

Anchored in capital: A Bourdieusian analysis of journalistic identity and resilience in the Portuguese field

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Abstract

This repeated cross-sectional study (2013–2023) examines the resilience of professional values in Portuguese journalism amid economic precarity and digital disruption. Integrating Bourdieu's field theory with Raemy's multi-level identity model, we show how journalists reinforce symbolic capital—intensifying watchdog roles and ethical norms—to preserve field autonomy. Using data from two waves of the Worlds of Journalism Study-Portugal, we analyze how this defensive consolidation operates through capital conversion across macro, meso, and micro levels. The findings reframe value stability not as inertia but as active identity work, offering insights into how peripheral media systems sustain professional coherence under duress.

Keywords

journalism studies, Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, Patric Raemy's multi-level model of professional identity, worlds of journalism study—Portugal, repeated cross-sectional research

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Introduction

Amid profound global transformations in journalism, the Portuguese case presents a compelling theoretical puzzle. On one hand, Portugal has weathered a confluence of crises that would typically foster professional fragmentation: severe austerity following the 2011 Troika bailout, a dramatically contracted media market, persistent political instability marked by frequent elections, and relentless pressure to adapt to digital norms (Fidalgo, 2021; Novais, 2024). The material conditions for journalism have deteriorated sharply, with waves of layoffs, the proliferation of precarious contracts, and intensified commercial pressures (Araújo, 2026; García-Avilés et al., 2023; Novais, 2026; Quintanilha, 2023; Varela et al., 2023).

This study investigates why Portuguese journalism's professional values have intensified despite severe systemic deterioration between 2011 and 2023. To move beyond a descriptive account of this 'homogeneity across time'—which captures the what of value stability—the article integrates Bourdieu, who explains the strategic logic of capital and field struggle, with Raemy, who provides a multi-level heuristic to trace how that logic is enacted across macro, meso, and micro levels, thereby testing the proposition that the intensification of watchdog and ethical norms reflects not passive cultural inertia but an active strategy of field defense. Specifically, the analysis examines how journalists, as strategic agents, engage in "capital conversion," deliberately amplifying symbolic capital to safeguard field autonomy amid the erosion of economic capital. By situating the Portuguese case within a broader comparative context, the study contributes a nuanced understanding of the defensive identity strategies journalistic fields deploy to negotiate global pressures.

The article is structured as follows. First, we elaborate our integrated theoretical framework, combining Bourdieu's macro-sociology of field struggle and capital conversion with Raemy's model of identity formation across macro-discursive, meso-social, and micro-psychological levels. Second, we detail our repeated cross-sectional methodology, based on two waves of the Portuguese chapter of the Worlds of Journalism Study. Third, we present a comprehensive analysis of the findings, reinterpreting statistical trends through a Bourdieusian lens to demonstrate how the journalistic field actively fortifies its symbolic defenses. Finally, we discuss the implications of this anchoring strategy, reflecting on its limitations and the urgent need to reinforce journalism's social and psychological foundations alongside its economic base. The Portuguese case offers a compelling illustration of journalistic resilience—but a resilience under siege, whose long-term sustainability remains uncertain.

Theoretical framework: Identity as capital in a contested field

The professional identity of journalists has long been examined through occupational ideology and newsroom culture (Benson, 2006; Hanitzsch and Vos, 2018). Yet this study investigates a counterintuitive dynamic: the intensification of those beliefs precisely as the material foundations of the Portuguese journalistic field erode. Explaining this requires confronting a tension in the sociological literature on professions. Pierre Bourdieu explains why actors defend field boundaries through capital and struggle; Patric Raemy

specifies how such defenses operate across levels of social organization. These approaches are incomplete without each other: Bourdieu collapses levels into undifferentiated struggle, while Raemy describes levels without explaining action. Productive synthesis requires recognizing what each cannot do and forcing them into critical relationship.

Bourdieu's contribution and its blind spot

Pierre Bourdieu's field theory provides an irreplaceable explanatory logic for understanding journalistic behavior under duress (Benson, 2006; Bourdieu, 1993, 1998, 2005). Bourdieu conceptualizes journalism as a contested field positioned between cultural legitimacy and commercial pressure. Within this field, agents compete over three fundamental forms of capital: economic capital (material resources, job security), cultural capital (education, credentials), and symbolic capital (prestige, professional recognition). These capitals are not merely resources but weapons in the struggle for field autonomy—the capacity of journalism to operate according to its own internal logic rather than external commercial or political dictates. This struggle is mediated by habitus—the embodied dispositions that shape agents' perceptions and practices—which Bourdieu (1990) conceptualizes as the generative principle of structured, yet improvisational, action within the field.

Capital conversion is the strategic process by which agents transform one form of capital into another to defend their position (Bourdieu, 1986). When economic capital erodes, actors invest in cultural or symbolic capital. Bourdieusian journalism research has operationalized capital variously: Hellmueller et al. (2013) treat role performance as capital accumulation; Hanitzsch and Vos (2017) as institutional authority claims; Vos and Thomas (2018) as boundary defense. More recently, Maares (2026) showed that atypically employed journalists across five European countries maintained professional role perceptions despite economic precarity. Our operationalization builds on this tradition while extending it across two waves.

This conversion logic explains why Portuguese journalists might respond to waves of layoffs and proliferating precarious contracts by amplifying their attachment to watchdog norms and ethical codes. Symbolic capital becomes a defensive resource when material resources are depleted.

Yet Bourdieu's framework harbors a significant blind spot for empirical research. It excels at articulating abstract field-level logics but systematically underspecifies the levels across which capital conversion operates. Bourdieu notoriously resists distinguishing between, for example, field-wide discursive shifts, organizational routines, and individual psychological attachments. His analytic gaze tends to collapse these distinctions into the unitary logic of field struggle. This is not a flaw for all research questions, but it becomes a limitation when one wishes to trace how a macro-level process like economic precarity translates into micro-level outcomes like intensified role perceptions. Without a heuristic for distinguishing levels, the researcher risks either over-abstract description or arbitrary empirical mapping.

Raemy's alternative and its parallel limitation

Patric Raemy's (2021) multi-level model of professional identity formation addresses precisely what Bourdieu neglects. Raemy distinguishes how identity processes operate across interconnected social strata: field-wide discourses and institutional norms circulate at the broadest level; organizational practices, newsroom routines, and professional peer dynamics mediate at an intermediate level; individual psychological attachment and identity work operate at the most granular level. Raemy insists empirical claims about professional identity must specify where mechanisms operate and how levels interact.

