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By: **Gregory Perreault** and Folker Hanusch

Abstract

While Facebook and Twitter have received significant scholarly attention for their role in shaping the journalistic field, Instagram has received sparse attention in comparison. The present study examines how lifestyle journalists (n=63) from Austria and the United States perceive Instagram influencers operating in relation to the journalistic field. Instagram influencers, empowered by the digital medium, would seem to be in direct competition with lifestyle journalists in terms of content. Through the theoretical lenses of boundary work and field, this study argues that lifestyle journalists--long relegated to the periphery of the journalistic field--discursively leverage the presence of influencers to protect their autonomy within the field, while pushing influencers to its boundaries.

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Field Insurgency in Lifestyle Journalism

How Lifestyle Journalists Marginalize Instagram Influencers and Protect their Autonomy

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ABSTRACT: While Facebook and Twitter have received significant scholarly attention for their role in shaping the journalistic field, Instagram has received sparse attention in comparison. The present study examines how lifestyle journalists (n=63) from Austria and the United States perceive Instagram influencers operating in relation to the journalistic field. Instagram influencers, empowered by the digital medium, would seem to be in direct competition with lifestyle journalists in terms of content. Through the theoretical lenses of boundary work and field, this study argues that lifestyle journalists--long relegated to the periphery of the journalistic field--discursively leverage the presence of influencers to protect their autonomy within the field, while pushing influencers to its boundaries.

KEYWORDS: LIFESTYLE JOURNALISM, INSTAGRAM, INFLUENCERS, BOUNDARY WORK, FIELD THEORY

NOTE: This is the ACCEPTED version of the manuscript and hence may not reflect all changes in the final version.

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Chiara Ferragni presents an aspirational vision of achievable, fashionable womanhood. Her Instagram feed, followed by 23.6 million accounts, places Ferragni all over the world--Milan, Italy to Los Angeles, United States. As an influencer, she uses her Instagram and her associated blog *The Blonde Salad* to collaborate with fashion and beauty brands and--as of 2021--Nespresso as well. The documentary *Chiara Ferragni Unposted*, aired in 2019, notes that Ferragni is placed in the front row of fashion shows alongside Anna Wintour, the famed *Vogue* editor-in-chief. One could be forgiven for asking how an influencer could so quickly achieve such preferential placement among legendary lifestyle journalists. Her Instagram account isn't just business--there are images of her with her children. She shows herself wearing a stylish, backless shirt to lunch, juxtaposed with the sunburn she received from wearing it. She does not shy away from photos of herself pregnant, eating, kissing her husband, and showcasing her favorite pizzas. Silvia Venturini Fendi, the creative director at Fendi, put it this way:

> It's not enough for a blogger to be able to conquer the front row. Chiara was able to go beyond through her vision … Chiara Ferragni is the one who brought the general public closer to fashion, more so than anyone else (Amoruso, 2019).

Therein lies Ferragni's appeal--she "shortens the distance between the fashion world and all the people who follow fashion" (Amoruso, 2019), an aspect that makes some of her work sound much like lifestyle journalism. In fact, non-traditional actors like Ferragni and many others

across society who may -- wittingly or unwittingly -- be engaging in 'random acts of journalism' (Lasica, 2003) have been challenging traditional journalistic authority for some time. Over the past 20 years or so, research on this topic focused originally on the rise of citizen bloggers (see, for example, Allan and Thorsen, 2009), shifting more recently to the role of so-called peripheral actors more broadly, which can include a large variety of so-called *insurgents* into the journalistic field (Belair-Gagnon and Holton, 2018).

One key concern in such scholarship has been the extent to which traditional journalistic actors are responding to the threats posed by these newcomers, often through the lens of sociological theories on boundary work (Gieryn, 1983) and Bourdieu's (1986) field. However, in accordance with a broader bias toward studying journalism's relationship with political life, softer kinds of journalism have been somewhat neglected in such scholarship (Hanusch, 2018). An example is the subfield of lifestyle journalism, which can be understood as "the journalistic coverage of the expressive values and practices that help create and signify a specific identity within the realm of consumption and everyday life" (Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2013: 947). Here, we can observe perhaps even more glaringly how bloggers and Influencers are perceived as highly successful at taking over traditional journalists' roles (Maares and Hanusch, 2022).

Yet, we still have an incomplete understanding of how lifestyle journalists perceive these threats from these peripheral actors, and what strategies they may use to counteract them. To

better understand these processes, this study examines 63 Austrian and US lifestyle journalists' jurisdictional claims about the boundaries of their field. This research is explored through the lenses of both boundary work and field theory—a research synthesis that is sensible given they are "internally consistent," providing an avenue to clarify their respective phenomena and provide additional insights into the experience of lifestyle journalism (Cairney, 2013: 2). We argue that journalists conduct boundary work through a *protection of autonomy*, an approach that defends their work but eschews expelling lifestyle journalists. We further argue that this reflects a sort of *soft* boundary of the lifestyle journalism subfield, allowing lifestyle journalists to be responsive to changes in technology and open to new entrants to the field.

