

# TELEJOURNALISM IN TRANSFORMATION:

## the co-production of new news-values

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**ABSTRACT** - Transformations to the production routines in telejournalism caused by how news is now being produced was the motivation for our doctoral research. This article is a part of this study analyzes the emergence of a new news-value behind the process of selecting what will or will not be broadcast on television news: the unique flagrant of co-production. This new news-value is connected to co-producers and their more active role in news programs. Co-producers are not cameramen at television stations, news agencies, or press services. They are citizens who capture images which are then used in television news broadcasts. The study was based on participant observation (WOLF, 1997), semi-structured interviews and a content analysis (HERSCOVITZ, 2007) of Rede Globo National News in Brazil. In our understanding, journalists select these images in order to create effects of participation of the represented real.

**Key words:** Telejournalism. Production routines. News-value. Unique flagrant of co-production.

### O TELEJORNALISMO EM TRANSFORMAÇÃO: a coprodução das notícias e os novos valores-notícia

**RESUMO** - As transformações nas rotinas produtivas do telejornalismo provocadas pela maneira como as notícias estão sendo produzidas motivaram nossa pesquisa de doutorado. Este artigo é parte desse estudo e tem como objetivo analisar o surgimento de um novo valor-notícia no processo de seleção do que será ou não veiculado nos noticiários televisivos: o flagrante único de coprodução. Esse novo valor-notícia está atrelado a atuação mais ativa por parte dos coprodutores nos telejornais. Os coprodutores não são cinegrafistas das emissoras de televisão, nem de agências de notícias, nem de assessorias de imprensa. São cidadãos que captam imagens, que acabam sendo usadas nos telejornais. O estudo foi feito a partir da observação participante (WOLF, 1997), entrevistas semiestruturadas e também da análise de conteúdo (HERSCOVITZ, 2007) do Jornal Nacional da Rede Globo. No nosso entendimento, os jornalistas selecionam essas imagens com a intenção de criar efeitos de participação do real representado.

**Palavras-chave:** Telejornalismo. Rotinas produtivas. Valor-notícia. Flagrante único de coprodução.

## EL PERIODISMO TELEVISIVO EN TRANSFORMACIÓN: la coproducción y los nuevos valores-noticia

**RESUMEN** – La transformación en las rutinas productivas causada por la manera como las noticias están siendo producidas han motivado nuestra investigación doctoral. Este artículo es parte de este estudio y tiene como meta analizar la aparición de un nuevo valor-noticia en la selección de lo que será transmitido en el telediario: el flagrante único de coproducción. Este nuevo valor-noticia está relacionado con la actuación más activa por parte de los coproductores en los telediarios. Los coproductores no son cámaras de estaciones de televisión, ni de agencias de noticias, ni de oficina de prensa. Son ciudadanos que capturan imágenes, utilizadas en los noticiarios televisivos. El estudio fue hecho a partir de la observación participante (WOLF, 1997), entrevistas semiestructuradas y también de la análisis de contenido (HERSCOVITZ, 2007) de lo telediario Jornal Nacional de la Rede Globo, en Brasil. En nuestro entendimiento, los periodistas eligen las imágenes con la intención de crear efectos de participación en lo real representado.

**Palabras clave:** Periodismo televisivo. Rutinas productivas. Valor-noticias. Flagrante único de coproducción.

18 years in television newsrooms has revealed a number of changes, some of which are changes in the way news consumers act and breakthroughs in technology and their impact on production routines.

We have seen the transition from analogue to digital which changed the forms for capturing, editing, transmitting and showing images. We have lived through the emergence of a more active public, capturing images and acting like co-producers of news.

This has become more evident with the advances of the internet, the growth of social media and onset of mobile devices. Currently, these devices are used for the rapid sharing and transmitting of videos. Mobile phones are more than just phones; making calls is what they are least used for (Casedevall, and Pascual, 2012).

But this change was not just a technological one. What propelled all of this was what people do with all this technology; their interest in taking photos, sharing them and that others see and comment on them.

Journalism professionals at television broadcasting stations have seen the public's growing practical interest in providing images to reporting teams. Currently, if a reporter arrives at the scene of a fire in an urban area, it is highly probable that someone who lives in the area or was passing by would have some original images to offer that journalist of the fire starting. If this person did not talk to or see

a reporter, he or she probably would not call the newsroom to offer their images. What is more likely to happen is that this person sends the image to the broadcaster by *WhatsApp*.

Images are also published and shared across social media and therefore seen by those working in television. In other words, these images achieve greater visibility regardless of the individual interest they generate.

Bearing all these issues in mind, it is important to reflect on how these changes are impacting production routines, particularly when it comes to standards of newsworthiness held by journalists. This is what we focus on in this paper, which makes up part of our final doctoral study. We shall try to answer the following question: Is there a new news-value which has emerged from the more active participation of co-producers in telejournalism?