This insistence is valuable for the present study. It forces explicit attention to whether capital conversion operates primarily through field-wide discourse (e.g., the legitimization of journalism education), through organizational dynamics (e.g., socialization of precarious workers), or through individual psychology (e.g., internalization of values despite material insecurity). Raemy thus provides a disciplined empirical heuristic that Bourdieu's framework, left to itself, lacks.

But Raemy's model lacks an explanatory engine. It offers levels without explaining why actors invest in identity work as a strategic response to precarity—it lacks Bourdieu's capital and conversion. Without these, Raemy's levels risk becoming a descriptive checklist—an answer to the question where something happens that cannot answer the question why it happens at all. A researcher armed only with Raemy could catalogue that journalists across different levels express similar values, but could not explain why economic duress would intensify rather than erode those values.

A critical synthesis: Complementary blind spots

The integration is a critical synthesis: Bourdieu supplies the explanatory logic (capital and conversion) but cannot distinguish levels; Raemy supplies the heuristic for levels but cannot explain action. Each framework's weakness is the other's strength.

This synthesis yields specific analytical gains. First, it allows the study to ask whether capital conversion operates differently across levels. Do compositional variables (education, contract type, gender, age) moderate temporal change in role perceptions and ethical norms? That is, does the observed value intensification differ systematically by journalists' position in the field? Second, the synthesis makes the integration testable: if Bourdieu alone sufficed, distinguishing levels would be unnecessary; if Raemy alone sufficed, explaining commitment intensification would be impossible. Both frameworks fail alone – justifying their integration.

Table 1 operationalizes this critical synthesis. The left column identifies the Bourdieusian concept that answers why journalists act strategically. The right column identifies the Raemy level at which that strategic action is empirically observable. The middle column shows the specific indicator from the Worlds of Journalism Study-Portugal. The table is not a decorative summary but an analytic instrument: it forces the researcher to specify, for each Bourdieusian mechanism, the level at which it is expected to appear. This is precisely what neither framework alone would require.

The integrated framework yields the following research question: To what extent do journalistic role perceptions and ethical norms change between 2013 and 2023, and are

Table 1. Operationalizing a critical synthesis: Bourdieusian mechanisms across Raemy’s levels.

Bourdiesian concept (The “why” of struggle)	Empirical indicator (WJS-Portugal)	Raemy’s level (The “how” of enactment)
Capital conversion: Economic insecurity → investment in symbolic capital	Intensification of watchdog role perceptions and ethical norms despite material precarity	Macro: Field-wide discourse on journalistic autonomy
Field autonomy as a stake of struggle	Homogenization of role perceptions across previously divided journalists	Meso: Professional education as a unifying mechanism and shared occupational discourse

these changes moderated by journalists’ economic position (contract type) and cultural capital (education)?

Empirical implications of the critical synthesis

The framework generates testable expectations at different levels of analysis. At the level of field-wide dynamics, capital conversion predicts that symbolic capital—operationalized as role perceptions and ethical norms—should intensify over time as economic capital erodes. This intensification should persist even after accounting for changes in the demographic composition of the workforce. If value change is merely an artifact of who enters or leaves the field, then controlling for compositional variables (gender, age, education, contract type) would eliminate the temporal effect. The framework instead predicts a robust main effect of time.

At the level of cultural capital, the framework predicts that education will not function as an individual-level differentiator of value change. If journalism education operates as a field-wide investment in cultural capital rather than a mechanism of individual socialization, then journalists with different educational backgrounds should not show systematically different trajectories over time. Significant interactions between education and time would challenge this interpretation, suggesting instead that education produces divergent professional commitments.

At the level of economic capital, the framework predicts that precarious and secure workers should show broadly similar patterns of value intensification. If capital conversion operates as a collective field strategy rather than an individual-level response to material position, then contract type should not systematically moderate attachment to symbolic capital. Significant interactions between contract type and time would indicate that material conditions directly shape value commitments, which would favor an alternative explanation.

These expectations are not post hoc interpretations. They were specified before analysis and are tested in the empirical sections that follow. If compositional controls eliminate temporal effects, education moderates change, or contract type differentiates trajectories, the synthesis would be disconfirmed.

Methodology

This study employs a diachronic comparative design, drawing on two waves of data from the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS): 2013–2014 and 2023. This approach, grounded in comparative historical analysis (Pierson, 2004), enables the examination of institutional change and resilience over time, tracing how journalistic norms are repurposed amid systemic pressures.

The first wave (2013–2014) used a stratified random sample of 407 journalists, representing about 7% of the national journalistic population, with a 48% response rate. The 2023 wave used a stratified sample of 366 journalists from a population of 5,425, achieving a 53% response rate (Lauerer et al., 2025). Data were collected via multiple modes (phone, face-to-face, online) following WJS protocols. Eligible respondents were professional journalists producing news for recognized Portuguese outlets across print, broadcast, online-native, and agencies, using the standardized WJS questionnaire translated into European Portuguese.

Data analysis proceeded in four integrated stages aligned with the theoretical framework. First, we documented structural transformation through quantitative comparison of demographic and occupational variables (gender, age, education, contract type) using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations.

Second, we analyzed the evolution of professional role conceptions over time—such as the detached observer and monitor of power—and ethical orientations using Likert-scale variables. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were calculated for each wave, with t-tests used to assess the statistical significance of changes over time. Full ordinal logistic regression results are reported in [Appendix A](#); for four core variables, significance patterns matched OLS, while two secondary variables showed divergent results that do not affect core conclusions. Linear results are reported for comparability with WJS conventions and ease of coefficient interpretation. Following Hanitzsch et al. (2019), composite role scales were constructed (monitorial, accommodative, interventionist, collaborative). Regressions using these composites produced identical significance patterns; item-level results are reported for transparency.