Theoretical Frameworks

Field Theory

An increasingly popular theoretical approach to studying journalism, and particularly the emergence of new actors in journalism, is Bourdieu's (1986) field theory. This approach has found favor with many journalism scholars, as a means to bridging "structural functionalism and social phenomenology by analyzing society on both the structural and individual level through the interplay of various concepts" (Maares and Hanusch, 2022: 738). According to Bourdieu (1986), the field is comprised of several concepts which reflect the power between different actors; namely, *doxa, habitus,* and *capital*. *Doxa* refers to the "universe of tacit presuppositions"

(Bourdieu, 1987: 35) which "organize action within the field" (Benson and Neveu, 2005: 3). As Benson and Neveu (2005) put it, agents who believe in a shared doxa tend to share the belief that the same game is worth playing. *Doxa* is evidenced, for example, in the enduring criteria for newsworthiness (Tandoc and Jenkins, 2018), and even if minor variations in the privileging of such criteria exist—such as mobile journalists' emphasis on lifestyle journalism norms within traditional journalism beats such as crime, weather, or traffic—it is cause for conflict within the field (Perreault and Stanfield, 2019). Habitus denotes the "dispositions" of journalists (Barnard, 2018: 2254) that reflect why "a certain story is chosen and written in a certain way" (Benson, 1999: 467). The habitus is an innately responsive structure, designed to allow journalists to respond to the tasks before them (Bourdieu, 1977), and it provides a classificatory system that enables journalists to immediately react relatively unconsciously to many in-the-moment reporting situations (Perreault et al., 2020).

Capital refers to the scarce resources that actors within the field strive to obtain; namely economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital refers very simply to the limited financial resources, which can empower actors with significant access to it—simultaneously facilitating easier access to other forms of capital (Ferrucci and Perreault, 2021). Cultural capital is often represented through investigative reporting, in-depth reporting, thought-provoking commentary and other privileged forms of journalistic content (Benson and

Neveau, 2005). Social capital refers to a person's complete social circle and the involvement of their social groups (Siapera and Spyridou, 2012), and in research this is often assessed through a journalist's social media network. Symbolic capital is reflected by the "recognition, institutionalized or not, that [one] receive(s) from a group" (Bourdieu, 1991: 72) through the "recognition, prestige, and consecration of valued practices" (Maares and Hanusch, 2022: 745). Symbolic capital reflects the means through which dominant, or incumbent actors, legitimize their dominance within the field (Benson and Neveau, 2005). These forms of capital are usually convertible (Driessens, 2013)—journalists with significant cultural capital are often in a privileged position for obtaining economic capital and social capital. Similarly, journalists with significant access to economic capital might find themselves in a privileged position for obtaining cultural capital.

Obtaining a dominant—incumbent—position affords the opportunity to apply "definitional control to apply or remove the label of journalism" (Carlson, 2016: 2), and journalists commonly do so through processes of expansion, expulsion and protection of autonomy. Perreault and Ferrucci (2020) argued that legacy media incumbents integrated digital journalism into their habitus in order to retain their dominant position within the field amidst increasing insurgency. In other words, the boundary intrusion in the field allowed legacy journalism to adapt to the field's digital turn. Yet, the presence of insurgents and shared ways of

doing work would seem to contribute to diminished symbolic capital for lifestyle journalists and less “distinction between the two fields due to increasing hybridity and emergent media logics” (Barnard, 2018: 2265). The concept of the *insurgent* lays bare the tension between heteronomy and autonomy within fields. As Benson (1999) puts it:

> Each field is structured around the opposition between the "heteronomous" pole representing economic…capital (forces external to the field) and the "autonomous" pole representing the specific capital unique to that field (e.g., artistic or…other species of cultural capital). (464)

In other words, fields commonly feel a tension between an emphasis on heteronomy—which would naturally result in a soft boundary and include more discourse with adjacent fields—and an autonomy, which would reflect a strong boundary and less discourse with adjacent fields (Benson, 1999, 2004).

Boundary Work

Fields hold different forms of boundaries. Strong boundaries represent an isolated field in that they “prevent adaptation and mask socially destructive deviance” but also ensure stability (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010: 217). Field agents are strictly managed and boundary challengers—or insurgents—are co-opted. Such boundaries clearly have their place, but in order

for fields to adapt to change, soft boundaries are largely deemed necessary and outsiders often need to be able to affect practices (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010).

As a form of metajournalistic discourse--or journalists reflecting on journalism--boundary work performs three tasks: (1) *expulsion* in which "rivals strive to be branded authoritative in the same terrain"; (2) *expansion* in which the domain of the field is expanded to include new actors or activities; and (3) *protection of autonomy*, in which interpretive walls are built to prevent new entrants from co-opting the dominant actors' authority (Carlson, 2015a: 5). The concept of boundary work helps illustrate why groups such as paparazzi are considered broadly *not* journalistic (Carlson, 2016). In boundary work people are "active interpreters of information," through classifying groups and activities in such ways (Bowker and Leigh Star, 2000: 291).

