a: Does the news item cover information that is typical of the journalistic "civic role"?*
  - Y/N
- *25b: If yes, how so?*

- **Definition:** Including citizen perspective (when substantive, rather than used for emotional appeals or personalisation – see above);

  Reporting citizen demands;

  Education on duties and rights;

  Providing background and context;

  Reporting on local impact (but still a social, not individual perspective)

- **Justification:** This list of traditional civic functions for journalists helps encapsulate many of the quintessentially "golden age" journalistic norms. This journalistic role (along with the Watchdog Role above) is thus helpful for defining and coding a more 'Golden Age' news standard. Where aspects of Hallin & Mellado's (2018) definition are unclear or potentially contradictory with other sub-characteristics in the Codebook, they are clarified/specified in brackets (see above).

Overall 'Golden Age' style and standard:
- *26: Based on questions 22a-25b, what is the overall prevalence of a "Golden Age" standard of style and content in the news item?*
  - (little to none) 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 (highly prevalent)

III - Infotainment Scale

Based on a holistic qualitative reading and coding, each news item is scored on the 5-point Infotainment Scale below:

Infotainment Scale Categorization:
- *27: Based on the overall coding of Questions 1-26 and a holistic qualitative reading of the news item, how does the news item rank on a 5-point Infotainment Scale?*
  - 1 = little to no infotainment characteristics present.
  - 2 = few infotainment characteristics present.
  - 3 = moderate infotainment characteristics present.
  - 4 = strong infotainment characteristics present.
  - 5 = very strong infotainment characteristics present.

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