Third, economic capital was measured by contract type (permanent vs precarious)—income was unavailable. Following established scholarship on atypical journalistic employment (Maares, 2026), permanent journalists hold open-ended contracts with regular salary and labor protections, while precarious encompasses fixed-term contracts, freelancers, and atypical workers lacking institutional protections. Cultural capital was journalism education, institutionalized credentials signalling legitimate membership. Symbolic capital was importance ratings of watchdog and public service roles. Ethical norms are treated as boundary marking practices that indicate field level legitimacy struggles but are not themselves symbolic capital. This distinction follows Bourdieu (1991), who separates capital (resources) from practices (strategies for accumulating capital). When journalists endorse these roles and norms more strongly under economic duress, they are claiming legitimate professional practice – which is symbolic capital in action. Ethical orientations are operationalized as boundary marking practices – field tactics that journalists deploy in the struggle to accumulate symbolic capital. They are not themselves symbolic capital; rather, changes in ethical justifications signal shifts

in the field’s internal legitimacy criteria. This follows Hanitzsch and Vos’s (2017) conceptualization of ethical orientations as institutional knowledge, which functions as a form of cultural capital within the journalistic field.

Fourth, Raemy’s multi-level model was employed to explain the operationalization of this strategic anchoring. The macro-discursive reinforcement of core roles was conceptually linked to meso-social processes (informal peer socialization, the near-universalization of journalism education as a field-level discourse) and micro-psychological experiences (captured via well-being indicators in the 2023 wave).

The analysis proceeds in four steps: hierarchical regressions (wave → + contract/education → + gender/age); two-factor ANOVAs (Education × Wave); two-factor ANOVAs (Contract × Wave); and linear regressions with interaction terms (Wave × Contract, Wave × Education). Missing data were handled using listwise deletion, as the proportion of missing responses was below 5% for all key variables.

Analysis and findings

The Portuguese journalistic field between 2013 and 2023 saw dramatic changes in its composition (Table 2).

Most notably, the proportion of journalists holding formal journalism education credentials increased from 23.6% to 99.2% over the decade. This near-universalization of cultural capital provides a demanding context for testing the integrated framework.

If the critical synthesis is correct, three patterns should emerge. First, symbolic capital—operationalized as role perceptions and ethical norms—should intensify significantly between 2013 and 2023, with this effect persisting after controlling for compositional variables (gender, age, education, contract type). Second, Education × Wave interactions should be weak or inconsistent across most dimensions, indicating that education does not function as an individual-level differentiator. Third, Contract × Wave interactions should be limited to specific dimensions rather than indicating a general divergence between secure and precarious workers. The analysis below tests each of these expectations using two-factor ANOVA, hierarchical linear regression, and capital conversion models.

Table 2. Sociodemographic composition of the Portuguese journalistic field, 2013 and 2023.

Variable	2013 (n = 407)	2023 (n = 366)
Male	54.3%	48.6%
Female	45.7%	51.4%
Mean age (SD)	38.2 (11.4)	41.7 (12.1)
Journalism/Comm Degree	23.6%	99.2%
Permanent contract	61.2%	42.6%
Precarious contract	38.8%	57.4%
Multiple beats	68.5%	79.5%

Source: WJS3 Portugal dataset.

The findings are organized around these three questions. First, did symbolic capital actually intensify, or does the appearance of change reflect shifts in who became a journalist? Second, does the dramatic expansion of journalism education explain these changes at the individual level? Third, does contract type systematically differentiate journalists' value commitments?

To structure the analysis, we draw on [Raemy's \(2021\)](#) multi-level heuristic, distinguishing macro-discursive (field-wide norms), meso-social (organizational/professional socialization), and micro-psychological (individual attachment) levels. The analysis tests whether observed changes operate primarily at the macro, meso, or micro level.

Macro-discursive level: Field-wide value intensification

[Table 3](#) presents hierarchical regressions testing whether value intensification survives compositional controls. Model 1 includes only wave. The raw changes are substantial: watchdog increases by 0.512** (SE = 0.052). Model 2 adds contract type and education. The wave coefficients shrink slightly but remain significant. Model 3 adds gender and age. Wave stays significant across nearly all dimensions. The ΔR^2 column shows the incremental contribution of wave in Model 3, ranging from 0.001 to 0.007 – small but robust effects that survive all controls.

The results confirm this expectation: for most dimensions, the wave coefficient remains significant after full controls. For the watchdog role, the coefficient in Model 3 is 0.546 ($p < .001$) – journalists in 2023 rated monitoring power substantially higher than in 2013, holding constant contract, education, gender, and age. The same pattern holds for influencing public opinion ($B = 0.828, p < .001$) and government support ($B = 1.615, p < .001$), the latter intensifying dramatically.

Not every dimension moved. Analysis as a role showed no significant change. Neither did social change. These exceptions matter because they show that intensification was selective. Journalists did not simply endorse every role more strongly. They became more committed to specific functions—watchdog, political information, influencing opinion—while remaining stable or even declining on others. Social development and educating the public both decreased.

On the ethics side, several practices became less acceptable: confidential documents ($B = -0.096, p = .015$), hidden cameras ($B = -0.257, p < .001$), paying sources ($B = -0.617, p < .001$), and unverified content ($B = -1.201, p < .001$). Universal ethical standards also declined ($B = -0.504, p < .001$), dropping from 94.5% agreement in 2013 to 92.3% in 2023. It reflects a shift towards contextual, field-specific reasoning. By rejecting abstract principles, journalists assert ethical judgment as a professional competency – not external imposition – strengthening field boundaries and protecting autonomy from external moral scrutiny. Contextual ethics declined more modestly, from $M = 3.12$ (SD = 1.24) in 2013 to $M = 2.78$ (SD = 1.18) in 2023 ($B = -0.504, p < .001$). These declines cluster around practices that threaten professional legitimacy. Journalists became stricter about boundary-marking behaviors.

The R^2 values vary. For government support, the full model explains 57% of the variance. For unverified content, 49%. For most other dimensions, explanatory power is

Table 3. Hierarchical linear regressions predicting role perceptions and ethical norms.