The lack of understanding regarding how journalists perceive strangers to the field (Hanusch, 2019) has led to a blind spot in our understanding of professionalism and professional identity in journalism in general (Hanitzsch and Vos, 2018), and particularly in relation to boundary work. Addressing this shortcoming is crucial, because professional struggles are also occurring in other areas of journalism, with beats such as economics, lifestyle or sports impacted by new entrants (Maares and Hanusch, 2020). These beats themselves are sometimes seen as

being on the margin of what is considered 'good' or quality journalism, thus necessitating a nuanced analytical approach (Hanusch, 2012).

Lifestyle journalism and Influencers

Lifestyle journalism was neglected as an academic field of inquiry until relatively recently, even though the past decade or so has seen a considerable surge in studies (Hanusch, 2018). Lifestyle journalism research has focused on four key themes: representations and notions of identity, political and critical dimensions, commercial and consumerist aspects, as well as democratizing elements of lifestyle journalism (Hanusch, 2018). These often tend to be evident in lifestyle journalists' role perceptions, with studies demonstrating that practitioners aim to inspire, entertain, provide advice, be service providers, friends, connectors, or even advocate for communities (Hanusch, 2019; Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2013; Hanitzsch and Vos, 2018). Within the journalistic field, lifestyle journalism has often been granted secondary status. In comparison to arenas of journalism with high cultural capital such as political journalism, lifestyle-oriented fields—such as travel (Hanusch, 2010), gaming (Perreault and Vos, 2018), and even some forms of sports reporting (Perreault and Bell, 2020; Rowe, 2005)—are perceived as trivial compared with *hard news* specialties (Fürsich, 2012). This is in part a result of lifestyle

journalism's historic dependence on cultural industries—a weakness in regards to journalism's normative value for independence (Fürsich, 2012).

Lifestyle influencers, broadly, are a "subset of digital content creators defined by their signature online following, distinctive brand persona, and patterned relationships with commercial sponsors" (Duffy, 2020: 1). Such influencing would pose a natural threat to journalists who traditionally worked *with* advertisers in order to obtain capital in that "instead of editorial content being used to attract audiences who are then exposed to advertising, advertising itself begins to attract audiences" (Carlson, 2015b: 861). Such influencers engage in what Duffy (2017) refers to as *aspirational labor*: "independent work that is propelled by the much venerated ideal of getting paid to do what you love" (Duffy, 2017: 4). These influencers also often have a good understanding of journalism (Pedroni, 2015) and, even though they avoid calling themselves journalists, acknowledge that much of what they do is similar to lifestyle journalism (Maares and Hanusch, 2020). In this manner lifestyle journalists, as with influencers, are responsive to the *gig economy*

As Hurley (2019) argues, the *instant* nature of Instagram means that it creates the illusion of immediacy and authenticity, an avenue valuable for advertising. Furthermore, Hurley (2019) notes the platform encourages "offer" images—where "the model is an object of contemplation drawing the viewer into her mental world" (Hurley, 2019: 5). From a field theory perspective, an

influencer's *self-presentation* acts as social capital if it helps them acquire followers and engagement (Savolainen, Uitermark and Boy, 2020) and reflects the influencer's *taste* (Pham, 2015). As Pham (2015) notes, an influencer's tastes locate them in a particular "social context that is itself structured by a system of sensibilities, dispositions and values (what Bourdieu terms 'habitus')" (Pham, 2015: 5). This is enhanced by affordances such as Instagram filters, captions and emojis—common across other platforms—that don't just function aesthetically but also as a sort of social performance (Hurley, 2019) that aims to portray intimate, private moments (Barnwell, Neves and Ravn, 2021). This reflects a sort of advertising *doxa* in that, invisible in the presentation, is the work of influencers "navigating their way through busy retail districts; looking for a parking space; waiting for a dressing room" (Pham, 2015: 168). In short, the knowledge of the use of the form allows influencers to highlight seemingly authentic, intimate moments while hiding the significant labor that led to that point (Pham, 2015; Duffy, 2017). Barnwell, Neves and Ravn (2021) argue that this *intimacy* occurs through the use of language such as nicknames and other intimate knowledge—making the audience feel they are "in the know" (18). It makes sense then journalists have adopted Instagram to an increasing degree and adopted some influencer practices as a way to "make their own professional identity and role promotable and relatable" (Bossio, 2021: 14).

This leads us to pose the following questions:

RQ 1: Where do lifestyle journalists position Instagram influencers in relation to the journalistic field?

RQ 2a: How do lifestyle journalists engage in boundary work in relation to Instagram influencers?

RQ 2b: What are the key boundary markers by which lifestyle journalists distinguish their work from that of Instagram influencers?