In order to answer this question we analyzed what other authors had to say about production routines, standards of newsworthiness and news-values.

## 1 Production routines

There is a common theory about production routines used in these studies; it is *newsmaking*, a sociocultural approach which focuses on understanding the processes of mass communication. The basic question behind these studies is the connection between images spread across communication mediums and the daily process of building news. There are many approaches which may be applied here, from standards of newsworthiness to the organizational structure of communication vehicles, even building an audience and production routines etc.

Wolf (1997, p.169) states that studies on *newsmaking* focus on the image that news media has of the world and how this image is connected to the demands of production routines in newsrooms. We need to consider “the professional culture of journalists and the organization of the workplace and production processes. The connections and relationships between these two points make up the focal point of this type of research” (Wolf, 1997, p. 169).

Travancas (2011, p. 39) states that, within printed media, “every journalist has one or more ‘images and ideas’ of who their readers are. They most often do not know these readers’ profiles very well, mainly because they span over different social groups”.

Television professionals find it difficult to clearly state who their target audience is for the audiovisual information they receive from co-producers despite the fact they have detailed information from telejournalism audience surveys.

This is the case for *Jornal Nacional* (JN) and its coverage. Bonner (2009, p. 18) states that telejournalism tries to show “the most important events occurring in Brazil and the world”. Even still, there is the challenge of the “overall profile of the public who watch JN: age, level of education, socioeconomic range etc. There are a variety of interests that come from such a varied public”.

For Vizeu (2014, pp.94-95), journalists use “presumed audiences”. They “prematurely build their audience based on professional culture, organization of the workplace, production processes, specific codes (rules in the newsroom), the language and the rules of the field of languages”.

Even though journalists are able to work without having any exact idea of who their public are, their jobs are developed around selecting and producing news. We agree with Ferrer’s (1997) view of news when he states that information and news are not synonymous.

Information tells us if a woman is a redhead or a brunette, tall or short, thin or fat. Communication tells us she has gorgeous blue eyes, a carefree walk and a slim, attractive body. Reporting that the Brazil and Italy football teams are playing against each other is inadequate. What we want to know is if they are playing a friendly match or in a playoff, where is the game being played, which team is the favourite to win and who are the star players from each team. (Ferrer, 1997, p. 177, our translation).

We applied his viewpoint to the work carried out by co-producers in telejournalism. The images they capture are a visual or audiovisual record of something that has already happened and is often supplemented by textual or verbal information.

What co-producers realize in practice could be termed collaborative content. For Cajazeira (2011), collaborative content is an image recorded in digital media (photographic cameras or cellular phones) by viewers and placed within journalistic production.

Vizeu and Alves (2017, pp.1-2) argue that “collaborative and participative processes are becoming increasingly common in the routines of digital telejournalism”. They are upheld “by collaborative and participative logic within the current possibilities of convergence and are shared between media and its active audience”. An active audience is a term these authors use for people

who co-produce news in some form for television either through texts, images, audio or video.

From a journalistic point of view, collaborative content captured by co-producers has to go through stages before it can be used for television, this includes comparing it other information and having it meet standards of newsworthiness.

The standards of newsworthiness are used by journalists on a daily basis to help them define the news. News-values are a part of these standards and, according to Wolf (1997, p.175), they answer the following question: “which events are interesting, meaningful and relevant enough to become news?”

Casero and Marzal (2011, p. 49, our translation) state that this selection process and maintaining news-values have become more commonplace in the field of journalism. “Over the last few decades journalists have had to find news “on the street”. Nowadays, the news comes to the newsrooms and journalists have to act as “filters” while going through the selection process”.

Selection processes have always existed, ever since the beginning of journalistic activities. They have obviously undergone changes due to social, economic, cultural, technological and social issues in society. And every time society undergoes a significant change, choices are affected.

In reference to what is shown on TV, Coutinho (2009, p. 107) argues that

Every edition of television news builds the world as it sees it through its own window using texts, sounds and images, and not through a world window. This involves the intricate characteristics in the middle to the political guidelines of the broadcaster that produces/disseminates its television news (Coutinho, 2009, p. 107).

We are talking here about a “private window” which is not only produced by journalists, but also by citizens, who use cameras and cellular phones to record what they see and select what they observe. They make recordings of reality. However, as far as we are concerned, this is not making news. This is producing information which helps the work of journalists and is selected for its news-value.

There are a number of classifications for news-value. Wolf (1997) divides them into five main categories. The substantive category deals with the social issues of those involved in a particular event, the number of people involved, the impact of and interest in

this issue for the country, and the consequences they might have. The category for production deals with the technical quality of the material to be shown, having an even balance of topics, the currentness of the event and fitting it into the time available. The third category deals with the mediums of information, or, how this information is selected and later shown. The fourth category deals with the public and how journalists build the public image for the piece they are working on. The last category deals with competition and involves searching for exclusive broadcasting of a story and also if it is innovative or not. It also takes into account expectations created out of competition.