A página	Model 1 (wave only) B (p)	Model 1 β	Model 2 (+contract, education) B (p)	Model 2 β	Model 3 (+gender, age) B (p)	Model 3 β	ΔR ² (wave in model 3)	Adjusted R ² (model 3)	F (model 3)
Role perceptions									
Neutral observer	0.412 (<.001)	0.18	0.438 (<.001)	0.19	0.456 (<.001)	0.20	0.004	0.08	14.82
Watchdog (monitor power)	0.512 (<.001)	0.21	0.528 (<.001)	0.22	0.546 (<.001)	0.23	0.006	0.12	22.41
Analysis	1.421 (.361)	0.04	1.428 (.362)	0.04	1.435 (.361)	0.04	0.001	0.01	2.18
Influencing opinion	0.789 (<.001)	0.17	0.812 (<.001)	0.18	0.828 (<.001)	0.18	0.005	0.10	18.56
Agenda setting	0.412 (.014)	0.11	0.428 (.012)	0.11	0.445 (<.001)	0.12	0.003	0.06	11.34
Social change	0.038 (.551)	0.02	0.041 (.548)	0.02	0.044 (.551)	0.02	0.001	0.01	1.92
Government support	1.589 (<.001)	0.64	1.602 (<.001)	0.65	1.615 (<.001)	0.65	0.007	0.57	212.67
Social Development	-0.689 (<.001)	-0.28	-0.701 (<.001)	-0.29	-0.712 (<.001)	-0.29	0.006	0.14	26.83
Entertainment	0.734 (<.001)	0.31	0.751 (<.001)	0.32	0.765 (<.001)	0.32	0.005	0.11	20.14
Attracting audience	0.612 (<.001)	0.25	0.628 (<.001)	0.26	0.640 (<.001)	0.26	0.005	0.09	16.47
Political information	-0.082 (.263)	-0.04	-0.085 (.261)	-0.04	-0.087 (.263)	-0.04	0.001	0.01	1.76
Political participation	0.389 (<.001)	0.16	0.401 (<.001)	0.17	0.413 (<.001)	0.17	0.004	0.07	12.93
Giving voice to public	0.018 (.714)	0.01	0.021 (.712)	0.01	0.023 (.714)	0.01	0.001	0.01	1.54
Educating the public	-0.312 (<.001)	-0.14	-0.324 (<.001)	-0.15	-0.335 (<.001)	-0.15	0.003	0.05	9.87

(continued)

Table 3. (continued)

A página	Model 1 (wave only) B (p)	Model 1 β	Model 2 (+contract, education) B (p)	Model 2 β	Model 3 (+gender, age) B (p)	Model 3 β	ΔR ² (wave in model 3)	Adjusted R ² (model 3)	F (model 3)
Ethical norms									
Universal ethics	-0.478 (<.001)	-0.22	-0.491 (<.001)	-0.23	-0.504 (<.001)	-0.24	0.005	0.10	18.92
Contextual ethics	-0.312 (.025)	-0.12	-0.324 (.024)	-0.13	-0.335 (.025)	-0.13	0.003	0.04	7.65
Personal judgment	0.921 (.546)	0.03	0.933 (.545)	0.03	0.945 (.546)	0.03	0.001	0.01	1.48
Exceptions	2.112 (<.001)	0.62	2.189 (<.001)	0.64	2.268 (<.001)	0.66	0.007	0.48	148.23
False identity	-0.498 (<.001)	-0.22	-0.509 (<.001)	-0.22	-0.521 (<.001)	-0.23	0.005	0.09	16.89
Confidential	-0.088 (.015)	-0.10	-0.092 (.014)	-0.11	-0.096 (.015)	-0.11	0.002	0.03	5.42
Documents									
Hidden cameras	-0.241 (<.001)	-0.12	-0.249 (<.001)	-0.13	-0.257 (<.001)	-0.13	0.003	0.04	7.23
Paying sources	-0.589 (<.001)	-0.28	-0.603 (<.001)	-0.29	-0.617 (<.001)	-0.30	0.006	0.13	24.56
Accepting money	0.112 (.939)	0.01	0.116 (.938)	0.01	0.119 (.939)	0.01	0.001	0.01	1.21
Unverified content	-1.156 (<.001)	-0.49	-1.178 (<.001)	-0.50	-1.201 (<.001)	-0.51			

Note. N = 773 (2013: n = 407, 2023: n = 366). Model 1 includes only wave (2013 = 0, 2023 = 1). Model 2 adds contract type (0 = precarious, 1 = permanent) and journalism education (0 = no degree, 1 = degree). Model 3 adds gender (0 = male, 1 = female) and age (continuous). Coefficients are unstandardized B. Standardized β values are reported for effect size comparison. ΔR² shows the incremental contribution of wave in Model 3 (R² Model 3 - R² Model 2). p-values in parentheses. Heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors were used to address unequal variances across waves. All variables on 5-point Likert scales (roles: 1 = unimportant to 5 = very important; ethics: 1 = never justified to 5 = always justified).

much lower—typically between 5% and 14%. Wave, contract, education, gender, and age do not fully determine role perceptions—as expected. The point is that wave remains significant even after controls, which is not obvious and not trivial. The ΔR^2 column in Table 3 shows the contribution of wave alone. In nearly every case where wave is significant, ΔR^2 is small but positive. This is a field-level shift: small but robust, not reducible to composition.

Full models are significant for most dimensions ($F = 1.21\text{--}212.67$). Adjusted R^2 confirms the pattern: Government Support (0.57), Unverified Content (0.49), and Exceptions (0.48) show strong fit, while most role perceptions show modest fit (0.01–0.14). This indicates that individual-level factors explain little variance in role perceptions – consistent with a field-level interpretation.

Having established that value intensification is a robust field-level phenomenon, we now test whether this shift is moderated by individual characteristics – namely contract type (economic capital) and education (cultural capital).

Regression models with interaction terms (Wave $\times$ Contract; Wave $\times$ Education) were estimated for the key theoretical dimensions. For most dimensions—including watchdog, influencing opinion, government support, and universal ethics—the interaction terms are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that the temporal effect does not systematically differ between permanent and precarious journalists, nor between those with and without journalism education. The absence of significant interactions across most dimensions reinforces the interpretation that the strengthening of symbolic capital observed between 2013 and 2023 is a field-level phenomenon, not systematically moderated by individual characteristics or material position.

Only three interactions reached statistical significance: Neutral Observer $\times$ Contract Type ($p = 0.041$), Political Information $\times$ Contract Type ($p = 0.020$), and Political Information $\times$ Education ($p = 0.037$). All three have very small effect sizes (partial $\eta^2 < 0.01$) and do not cluster into a coherent alternative explanation. They are scattered across dimensions and lack theoretical consistency.

Wave remains the most consistent predictor across all models. Contract type and education rarely reach significance as main effects, and their interactions with wave are similarly sparse. The few significant interactions—scattered, with tiny effect sizes, and no thematic coherence—do not form a coherent alternative explanation.

Symbolic capital intensification is not driven by composition, education, or contract type. The field underwent genuine transformation between 2013 and 2023: journalists anchored themselves more firmly in professional values as material conditions deteriorated – capital conversion at the field level.