Method

In order to address the research questions, we interviewed 63 lifestyle journalists from two countries—32 from Austria and 31 from the United States with the intention to compare both samples. Both Austria and the US share similarities in that they represent western consumer societies that have experienced similar processes in the rise of lifestyles and lifestyle journalism, but they also differ somewhat in terms of their journalistic cultures and media systems (Esser, 1998; Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Both countries also face challenges in regards to digitization and the insurgency of new journalistic actors (Franklin, 2014; Banjac and Hanusch, 2022), and lifestyle journalists could be assumed to face similar experiences from insurgents. Participants in both countries were selected through a purposeful sampling method aimed at including the "widest possible perspectives possible within the range specified by their purpose" (Koerber and

McMichael, 2008: 464). For sampling criteria, we defined lifestyle journalists as conducting reporting on the "expressive values and practices that help create and signify a specific identity within the realm of consumption and everyday life" (Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2013: 947). Such reporting is often reflected in lifestyle topics such as fashion and beauty, health, fitness, food, cuisine and cooking, family, technology, travel and celebrity (Hanusch, 2012)—hence, if reporters worked in these arenas we deemed them eligible for inclusion.

In order to achieve the range encouraged in purposeful sampling, we included journalists who worked for a variety of outlets, including general-interest publications, such as newspapers and magazines, as well as specific lifestyle publications. Participants were recruited via email and interviewed via online video (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams). Interviews were conducted between September 2020 and February 2021.

The interviews probed the journalists' experience with lifestyle journalism using other studies of journalistic use of technology and field maintenance as guides (e.g. Ferrucci and Perreault, 2021; Perreault and Ferrucci, 2020; Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2013). The semi-structured interviews were each about 45 minutes to an hour and a half in length, with slight differentiations in wording and questioning responsive to helping participants answer fully (Price and Smith, 2021). The interviews created a significant corpus of qualitative data, and for this study, we are analyzing data from four areas. In the below sample questions, the term

"lifestyle" was substituted more specifically in questions from the journalists' specific lifestyle niche (e.g. fashion, food, gaming, sport, travel). Throughout, respondents often referred to numerous aspects of field theory in their responses, but below we'll highlight questions aimed to elicit specific response to different aspects of their experience of the field.

(1) In order to understand journalists' perceptions of the field, researchers asked questions about journalists' professional experiences of the field and their current place within the field (Benson, 1999), such as "why did you choose lifestyle journalism?," "How important do you feel XXX reporting in general is to your newsroom's overall coverage?," "How important do you feel lifestyle journalism is to the journalism field at large?" In such questions, and similar questions, "XXX" was replaced with the journalists' specific niche (e.g. beauty, travel).

(2) In order to understand journalists' habitus, researchers asked questions related to journalists' habits and their daily tasks (Benson, 1999), such as "How do you identify the topics and sources, you'll use to put a story together?"—in order to assess journalist's habitus.

(3) In order to understand journalistic doxa (Hanitzsch, 2013; Perreault and Stanfield, 2018), journalists were asked how they perceive Instagram influencers' work relative to their own in order to understand the values employed in differentiating the fields; such questions included: "Where are the differences in the work of lifestyle journalists and bloggers and

influencers?," and "How has the emergence of these bloggers and influencers affected lifestyle journalism in general?"

(4) In order to understand journalistic capital (Hanitzsch, 2013; Perreault and Stanfield, 2018), journalists were asked about their professional goals within the field. Such questions included "What is your professional goal through your work?" "What are you trying to achieve with your work?" and "How important is it that your work be entertaining to the audience?"

This structure mirrors the questionnaire structure from Perreault and Stanfield (2018) but substitutes doxa questions regarding role perceptions for questions that urged participants to consider the similarities and differences to bloggers and influencers in that this represents a natural way similar issue of doxa would emerge. Normative roles in the past have been considered to reflect issues of both doxa and capital in that they tend to reflect "what journalists should do" as well as how "journalists indicate what they want to do in their work" (Vos and Wolfgang, 2016: 2). Such roles can certainly be operated unconsciously (Hanitzsch, 2007) and on the level of presupposition as noted by Bourdieu (1987).

All of the 63 participants were located in the United States or Austria. The sample skewed female (n=43), which is in keeping with a largely female presence in lifestyle journalism (Hanusch, 2019). The sample included journalists who covered travel (n=21), culture & entertainment (n=14), fashion/beauty (n=13), food (n=8), personal wellness (n=5) and sports

(n=2). Interviews were conducted by trained research students in English in the US and German in Austria and lasted until the researchers felt they reached saturation of ideas. Researchers then transcribed the interviews for textual analysis. One member of the research team is a native English-only speaker, and another member is a native English and German speaker. German interviews were translated into English via a mixture of a three-step method of (1) initial online transcription via Google Translate and DeepL Translate, (2) trouble areas in translation were spotted via a close reading by a bi-lingual research assistant and retranslated, and (3) all quotes used were checked for additionally accuracy against original transcriptions by a bi-lingual member of the research team. This was done so that the data could be jointly analyzed amongst research team members.

We employed the constant comparative approach in order to answer the research questions (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). Fram (2013) argues that while the constant comparative method may commonly be associated with grounded theory, it is also well suited for both emic coding, driven by themes that emerge from the data analysis, as well as etic coding, driven by theory and literature. During this process, the research team read through the data as a corpus considering responses that alluded to the journalistic field, Instagram, and Instagram influencers. For example, authors examined the data considering the three tasks of boundary work—*expulsion, expansion,* and *protection of autonomy*—particularly in regards to how they

addressed questions of how journalists perceived the work of influencers; and considered concepts of *doxa*, *habitus*, and *capital* in regards to journalistic motivations and their place in the field.