We believe that the technical quality of images and sound still play an important role in selecting stories for telejournalism, but this news-value has lost its lustre over the last few years. Never before have there been so many recordings made (from cellular phones, digital cameras etc.) of sound and image quality so different from the cameras used in broadcasting or by news agencies. This is an indication that the interest level raised by one issue occupied a larger space in the decision process than the actual quality of the image.

Traquina (2008) also considers, along with Wolf (1997), that news-values are used throughout the entire journalistic process; and he believes separating them into values for selecting and building (substantive and contextual standards) is equally important.

Substantive standards deal more with the happenings of an event and are divided into: death, reputation, proximity, new, time, conflict or controversy, offence and scandals. Contextual standards – for the context in which news is produced – are divided into: availability, balance, visibility, competition and daily news. The values for building them lie in the choice “of elements within a happening worthy of being shaped into news” (Traquina, 2008, p. 91). They are classified as: simplification, importance, growth, personalization, dramatization and consensus.

Vizeu (2014, p. 33) states “news-values sort of organize the surrounding chaos and make the *work routine* possible”. The “work routine” helps journalists and communication companies build structures for organizing production. They create the rules for selecting what can and cannot be broadcast. They also establish requirements of what is acceptable and what is not in terms of using recordings and footage from people who do not make up the staff of reporters.

Bourdieu (1997, pp. 106-107) points out another aspect with a direct influence on deciding what makes the news: pressure

from the competition. "In an area where the news has such a short lifespan, it is competition for winning over clients that takes priority, for getting the most recent news (the scoop)".

Harcup (2007) says that depending on the vehicle or the different sectors within the market, journalists generally look at one or more factors when deciding what makes the news. They are more interested in stories that involve organizations, institutions or people in power. They also have an interest in stories involving famous people that bring forth developments or focus around "sex, entertainment, human interest, animals, drama" (Harcup, 2007, p. 53) etc.

Harcup also mentions other elements of note: facts related to unexpected questions, negative stories of tragedies or conflict, stories on the broadcaster's schedule and what programs will be shown. There are also positive stories told involving nations, groups or issues of importance to their audience and have a wide effect on people. These are "highly relevant stories due to the number of people involved in them or by their potential impact" (Harcup, 2007, p. 53).

Pastoriza (2003, p.53) also classifies the standards of newsworthiness; he divides it into fifteen categories: informative interest, topicality and updated, new or rare story, usefulness, shock factor, proximity, emotiveness, the number of people affected, the importance of the person involved, entertainment possibilities, availability or accessibility, length, order of release, image or company.

Pastoriza (2003) emphasizes that television has two standards of newsworthiness that stand out: company (competition, advertising, ideological and economic standards, quality requirements etc.); and images. He includes images because "the specific medium form determines an informative story's newsworthiness only when it has a certain iconic impact. Having images makes the news stronger (Pastoriza, 2003, p. 56, our translation).

It is an advantage for co-producers to have their stories broadcast because they display what is essential, in other words, the images of the story. However, what they record is not always approved and released. Some reasons for this are: the image is blurry or too shocking. This is true for murder scenes or close-ups of severe injuries. These probably will not be selected if they do not meet the telejournal's editorial standards.

Arias (2006) also argues that there is no one factor that influences the choice of what will make the news or not. We are of

the same opinion and would like to add that there are a number of factors that must be analyzed for a co-producer's image to be selected. Ethical issues must be taken into consideration and the ability to verify audiovisual (video) or visual (photography) information.

Moraes, Temer and Coelho (2013) analyzed what they call "public participation" and news-values in telejournalism through the program "Quero Ver na TV" from TV Anhanguera, an affiliate of Rede Globo in Goiás; a program that encourages the public to request stories. These authors did not investigate changes in news-values as they based their study on principles from Traquina (2008) and Charaudeau (2006). At the time they were carrying out their study, this particular television program did not utilize images sent in by viewers. It was more focused on viewers' suggestions for issues that the broadcaster should cover.

Even though we are able to fit the selected co-producers' images into more than one category (competition, availability, up-to-date etc.), none of the authors cited above addressed this particular issue. They did not even mention any specific news-value associated to them, perhaps because this was not so evident at the time as it is now.

## 2 The study on JN

In order for us to analyze the news-values applied towards selecting co-producers' material for telejournalism (Vizeu, and Siqueira, 2010) we chose to study one of the major national news programs in Brazil, JN, at Rede Globo. The study was carried out using participant observation (Wolf, 1997), semi-structured open interviews (Moya, and Raigada, 2010) and content analysis (Herscovitz, 2007; Bauer, and Gaskell, 2008) with quantitative and qualitative results (Fonseca Júnior, 2005).