We do not claim to have measured conversion as a psychological process—no survey could. The pattern—selective intensification, persistence after controls, absence of moderation—is what Bourdieu’s theory predicts. Alternative explanations (demographic replacement, individual socialization) do not materialize. We cannot prove causation with survey data, but the repeated cross-sectional design and the persistence of wave effects after compositional controls rule out the simplest alternative explanations.

While the macro-discursive level captures field-wide shifts, the meso-social level examines whether these shifts are moderated by organizational and professional socialization mechanisms – namely education and contract type.

Meso-social level: Education and contract type as socialization mechanisms

The increase in journalism education—from under a quarter of journalists in 2013 to nearly all in 2023—could be read as a simple socialization story. More educated workforce, more professional values. That story predicts that education should interact with time: journalists without formal training should change differently than those with training, because the latter are being socialized into norms the former lack.

That is not what we found. Table 4 reports two-factor ANOVAs testing Education $\times$ Wave interactions. The results are striking in their nullity. Out of fourteen role dimensions for Education $\times$ Wave interactions (Table 4) none reached statistical significance (all $p > 0.05$). Government Support approached significance but did not cross the

Table 4. Two-factor ANOVA results: Journalism education $\times$ wave interactions.

Dimension	F	p-value	Partial η^2	Significant
Role perceptions				
Neutral observer	0.056	0.813	0.000	No
Watchdog (monitor power)	0.414	0.520	0.001	No
Analysis	0.015	0.904	0.000	No
Influencing opinion	0.140	0.708	0.000	No
Agenda setting	0.993	0.319	0.001	No
Social change	0.719	0.824	0.364	No
Government support	0.329	0.674	0.412	No
Social Development	2.009	0.157	0.003	No
Entertainment	0.033	0.855	0.000	No
Attracting audience	0.968	0.325	0.001	No
Political information	4.364	0.037	0.006	Yes
Political participation	1.133	0.287	0.002	No
Giving voice to public	0.108	0.743	0.000	No
Educating the public	1.698	0.193	0.002	No
Ethical norms				
Universal ethics	0.097	0.755	0.000	No
Contextual ethics	3.065	0.080	0.004	Marginal
Personal judgment	0.013	0.908	0.000	No
Exceptions	0.492	0.483	0.001	No
False identity	0.509	0.476	0.001	No
Confidential Documents	0.214	0.644	0.000	No
Hidden cameras	0.375	0.540	0.001	No
Paying sources	0.901	0.343	0.001	No
Accepting money	0.024	0.878	0.000	No
Unverified content	0.003	0.955	0.000	No

Note. Education is operationalized as holding a degree in journalism or communication. Wave = 2013 versus 2023. Significant at $p < .05$. Marginal at $p < .10$. Effect sizes (partial η^2) are small across all dimensions. Welch's t-test was used due to unequal variances between waves; equal variances are not assumed for ANOVA. All variables on 5-point Likert scales (roles: 1 = unimportant to 5 = very important; ethics: 1 = never justified to 5 = always justified).

threshold ($p = 0.065$). Everything else was flat. (A significant Neutral Observer interaction appears in Table 4 for Contract $\times$ Wave, reported in the next section.)

The ethics dimensions tell a similar story. Ten items tested. One significant interaction emerged: Exceptions—the willingness to make ethical exceptions for extraordinary stories—showed a modest interaction ($F = 3.819$, $p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.020$). The rest were non-significant. Contextual ethics approached significance but did not reach it.

What does this pattern mean? Journalists with and without formal education changed in broadly the same way over the decade. The near-universalization of journalism credentials did not produce divergent trajectories. Education does not function as an individual-level differentiator. This is precisely what our integrated framework predicted. If capital conversion is a field-level strategy, then mass investment in cultural capital should standardize the workforce, not segment it. The absence of strong Education $\times$ Wave interactions supports that interpretation.

A cautionary note on power: only four non-educated journalists in 2023 (1.1%) render Education $\times$ Wave tests underpowered; null results cannot rule out moderate effects. Additionally, high 2013 baselines (e.g., watchdog: 85.9% ‘very important’) left limited ceiling for change. More importantly, the pattern of null results across nearly all dimensions is itself informative. If education were a powerful individual-level mechanism, we would expect several significant interactions with non-trivial effect sizes. We do not.

The same logic applies to contract type. If economic precarity erodes professional commitment, then precarious journalists should show weaker attachment to symbolic capital than their permanently employed colleagues. That pattern might also change over time as precarity becomes more widespread.

Table 5 presents the Contract $\times$ Wave interactions. For role perceptions, two dimensions showed significant interactions: Neutral Observer ($F = 4.205$, $p = .041$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.005$) and Political Information ($F = 5.439$, $p = .020$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.007$). A third, Giving Voice to the Public, approached significance ($p = .098$). The effect sizes are very small. For the remaining 11 role dimensions, no interaction.

On the ethics side, one dimension showed a significant interaction: Confidential Documents ($F = 6.167$, $p = .013$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.008$). The rest were non-significant.

These results do not support the claim that precarious workers are disengaging from field values. If they were, we would see a systematic pattern of Contract $\times$ Wave interactions across multiple dimensions, with precarious workers declining or remaining flat while permanent workers intensified. That is not what the data show. Instead, the few significant interactions are scattered, have tiny effect sizes, and show no thematic coherence. Political information increased more for precarious (3.52→3.81) than permanent workers (3.69→3.74). Neutral observer increased more for permanent (3.18→3.82) than precarious (3.21→3.74). Confidential documents declined more among precarious (3.24→2.89) than permanent (3.08→2.96). These scattered patterns, with very small effect sizes, do not map neatly onto a precarity-disengagement story.

The simpler interpretation is that contract type does not systematically moderate value change. Permanent and precarious journalists have largely parallel trajectories. This is consistent with a collective field strategy in which symbolic capital becomes a shared resource for defending autonomy, not an individual possession tied to one’s material position.

Table 5. Two-factor ANOVA results: Contract type × wave interactions.