Themes that emerged from the responses were then compared by the research team in order to establish resonance and find associations, differences and similarities among them. An initial reading of the data was conducted with the assumption of the US and Austrian journalists as two separate datasets. However, the research team found that the similarities that emerged contextually from being situated in "western consumer societies" made such differentiation insensible for a study regarding lifestyle journalism (Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2013: 948). This was particularly true given that respondents reflected on the use of Instagram and the emergence of influencers in a relatively consistent manner across countries.

The analysis reflects Yin's (2011) methodological structure aiming to offer insight into "existing or emerging concepts that may help explain human behaviour" (8) through representing the "perspectives of the participants in the study" (7). This was done through three steps. In the first step, all transcripts were given a close read in order to develop discursive themes. In the second step, after themes were identified, the authors once again approached data and notes, and drew out quotes deemed to best represent the discursive themes that emerged (Emerson et al., 2011; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2008). In the third step, interpretation built on

the selected quotes was developed in order to provide meaning to the data beyond summarizing. This interpretation acted as the reasoning behind the descriptive statements.

All participants were granted anonymity in part because this study is most interested in understanding perspectives on lifestyle journalism as a field. With that in mind, respondents are quoted without identification, but given additional context, such as their medium or country of reporting, where it may help with interpretation while not jeopardizing participant anonymity. This study was conducted in accordance with the [REDACTED FOR BLIND REVIEW] Review Board (approval #19-0041). Participants in Austria and the US were verbally consented for participation--and informed their participation was voluntary--and all participants were deidentified.

Findings

In regards to RQ1, our findings indicate that lifestyle journalists largely conceptualized Instagram influencers as peripheral actors who had their foot in another field but perhaps were conducting the sort of work that nevertheless necessitated some operation within the journalistic field (Belair-Gagnon and Holton, 2018). In field theory parlance, the journalists saw similarities in the *habitus* of influencers while seeing their *doxa* as essentially different and perhaps even incompatible.

If Instagram influencers have *one foot in* journalism, this begs the question of where the other foot stands. Participants largely regarded this other footing as being in advertising. As one participant put it: “In the end they are mainly advertising media for these brands”; even as she acknowledged that “personally, I think that brands and companies have misunderstood what...influencers actually do.” Similarly, another participant noted: “It (Instagram) is still an advertising medium.” Participants tended to be most clearly able to delineate the placement of influencers at the periphery as a result of this shared footing, in that “journalists are not advertising media,” but are rather reporters--a distinction that, lifestyle journalists believed, would naturally lead to more social capital on the part of journalists. More specifically, journalists denoted a difference in motives between journalism and influencers related to a difference in *doxa*. Simply put, the role of an Instagram influencer was to encourage purchasing and consumption, in that influencers were “going to get people to buy their products because they’re also role models.”

Journalists however did indicate that the work of influencers seemed similar to their own--similar enough that it warranted their conceptualization of them operating within the journalistic field. Journalists noted that “there are certainly influencers who, for example, produce similar content as we do with our articles” and “they also work journalistically and try to pass on information to their followers.” The use of the modifier *journalistically* in the prior

quote reflects a shared process, and that process was more important to many respondents than the person's title or position. One participant argued that "it makes no difference" if you're an influencer or journalist--both conduct reporting--but that "what an influencer posts is also a kind of reporting and it can be good or bad, or objective or not objective".

Journalists acknowledged an anticipated tension between their work and influencers but were introspective about it: arguing that their own objections to influencers' work in the field could simply be chalked up to concern for their own paycheck. And perhaps, journalists argued, the competition was a good thing in that it "means we have to do our job well, otherwise we will be replaced." And while journalists did not necessarily think their jobs were in jeopardy, they certainly saw an implication on funding in their niche--particularly for travel journalism. As one travel journalist put it: "Travel journalists are spoiled in the sense of support through research trips. There used to be the golden age and some travel journalists did not have a very positive development" with the influx of Instagram influencers. Certainly, there is only so much money available to the field--one participant noted that the arrival of influencers means that lifestyle journalists may have less access to funds. As one respondent put it: "The budget cake doesn't get any bigger, it just gets distributed differently."

Hence, this reflects that journalists perceive what some prior research has argued: that they perceive Instagram influencers as being similar, even if they operate with different

priorities--a reality that has implications for lifestyle journalists' access to economic capital (Maares and Hanusch, 2020). Journalists' definitional control over influencer work reflects journalists symbolic capital; control reflected in the perceived more-dominant placement within the field.

In regards to RQ 2a, our participants engaged in boundary work primarily through a *protection of autonomy*, which allowed influencers access to the field while nevertheless preserving lifestyle journalists' domination of the niche. This was done primarily discursively through articulating an attachment to long-held values and norms of traditional journalism, values and norms that lifestyle journalists would naturally find difficult to discursively connect to.

