

SUPPLEMENTARY
FILES

WHAT MAKES AN ISSUE RELEVANT TO NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS?

An empirical approach to criteria of
editorial-worthiness



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1 Codebook – Editorial Values

This codebook has the purpose of making possible an empirical assessment regarding the criteria of editorial-worthiness. It seeks to identify the editorial values in pieces comprising our sample empirically. Those descriptions make the effort to operationalize the theoretical categories presented by Marques and Mont’Alverne (2019).

1.1 Theme

VAR0101 – What is the main them of the text?

(Only one category must be chosen)

1 = Politics => Go to VAR0201

2 = Economy => Skip to VAR0301

3 = Social Issues => Skip to VAR0301

4 = Other => Skip to VAR0301

1.2 Specific Theme

(*only if the main theme is Politics)

VAR0201 – Considering that the main theme is Politics, what is the specific theme of the editorial text at stake?

(Only one category must be chosen)

1 = Institutional norms:

Norms and legal procedures

Formal functioning of political institutions

Formal rules of the political system

Formal rules of the electoral system

2 = Political game:

Political parties

Negotiations and conflicts between powers

Relationships between political parties

Cronyism

Governability

Political Crisis

3 = Elections:

Electoral disputes and candidacies

Election campaign

Opinion surveys on candidates

4 = Economic policies:

Public budget

Public debt

Budgetary policies

Monetary policies

Economic indicators (Inflation, interest rates, GDP, political exchanges and so on)

Economic crisis

Economic reforms

Risk assessment and classification

Infrastructure

Economic bureaucracy

5 = Other public policies:

Health Policies

Housing Policies

Education Policies

Public Safety Policies

Environment Policies

Race/gender/minority relations

6 = Assessment of political agents and institutions:

Assessment of government's performance

Public opinion surveys

Identifying management problems

Civil protests

7 = Corruption and investigations:

Misappropriation of funds

Bribery

Criminal conduct in public administration

Political and public administrative crimes and misdemeanors

8 = International policies:

International politics

Brazilian international relations

9 = Political ideology:

Ideologies and programs defended by political parties or political agents

10 = Other

1.3 Editorial value: Magnitude and Relevance

Similarly to news coverage, the logic of editorial production is also under pressure, given that some events cannot be disregarded due to their magnitude and relevance. This happens even if it is not convenient for the newspaper to comment on them at first (Espinosa, 2003; Firmstone, 2008; Ryan, 2004).

VAR0301 – What is the range of the event commented on the editorial?

1 = Local

2 = National

3 = International

1.4 Editorial value: Follow-up

When controversies or cases of social repercussion persist in the public debate and meet a newspaper's interest, many editorials can be written (sometimes during weeks or months) to cover a same topic. However, the importance of such value is linked to the emergence of new facts on the matter in question.

VAR0401 – The topic was analyzed in other editorials published in the same week?

0 = No

1 = Yes

1.5 Editorial value: Topicality

This value refers to the preference for covering events present in the public agenda in a given moment (Firmstone, 2008). The election period, for example, influences a newspaper's willingness to address candidates and their proposals. A tragedy or case of violence can trigger the reaction of sectors of the political field, which, in turn, may push the newspaper to take a public position. It is also worth mentioning that commemorative dates can end up provoking manifestations by journalistic companies (an anniversary of independence or a day in the calendar that marks the end of a war).

VAR0501 – Is there any mention of a specific event triggering the editorial?

(The specific event must be an external provocation: a new study, news about a scandal, comments on a leader's speech, and so on. In cases where there is no external provocation (if the newspaper decides to address a topic outside the daily agenda), answer "No").

0 = No

1 = Yes

1.6 Editorial value: The Power Elite

When one is dealing with holders of prominent positions (like the president or the prime minister), the need to underline events related to a political authority is quasi-automatic (Cook, 2005). Therefore, the head of government lives a peculiar situation concerning other political agents, since it does not have to worry about being in the spotlight (Van Dalen, 2012).

VAR0601 – Is there any mention to politicians or Judiciary members?

0 = No

1 = Yes

1.7 Editorial value: Conflict

A fundamental value an event must rely on to be commented on in editorials is the existence of controversies. With no evident disagreements, the issue could hardly gain visibility in editorials. The conflict dimension refers to at least two-sided depictions of (attempts, initiation, completion of) dispute, disagreement, discordance, confrontation, clashing positions, and views or controversy.

VAR0701 – Is there any conflict being addressed in the text?

(The controversy exists when the newspaper presents – and/ or presents an opinion on – conflicts involving other actors that are not the publication itself)

0 = No

1 = Yes

1.8 Editorial value: Jurisprudence

A newspaper's opinion tends to be stable over time. That is what professionals and scholars call "jurisprudence" (Arbex Júnior, 1987; Mont'Alverne, et al., 2018; Hansen et al., 1987). The daily reading of editorials collaborates to train professionals to acknowledge how the newspaper usually think about public issues. In other words, previous editorial decisions work as a parameter for later manifestations on related topics.

VAR0801 – Is there any mention of opinions previously expressed by the editorial?

0 = No => Go to VAR0901 and answer "NA" to VAR0802

1 = Yes => Go to VAR0802

VAR0802 – Does the editorial reinforce the opinion expressed previously?

(This variable aims to verify if the newspaper maintains the same opinion through time)

0 = No

1 = Yes

1.9 Editorial value: Political parallelism

This value highlights the ideological adherence newspapers voluntarily share with institutions from other fields. Mancini (2015, p. 3) states that in contemporary societies, the weakening of political parties makes newspapers no longer to be considered as directly aligned with them, but rather with specific policies and values.

Both VAR0901 e VAR0902 can be simultaneously marked.

VAR0901 – Does the newspaper explicitly endorse projects, ideas, evaluations, or attitudes from a political party or politician?

0 = No

1 = Yes

VAR0902 – Does the newspaper explicitly criticize projects, ideas, evaluations, or attitudes from a political party or politician?

0 = No

1 = Yes

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