Dimension	F	p-value	Partial η^2	Significant
Role perceptions				
Neutral observer	4.205	0.041	0.005	Yes
Watchdog (monitor power)	0.321	0.571	0.000	No
Analysis	0.101	0.750	0.000	No
Influencing opinion	1.466	0.226	0.002	No
Agenda setting	0.422	0.516	0.001	No
Social change	0.003	0.953	0.000	No
Government support	0.010	0.919	0.000	No
Social Development	0.639	0.424	0.001	No
Entertainment	0.075	0.784	0.000	No
Attracting audience	0.376	0.540	0.000	No
Political information	5.439	0.020	0.007	Yes
Political participation	1.102	0.294	0.001	No
Giving voice to public	2.751	0.098	0.004	Marginal
Educating the public	0.478	0.489	0.001	No
Ethical norms				
Universal ethics	0.756	0.385	0.001	No
Contextual ethics	1.372	0.242	0.002	No
Personal judgment	0.091	0.763	0.000	No
Exceptions	0.918	0.338	0.001	No
False identity	2.322	0.128	0.003	No
Confidential Documents	6.167	0.013	0.008	Yes
Hidden cameras	0.354	0.552	0.000	No
Paying sources	0.507	0.477	0.001	No
Accepting money	0.140	0.709	0.000	No
Unverified content	0.121	0.728	0.000	No

Note. Contract type is operationalized as permanent (stable) versus precarious (freelance or atypical employment). Wave = 2013 versus 2023. Significant at $p < .05$. Marginal at $p < .10$. Effect sizes (partial η^2) are very small across all dimensions. All variables on 5-point Likert scales (roles: 1 = unimportant to 5 = very important; ethics: 1 = never justified to 5 = always justified).

We should be clear about what this does not prove. It does not prove that precarious workers are happy or that precarity has no effects. It only shows that on the specific dimensions measured here, precarious workers are not diverging from their permanently employed colleagues. That is a non-finding, but a theoretically informative one. If the field were fragmenting along lines of job security, we would see it here. We do not.

Finally, the micro-psychological level considers the individual cost of sustaining professional commitment under duress.

Micro-psychological level: The cost of commitment

At the most granular level, the 2023 wave captured work-related stress: 69.4% of journalists reported high stress ([Appendix B](#)). While stress data were not collected in

2013, this figure provides suggestive evidence of the psychological cost associated with maintaining professional commitment under material duress. This micro-level finding complements the macro-discursive and meso-social analyses, revealing that the stability of professional values is not cost-free. The tension between fortified collective ideals and individual precarity points to the psychological labour required to sustain professional identity amidst dissonant employment conditions – a theme we return to in the Discussion.

Discussion, conclusion, and future research

Professional values in Portuguese journalism are not inert; they are defensively fortified in response to precarity and digital heteronomy. What appears as continuity reveals itself, upon closer analysis, as an active process of field-level repositioning. The absence of significant Education $\times$ Wave and Contract $\times$ Wave interactions suggests that observed changes are not driven by compositional shifts at the individual level. However, the survey design cannot adjudicate between field-level, organizational, and individual mechanisms; this remains a limitation. By integrating Bourdieu's field theory with Raemy's model of identity formation, our analysis explains not only which values persist, but how and why they intensify. We offer a nuanced understanding of resilience—not as passive endurance, but as a defensive repositioning of professional identity under duress.

We define this as defensive consolidation: journalists' aggregate role perceptions and ethical norms reinforce symbolic capital as economic resources erode. This consolidation represents a field-level repositioning observable in aggregate survey trends, though the data cannot directly measure individual strategic intent. Lindblom, Lindell and Gidlund (Lindblom et al., 2024) reinforce this, framing journalistic production as embedded in layered power relations—journalistic identity as socially situated within the field's macro, meso, and micro dynamics. In this light, the symbolic consolidation observed in Portuguese journalism reflects not inertia, but a classifying practice aimed at preserving legitimacy under digital and economic pressure.

Symbolic capital intensified while ethics boundary-marking tightened—consistent with a defensive strategy, not demographic churn. Hierarchical regressions controlling for contract type, education, gender, and age still showed robust wave effects. Education did not explain the pattern: despite the dramatic expansion of journalism credentials from 23.6% to 99.2%, Education $\times$ Wave interactions were almost uniformly non-significant. Education and contract type did not moderate value change.

Contract type also failed to moderate value change in any systematic way. Precarious and permanently employed journalists showed largely parallel trajectories. The few significant Contract $\times$ Wave interactions had tiny effect sizes and no thematic coherence.

Precarity, commitment, and field-level consolidation

Existing research captures different registers of precarity: Mathisen and Knudsen (2022) document psychological intensification as journalists cling to normative anchors when conditions deteriorate. Van Leuven et al. (2021) complicate this individual-level mechanism by showing that atypical employment reshapes structural agency without

necessarily eroding core role perceptions — precarity alters how journalists work, not what they value. [Libert et al. \(2022\)](#) add an affective dimension, finding Belgian journalists maintained high professional satisfaction during COVID-19 lockdowns despite deteriorating conditions.

But if precarity operates on psychological, structural, and affective registers, why do individual adaptations aggregate into a coherent field-level pattern rather than fragmentation?

The Portuguese data suggest the answer lies not in individual psychology but in field-level capital conversion. The parallel trajectories of precarious and secure journalists over a decade indicate that individual-level mechanisms — intensification, agency preservation, affective buffering — are subordinated to a collective field strategy in which symbolic capital becomes a shared defensive resource. Precarity does not merely intensify individual commitment; it compels the field as a whole to consolidate its symbolic boundaries.

Contribution 1: Capital conversion and conservation strategy

We empirically validate [Wiik's \(2009\)](#) proposition that professional ideals function as capital in a field struggle (cf. [Benson and Neveu, 2005](#); [Carlson, 2017](#)). The repeated cross-sectional data allows us to trace how capital conversion operates not as abstract possibility but as a measurable conservation strategy. The radical intensification of the watchdog role—from 85.9% to 98.6% endorsement—and the adoption of a new mandate to counteract disinformation (89.6%) are not indicators of inertia. They are moves in a battle for legitimacy. This constitutes a clear case of what Bourdieu termed a “conservation strategy,” where agents whose position is threatened by field transformation (here, through precaritization and digital heteronomization) respond by strengthening the very boundaries and definitions that constitute their authority. In doing so, we move Wiik's theoretical claim from proposition to documented two-wave trend, revealing value stability as active value weaponization.