In order to delineate the boundary between their work and that of influencers, journalists drew on fairly standard normative journalistic terminology that emphasized neutrality and independence--terminology again difficult to apply in lifestyle journalism given its close connection to commercial interests, which has been the focus of much criticism of the field (Hanusch, 2019). For example, one participant argued that in his niche--gaming journalism--influencers were used as a part of the strategy of developers to combat potentially negative reviews of games. According to the participant, the influencer "is just so entertaining you can't

look away" and hence, can be used in order to flood the audience with positive information as a way of drowning out the negative.

Participants argued that "as a journalist you must never switch off your brain...you still have to remain critical and you have to question." This participant went on to say that journalists need to "apply the principle of good research, of looking, of questioning." By contrast, with influencers, participants argued, "a lot is driven by money, that they...hype something from which they get paid." Similarly, participants noted with dismay that influencers were "allowed to advertise brands" in their work.

One participant noted that influencers' differing priorities allowed them to be "funny and casual"--a tone that needed to be avoided by journalists. But why should a "funny and casual" tone be avoided in, of all places, lifestyle journalism where lightheartedness is most celebrated? We would argue that such statements as offered here by our participant may perhaps be a bit disingenuous, but that it was stated as a part of the boundary work journalists were engaging in.

In order to protect this autonomy from traditional journalism conventions and yet from the perceived tighter pressure of market interests in Instagram influencing, participants noted that journalists should be wary of amplifying influencers too much through either collaboration or sourcing: "You can't ignore them, and you have to think about how much stage you give them." Noteworthy in the *protection of autonomy* is that it acknowledges that influencers are

journalistic in some sense. This also makes sense given the convertibility of capital—ceding economic capital to influencers would seem to have a debilitating effect on lifestyle journalists, given that journalists would naturally have less ability to convert that capital into symbolic or social capital.

Finally, in regards to RQ 2b, our findings point to the centrality of concepts like proximity to the audience and the notion of professionalism.

The respondents demarcated their professional boundary from influencers with respect to the audience they attracted. Lifestyle journalists envisioned themselves as having a large, general audience that was kept at a distance; the influencer by contrast was imagined as having a smaller, niche audience. As one participant put it: “Influencers serve a much younger target group that maybe at times be no longer willing to consume classic media.” Lifestyle journalists, on the other hand, were occasionally able to reach this audience, but had a larger overall audience to serve. This perception of course misses the nuance that many influencers make very little money and the elite influencers they envisioned were in fact more likely to have a large, general audience (Pham, 2015; Duffy, 2017).

This imagined audience shaped the manner with which respondents conceptualized the focus of influencers, which was perceived as “very personal.” Another participant noted that their work was “very individual and it’s very subjective...not that it is not well-researched and

very informative." Others described their work in terms of "closeness," which means the audience is liable to "think an influencer is cool...and that's why you only buy the products he or she recommends and go to where he or she is." Participants argued that people naturally empathize with influencers, given their close relationship. Journalists admired this in influencers, even as they assumed their occupational calling required something different. One participant noted "we're not actually the ones who personalize" because someone should be able to read their work without it mattering "whether you like the author or not."

Journalists often argued that there was no professional competition with Instagram influencers, because journalists' work reflects a degree of *professionalism* not found among influencers. Given the journalists' perception of influencers as advertisers, it would make sense that they would similarly perceive a lack of journalistic professionalism (Otterman, 2007). As one participant said: "They make grammatical mistakes, they repeat words--so it's not a competition for me." He added that for an influencer to be competing, they would have to be offering something to the audience that was of "equal value." Our participants in particular focused on the visuality necessary for Instagram. Hence, they described influencers as "very visually oriented" and reflected on that as being relatively unprofessional in practice:

> They have to be in the photos themselves: the pose should then be right, the lighting should be right, somehow the outfit has to be changed five times and

> then as a classic journalist you stand next to yourself and think: "Oh God! … I would have liked to do an interview with the hotel manager and it would actually be interesting to know what else is going on outside of this beach."

Worth noting here was the journalist's phrase of operating as a *classic journalist*—the term is employed to discursively distance the influencer and reflect that the journalist's values (as through the *doxa*) differ. From the journalist's perception then, it wasn't *what* the influencer did, but rather *how* they did it that would differentiate the two. This perspective is most acute for specialties that reflected more visuality in their reporting (food, travel, fashion/beauty) but the response nevertheless reflected a consensus within the sample (Driessens, 2013). Participants seemed to note a sort of buy-in to the *aspirational labor* conducted by influencers—perceiving them as achieving the aspiration of "getting paid to do what you love" (Duffy, 2017: 4). In other words, participants said, lifestyle journalism requires a level of professionalism and attention to the *needs* of the audience, as opposed to the *wants*. This is particularly interesting given that the traditional separation between lifestyle and political journalism has often been that the former gives the audience what it wants, while the latter gives it what it needs -- also known as the consumer vs. citizen orientation (Hanitzsch, 2007). Another participant noted that it must be refreshing for an influencer to post images without being drawn into political debate. In short, journalists were able to argue that there was no professional competition, but only through

comparison to elite influencers. But what they ignored more broadly was the trend in journalism and advertising toward leverage of underpaid or unpaid labor (Duffy, 2017, 2020; Fast, Örnebring and Karlsson, 2016).

