

Tabloid Journalism Questions

- ❏ Questions of representation: What precisely constitutes the content and modes of address that characterise the various tabloid titles? How does this differ from mainstream news titles and what are the implications for identity and society?
- ❏ Questions of culture: What do tabloids tell us about the lived culture into which the text is inserted? How should one understand the cultural moments of representation, production, consumption, identification and regulation in terms of tabloid newspapers? How and to what effect do tabloids foreground alternative experiences and identities to those represented in mainstream media? How are these tabloids received, read and responded to by audiences?
- ❏ Questions of community: What communities have arisen around tabloid newspapers, and what new relations (e.g. of trust, authority and reciprocity) have these communities entered into regarding these publications?
- ❏ Questions of normativity: How have tabloid newspapers contested dominant perceptions of ethical norms and professional standards of journalism in the country? How are the roles that tabloid journalism fulfill, related to views of the democratic function of media in a post-colonial, developmental context? Can tabloids be seen to serve as catalysts for a growing malaise among journalists working in other areas?
- ❏ Questions of politics: What political potential do tabloids hold? What place do tabloids occupy in the discourse of democracy in the country? What implications does the emergence of tabloids have for the conception of the mediated public sphere in post-apartheid South Africa?
- ❏ Questions of discourse and identity: What discursive functions do the contra-conventional style and narrativisation of tabloid newspapers fulfil? How are identities constructed through tabloid discourses? What discursive claims are made by journalists working for tabloid newspapers with regards to their professional identities?
- ❏ Questions of civil society and the public sphere: Can the emergence and popularity of tabloids be seen as a manifestation of larger shifts taking place in civil society? How the tension is articulated between tabloid media as part of the mediated public sphere vis-à-vis their function as profit-seeking entities in the capitalist sphere of commercial production? What do tabloids tell us about the way that the public sphere is functioning in post-apartheid South Africa, and how does this differ from the conception of the public sphere contained in currently dominant normative theory?