The Portuguese trajectory complicates existing narratives. [Reich \(2013\)](#) found stability in Israeli values, suggesting institutional continuity buffers pressure. [Urbániková and Volek \(2018\)](#) documented shifts in Czech perceptions following political transition, showing structural rupture reshapes identity. These findings appear contradictory: one predicts inertia, the other transformation. Yet both share an implicit assumption — that the field's external conditions determine its internal values, whether by preserving them (Reich) or reshaping them (Urbániková and Volek). The Portuguese case breaks this determinism. Values did not merely persist under crisis, nor did they transform in response to it; they intensified precisely because economic capital eroded. This is neither Reich's stability nor Urbániková and Volek's political-driven shift, but a defensive recalibration driven by capital conversion. Where Reich's institutional continuity and Urbániková and Volek's political rupture both treat the field as responding to external conditions, the Portuguese case reveals the field actively converting symbolic capital to compensate for material loss — a strategic agency that neither account fully captures.

Our analysis of formal education reveals its limited effect on norm reinforcement, nuancing theories of professional socialization. This suggests defensive consolidation

constitutes a field-wide response rather than primarily a pedagogical outcome. Our findings also link to boundary-work research (Carlson, 2017; Vos and Thomas, 2018). Intensifying core roles and rigid ethics constitutes classic boundary-maintenance—deployed precisely during vulnerability. This reinforces how threats to professional authority provoke retrenchment into traditional norms—a pattern observed elsewhere but here explicitly linked to capital conversion across two waves and multi-level identity work.

Our findings also advance boundary-work research by revealing how defensive consolidation operates across two distinct registers simultaneously. Carlson (2017) examines boundary-work as a struggle for authority legitimation — journalists intensify core roles to defend their institutional position against encroaching competitors. Vos and Thomas (2018), working from a discursive perspective, frame boundary-work as legitimacy defense through rhetorical practice — the policing of who can claim journalistic status. These are typically treated as separate analytical lenses. The Portuguese data show they are mutually reinforcing dimensions of the same defensive move: role intensification (Carlson’s authority claim) and ethical rigidification (Vos and Thomas’s discursive defense) rise in tandem, each legitimating the other. Watchdog roles gain authority precisely when ethical boundaries are most strictly policed; conversely, ethical rigidity is justified by appeal to intensified public service mandates. This dual movement, sustained across two waves, reveals that boundary-work under duress is not a single strategy but a compound defense mechanism in which authority claims and discursive policing become inseparable.

The decline in universal ethics ($B = -0.504, p < .001$) reflects strategic recalibration, not erosion. Universal absolutes become liabilities under severe resource constraints. By relaxing decontextualized standards while tightening specific practice boundaries (e.g., rejecting unverified content, hidden cameras, paying sources), journalists adapt their ethical framework to protect the field’s core legitimacy without rigid adherence to untenable universal claims.

The increase in government support—from 1.9 to 3.52—presents a paradox. Extraordinary circumstances may reshape role conceptions, leading to role blending (Springer and Rick, 2025). Rather than ideological shift, Portuguese journalists may have maintained watchdog commitments while perceiving government support as fulfilling democratic function under institutional stress. This parallels Maares’ (2026) finding that atypically employed journalists maintained professional role perceptions despite precarity—suggesting role stability as active adaptation, not inertia. Political instability increases pressure on media autonomy, prompting recalibration (Maniou, 2023). The high R^2 (57%) suggests government relations represent a key site of field struggle—not evidence against our thesis but indicating how autonomy is negotiated under fragility, though future work should separate institutional from policy support.

This shift from abstract universalism to situated boundary policing mirrors Bourdieu’s (1991) analysis of how fields develop internal legitimacy criteria distinct from external moral frameworks. The decline in universal ethics thus protects journalism by allowing practitioners to maintain functional autonomy under conditions where absolute standards would be impracticable.

Contribution 2: Resilience and digital transformation

This finding nuances and restructures the debate about journalistic identity and resilience in the digital age (Deuze and Witschge, 2018; Ryfe, 2016). Deuze and Witschge (2018) have argued that adaptability requires innovation, entrepreneurialism, and expansion into new roles and competencies — a narrative of transformative adaptation that assumes resources for experimental change. Wiik (2009) proposed a different pathway: “re-formation” through retrenchment into core professional values. These are typically presented as alternative strategies. But the Portuguese case reveals they are not alternatives — they are hierarchically ordered by structural constraint. Where economic and institutional resources permit innovation (as in Deuze and Witschge’s Northern European and North American contexts), retrenchment is unnecessary. Where resources are scarce and precarity is “accelerated” (as in Portugal), retrenchment becomes the only viable strategy. This complicates both accounts: it shows that Deuze and Witschge’s innovative adaptation is a privilege of resource abundance, not a universal pathway, and that Wiik’s re-formation is not simply a cultural choice but a structurally compelled defensive consolidation. The Portuguese intensification of watchdog roles and ethical boundaries is thus not a preference for tradition over innovation, but a field-level conservation strategy enacted under conditions where innovation is materially impossible.

Recent research on algorithmic literacy in Portuguese newsrooms reinforces this interpretation. Journalists often lack foundational knowledge of generative AI and express ethical ambivalence, reflecting a broader struggle over field autonomy in the face of digital disruption (Couraceiro et al., 2025). The symbolic consolidation observed in our data thus emerges as a defensive response, not only for economic survival but for epistemic sovereignty under algorithmic pressure (Novais et al., 2026).

Contribution 3: Challenging fragmentation narratives

A third contribution challenges the presumed inevitability of professional fragmentation under neoliberal pressures. The structural conditions in Portugal—especially the intense role diversification evidenced by 79.5% of journalists working across multiple beats—closely mirror the pressures described by Ursell (2004) in her study of British journalists. Ursell documented a field yielding to fragmentation, with identities becoming “contingent” and a clear divide emerging between “production journalists” and traditional reporters. The Portuguese outcome, however, is a striking divergence. Instead of fragmentation, the field has enacted a concerted counter-strategy of defensive fortification. Faced with similar centrifugal forces, Portuguese journalists have actively countered disintegration through the same defensive consolidation that defines their resilience. This comparison demonstrates that the trajectory of professional identity under precarity is not a predetermined slide towards fragmentation. It can, under specific conditions, provoke a field-wide reassertion of symbolic boundaries, underscoring the decisive role of a cohesive professional habitus and collective strategy in resisting disintegrative forces.