Simply put, journalists conducted boundary work through aiming to protect their autonomy. They used language that highlighted their own independence from their audiences as well as their advertisers, while arguing that this independence did not exist among influencers. They also discursively highlighted their own professionalism in contrast to the implications levelled at influencers, who are were described in a manner that diminished the light-hearted, performative aspects of influencing (e.g. through references to playing dress up, or posting pictures of animals).

Discussion

Chiara Ferragni's Instagram never overtly promotes itself as a work of journalism. Ferragni never refers to her work using journalistic terminology--although others do--and indeed presents no explicit aspirations toward journalism. Nevertheless, her Instagram account presents the advice-granting, guidance-oriented storytelling that have long been hallmarks of lifestyle journalism. Her images of fashion, food and travel are not dissimilar to those that might have accompanied a work of lifestyle journalism. In short, while Ferragni may have little desire to be

a part of the journalistic field, and indeed prior research argues just this (Maares and Hanusch, 2020; Maares et al., 2021), the work she does would naturally seem to impose on that of lifestyle journalists.

Ferragni is an admittedly an exceptional case in influencing—many influencers never achieve a living wage, much less her level of public visibility (Duffy, 2017, 2020). However, this elite case highlights the potential threat or competition lifestyle journalists perceive. Lifestyle journalists certainly perceive Ferragni and influencers like her to "commodify the everyday by broadcasting their lifestyle in seemingly intimate ways to a public who validate their work with likes and engagement" (Maares and Hanusch, 2020: 266)—an activity with meaningful overlaps with the work of lifestyle journalists. This study did not look at influencers directly and can only point to research that indicates this threat is largely confined to elite influencers (Duffy, 2017, 2020; Pham, 2015). But from the perspective of field theory, a threat need only be perceived in order for a field to act responsively (Duffy, 2013).

In response to our first research question, we found that journalists conceptualized Instagram influencers as operating on the periphery of the field, applying a similar *habitus* to that of journalists while operating from a different *doxa*. In short, while not *rooted* within the field, they nevertheless were seen by lifestyle journalists as operating within it—albeit at the periphery. Influencers were perceived as a sort of competition, even if not professional

competition. In regards to RQ 2a, lifestyle journalists engaged in boundary work primarily through a *protection of autonomy*. This grants influencers access to the field, while still reifying journalists' dominance within the lifestyle domain. The manner with which this was done, however, relied on discursive attachment to values and norms of hard news journalism, to which lifestyle journalists have historically struggled to attach themselves. Finally, in RQ 2b, lifestyle journalists conducted this work through the identification of particular boundary markers--in this case a perceived too close-relationship with the audience and a lack of professionalism.

These latter findings provide important food for thought in relation to our understanding and theorization of boundary work, as well as of lifestyle journalism's location within the journalistic field. Traditionally considered as being on the margins of journalism because of their proximity to commercial interests (Maares and Hanusch, 2020), lifestyle journalists have often been denigrated for not being 'real' journalists. Yet, when confronted with an insurgent such as lifestyle influencers, these marginalized journalists draw on core tenets of journalism to set themselves apart, even though they have traditionally been considered as failing to meet these core principles themselves (Perreault and Vos, 2018). While certainly lifestyle journalists would commonly claim status within the field, discussion of influencers encourages them to emphasize this connection. Lifestyle journalists' independence from commercial pressures has often been questioned by others and even by lifestyle journalists themselves as they have sought

to navigate the precarity of the journalistic field (Hanusch et al., 2017). Yet, in distinguishing themselves from other insurgents, they call on their perceived stronger autonomy to exclude influencers from the field as well . Their discursive strategies are perhaps not so much about excluding others, but establishing their own belonging to a journalistic core from which they themselves have been excluded in the past. In an optimistic perspective, the intrusion from influencers may therefore force lifestyle journalists to more strongly problematize, for example, commercial influences.

Through the lens of field theory, lifestyle journalists' differentiated influencers in terms of *doxa*. One particular lifestyle journalist reflected the more implicit responses from most respondents in reflecting on influencers as being "unprofessional." But what does it mean to be professional? It would naturally assume a shared assumption and understanding of the game (Benson and Neveau, 2005). Hence, it would make sense that lifestyle journalists would not perceive influencers to be playing the same game, given that they would not have necessarily received the same socialization into the roles and goals of the field. (Benson and Neveau, 2005; Hanizsch, 2007; Vos and Wolfgang, 2016).