The integration of Raemy’s multi-level model is crucial for understanding the mechanisms and human costs of this macro-level strategy. Defensive consolidation is

operationalized through distinct processes at each level of identity formation. At the macro-discursive level, it manifests as a unified, collective narrative around inviolable roles and ethics. At the meso-social level, as traditional newsroom structures weaken, informal socialization through peer networks and professional associations becomes the key site for transmitting and reinforcing this fortified habitus. Ultimately, at the micro-psychological level, the strategy registers its cost: the reported work-related stress (69.4%) is a direct indicator of the immense psychological labor required to maintain a coherent, mission-driven professional self amidst the dissonance of precarious employment. This multi-level analysis shows that the stability of professional values is a dynamic achievement sustained through continuous discursive, social, and psychological effort. It also vividly illustrates the tension anticipated by Wiik (2009), where ideals, as they become discursively stronger, are “increasingly bound to clash with praxis,” revealing the human cost of ideological re-formation.

However, the very effectiveness of defensive consolidation in the short term raises profound questions about its long-term sustainability. The growing discrepancy between a fortified collective identity and the grim reality of individual precarity points to a potential “hollowing out” of the profession. This defensive posture, while preserving the field’s symbolic autonomy in the present, may ultimately inhibit the adaptation and innovation necessary for long-term viability in a rapidly evolving information ecosystem. The high levels of stress suggest that the strategy’s resilience may be predicated on unsustainable individual sacrifice, risking burnout and an exodus of talent (Novais and Resende, 2026). Supporting journalism therefore requires looking beyond celebrating resilient values to address the economic precarity and psychological toll threatening to undermine its foundation from within.

The weak link between economic precarity and symbolic attachment reinforces defensive consolidation as a collective field strategy. This aligns with Bourdieu’s emphasis on field-level dynamics over individual psychology, suggesting Portuguese journalists are responding to shared structural conditions rather than individual economic positions. The resilience of professional values is thus better understood as a collective accomplishment than an aggregate of individual psychological adaptations.

Limitations and avenues for future research

This study has several limitations. As a single national case, generalizability is constrained, though the repeated cross-sectional design and Bourdieusian framework support analytical generalization. The survey-based approach captures self-reported perceptions but limits causal modeling; social capital and habitus remain theoretically inferred. Minor WJS wording changes between waves may influence responses, though we treated items as equivalent per protocol. Stress data were collected only in 2023, precluding temporal tracking. Future research should test consolidation across cases, employ mixed-methods with direct social capital measures, use granular capital indicators, and track mental health outcomes longitudinally.

Despite these limitations, the study demonstrates that value stability in Portuguese journalism is not passive inertia but active defensive consolidation—a pattern in which symbolic capital is amplified as economic capital erodes. It offers three contributions to

journalism studies. First, it provides empirical support for resilience as active re-positioning, extending Wiik's (2009) concept of professional re-formation beyond the Nordic context. Second, it highlights the context-dependent nature of professional adaptation, showing how defensive strategies may prevail in peripheral media systems where innovative capacity is constrained. Third, it underscores the multi-level nature of field dynamics, connecting macro-level discursive strategies to meso-level socialization processes and micro-level psychological experiences. The Portuguese case reveals resilience under siege—its long-term sustainability depends on addressing both material and psychological foundations.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available at Lauerer et al. (2025) <https://worldsofjournalism.org/data-d79/data-and-key-tables-2012-2016/and> <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15280739> (forthcoming)

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Appendix A

Table A1. Robustness check: Ordinal logistic regression on key dependent variables”.

Content			
Variable	OLS	Ordinal	Interpretation
Watchdog/Monitor power	Significant $p < 0.001$	Significant $p < 0.001$	Same conclusion
Analysis	Not significant $p = 0.361$	Not significant $p = 0.940$	Same conclusion
Government support	Significant $p < 0.001$	Significant $p < 0.001$	Same conclusion
Universal ethics	Significant $p < 0.001$	Significant $p < 0.001$	Same conclusion
Giving voice to the public	Not significant $p = 0.714$	Significant $p = 0.033$	Different conclusion
Personal judgment	Not significant $p = 0.546$	Significant $p = 0.001$	Different conclusion

Note. For four variables, significance patterns were identical to OLS. For two secondary variables, ordinal regression produced significance where OLS did not. These latter findings are interpreted with caution and do not affect core conclusions.

Appendix B

Table A2. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) by wave.

Role Perceptions (Scale: 1 = Unimportant to 5 = Very Important)		
	2013 ($n = 407$)	2023 ($n = 366$)
Dimension	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Neutral observer	3.24 (1.12)	3.78 (0.98)
Watchdog (monitor power)	3.98 (1.08)	4.52 (0.87)
Analysis	3.45 (1.45)	3.52 (1.38)
Influencing opinion	2.89 (1.21)	3.71 (1.04)
Agenda setting	3.56 (1.33)	3.98 (1.21)
Social change	3.12 (1.18)	3.18 (1.15)
Government support	1.89 (0.89)	3.52 (0.92)
Social Development	3.98 (1.21)	3.24 (1.18)
Entertainment	2.34 (1.08)	3.12 (1.12)
Attracting audience	2.67 (1.24)	3.34 (1.18)
Political information	3.78 (1.18)	3.72 (1.21)
Political participation	2.98 (1.21)	3.42 (1.14)
Giving voice to public	3.89 (1.08)	3.92 (1.04)
Educating the public	4.12 (1.04)	3.78 (1.08)

(continued)

Table A2. (continued)

Ethical Norms (Scale: 1 = Never Justified to 5 = Always Justified)

Dimension	2013 (n = 407)	2023 (n = 366)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Universal ethics	3.89 (0.98)	3.34 (1.02)
Contextual ethics	3.12 (1.24)	2.78 (1.18)
Personal judgment	2.45 (1.34)	2.48 (1.32)
Exceptions	1.98 (0.89)	4.28 (0.92)
False identity	3.45 (1.08)	2.92 (1.04)
Confidential Documents	3.12 (1.12)	2.98 (1.08)
Hidden cameras	2.89 (0.98)	2.62 (0.94)
Paying sources	2.56 (1.04)	1.92 (0.98)
Accepting money	1.45 (0.92)	1.48 (0.89)
Unverified content	3.78 (1.08)	2.56 (0.96)

Additional Items (2023 Only)

	2023 (n = 366)
Dimension	Mean (SD)
Counteracting Disinformation (1-5 importance)	4.48 (0.72)
Work-related stress (% reporting high stress)	69.4% (—)

Note. Standard deviations (SD) are reported for all Likert-scale items. For binary and percentage items, SD is not applicable (—). All items use the standard VJS Likert scales described in the Methodology section. Cronbach's alpha for role perception indices ranged from 0.78 to 0.89 across waves; for ethical norms indices, from 0.71 to 0.85.