While journalists certainly conducted classic boundary work in the order of *protection of autonomy* (Carlson, 2015a), this was not done to minimize the work of influencers. Far from it. In fact, many journalists perceived influencers as working with them collaboratively in a way

similar to how advertisers and journalists worked to produce the news in the past. Furthermore, it is worth noting that boundary work in the order of protection of autonomy can only be employed if relevant similarities are seen among the actors. Certainly, relative to actor *habitus,* the relation to the audience, and emphasis on visuality reflect an overlap between lifestyle journalism and influencing (Barnard, 2018; Duffy, 2017; Perreault and Stanfield, 2018; Pham, 2015). It is also worth noting that it seems like the social/economic inequities of the field pose meaningful similarities among agents: the sort of *aspirational labor* undertaken by influencers (Duffy, 2017) corresponds in some ways with the *prospector* and *apprentice* forms of free labor undertaken by journalists, in which the actors "work for no or little pay in exchange for potential future returns" (Fast, Örnebring and Karlsson, 2016: 970).

The boundary work conducted by lifestyle journalists served primarily to mitigate the boundary work that had been conducted on them in the past--in other words, lifestyle journalists see the insurgency of influencers as a way to more strongly attach themselves to the *doxa* and *habitus* of traditional journalism (Belair-Gagnon and Holton, 2018; Perreault and Vos, 2018, 2020). By viewing influencers as advertisers however, they simultaneously reveal their perception of the strong hold influencers have over the economic capital of the space (Ferrucci and Perreault, 2021). And even as journalists have troubled over their relationship with advertisers in the past, it would make sense that lifestyle journalists would trouble their

relationship *even more* given that the two are drawing funding from the same well—the same entities that with interest in advertising in lifestyle journalism outlets would have interest in sponsoring for Instagram influencers (Maares and Hanusch, 2020). Journalists only reflected on the implications of the lost economic capital through reflecting their own symbolic capital—capital that, with less economic capital, could weaken their position within the field.

A final contribution of this research is in the consideration of the dual theories of field and boundary as perspectives that work together to shed light on how actors within a field make sense of a perceived boundary intrusion. Certainly, the fact these theories are commonly used together provides evidence of a sort of internal consistency (Cairney, 2013), but how so? RQ 1 dealt with the position of actors (a topic of field theory) while RQ 2a-b dealt with the boundaries of the actors (a topic of boundary work). As we see in this study, the results are correspondent, distinct, yet interdependent:

- The boundaries drawn reflect the placement of actors (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010)—the position determined by professionalism and intimacy with the audience.
- The position of the actors support particular group boundaries (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010)—the boundaries reflecting field *doxa* (advertising and journalism).

Yet the boundary work employed on field insurgents was not *expulsion* but *protection of autonomy*—this denotes that while boundaries were drawn, lifestyle journalism is a field with a soft boundary. Influencers were neither deemed to be insiders or outsiders (Carlson, 2015a). This study evidences two reasons why this would be the case. First, lifestyle journalists recognized influencers as intruding on the field but not challenging journalists (e.g. lifestyle journalists didn't perceive influencers to be attempting to diminish their social or cultural capital—only to get at a slice **of the** economic capital). Second, lifestyle journalism would need to rely on a soft boundary in that while "strong boundaries provide stability for…fields, they also prevent adaptation" (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010: 217). Adaptation would be of natural interest to lifestyle journalists given the digital turn of the field (Hermida and Young, 2019; Perreault and Ferrucci, 2020). Hence, this soft boundary would ensure the ability of lifestyle journalism to navigate a digital turn that has had debilitating effects in many arenas of the field (Hermida and Young, 2019) but it also reflects a level of instability within lifestyle journalism. This instability of course is certainly reflected in the state of the field, which relies on significant unpaid/underpaid labor and "forces many lifestyle journalists to also work in or to move across to PR" (Hanusch et al., 2017: 155).

From this perspective *insurgency* is the mark of an heteronomous field (Benson, 1999)—soft boundaries ensuring that the field is discursive with others in order to adapt to changing

social, cultural and technological norms. Journalists perceive an intrusion in the field by influencers. While this intrusion comes with the tradeoff of a perceived threat to economic capital, our participants indicated that it was a tradeoff to which they were amenable, given that it also reflects lifestyle journalists' ability to move into other fields (Hanusch et al., 2017).

Obviously, this study suffers from some limitations. Based on journalists' narratives, we need to take their accounts at face value, yet, as we know, what journalists say they do is not always what they actually do. Furthermore, we know that in the process of qualitative analysis, the researchers are an essential research tool and hence, while the authors were intentional in selecting quotes and themes reflective of the discourse, it may be that different scholars may have emerged from the data with different findings. At the same time, we were mostly interested here in the discursive boundary-making, i.e. how journalists make sense of influencers as a form of competition. To examine how lifestyle journalists deal with influencers in their daily lives, observational studies might reveal more about the extent to which these new forms of journalism may be shaping traditional lifestyle journalism in turn. Similarly, it is worth noting that both countries selected are western and from the global North—it may be that a different national sample may have reflected a different perspective on insurgency in lifestyle journalism. Finally, it is worth noting that both lifestyle journalism and influencing are extremely heterogenous

fields. While our sample reflected on these issues in a unified manner, it may be that different specialties within lifestyle journalism may have resulted in different findings.

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