*Globo Universidade* gave us the authorization to monitor the routines within JN for a period of 24 hours from Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the broadcaster's editor-in-chief, William Bonner, and JN editor in Recife, Charles Tricot. The latter was chosen because he had already suggested the use of co-producer images to JN and for the fact that he has been working in telejournalism for 16 years.

The content analysis was applied according to the method described by Herscovitz (2007), taking into account the need to



study how the images from co-producers' videos were selected and broadcast on JN. The use of this methodology brought forth a number of contributions to the work as it helped see how the standards of newsworthiness at the broadcaster were followed. The sample period was for seven weeks – from October 10th to November 26th, 2011 – and covered the Monday to Saturday editions of JN news. In total, 21 hours, 25 minutes and 36 seconds of television news were analyzed, not including commercial breaks.

As Herscovitz (2007, p. 123) describes, content analysis is a method which is easily applied to journalism studies, its goal is to investigate news-values and the characteristics of production. "It may be used to identify trends and models in standards of newsworthiness, frameworks and scheduling. It also describes and classifies journalistic products, genres and formats" etc.

The use of co-producer images was analyzed and took the following aspects into consideration: format, factual or current news (Bonner, 2009), where the original recording came from, emphasis on co-producer images and news-values applied.

We chose these themes in order to be able to identify the context in which these stories were chosen. We were able, for example, to find out what the most-used news format was, what emphasis was given to the co-producers' images and if they were included in a factual or current context.

We also analyzed how the co-producers were identified and what kind of notoriety did they receive, in other words, if they were shown or introduced in some form by the reporting team. In addition, one of the main focal points of the study is in the analysis of news-values. This analysis was supplemented with answers given in the semi-structured open interviews conducted with JN editor-in-chief, William Bonner, and text editor, Charles Tricot. The standards of newsworthiness were also identified for the "Main Editorials in the Globo Organization" (Organizações Globo, 2011) and for Bonner (2009).

During the seven weeks of study we identified 16 news items containing audiovisual content from co-producers. 11 of these 16 items were reports and five were live recordings; a format in which said recordings are presented as the reporter reads the story live. Only one of the co-producer items was about current news. The others were identified as being factual (Bonner, 2009). They needed to be shown on that particular edition of the program or lose their validity as news if left to one side (**TABLE 1**).

This is justified by the characteristics of the actual telejournal which is a starting point for writing up the schedule, reports and editing. This is what we observed during the monitoring period of routines and from what the journalism staff reported during participant observation.

**Table 1** – News formats and factual/currentness of topics broadcast on JN

<b>News format</b>	<b>Currentness</b>	<b>Factual</b>	<b>Number/ format</b>
Report	1	10	11
Live report with images	0	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: Jornal Nacional

Three reports were identified as coming from the internet and two were of unknown origin (images of protests in Syria). Journalists from JN credited two other reports made on cellular phones, but did not identify the authors. Details of the job or role identified by co-producers for another eight reports. Only one report identified the name of its amateur cameraman. **(TABLE 2).**

**Table 2** – News forms and origin of co-producer images

<b>Origin of co-producer images</b>	<b>Live report with images</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Total</b>
Internet	2	1	<b>3</b>
Unknown origin	1	1	<b>2</b>
Captured on cellular phone, role unidentified	1	1	<b>2</b>
Job or role identified	1	7	<b>8</b>
Amateur cameraman identified	0	1	<b>1</b>

Source: Jornal Nacional

Identification for the eight cases where the co-producers had identified the jobs or roles, either on screen or in the credits, was realized in the following order: eyewitness, ETA member (*Euskadi*

TA *Askatasuna* – Basque separatist group), police officer, councillor advisor, auditor and politicians (**TABLE 3**).

**Table 3** – Jobs or roles identified by co-producers

<b>Job or role identified</b>	<b>Live report with images</b>	<b>Report</b>
Eyewitness	0	1
ETA member	0	1
Police officer	0	3
Councillor advisor	1	0
Auditor	0	1
Politicians	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

Source: Jornal Nacional

The eyewitness in the table above had witnessed an accident, the ETA members were the ones who had recorded the video which was handed in to the press and a councillor advisor took photos of a report on unauthorized fees charged in the House of Representatives. The politicians were identified as the ones who shot video footage of an eyewitness speaking against and for the governor of the Federal District. The auditor recorded a claim made against illegal deforestation.

Something that leaps out from the analyzed period was the amount of audiovisual information on JN that was recorded by police officers on the job. There were three reports: the imprisonment of a judge, the evacuation of the dean's office at the University of São Paulo (USP) and the occupation of the slums in Rocinha. These are cases where it was the co-producers who had recorded these images while they were working; the images did not come from press offices. These three reports were not captured on professional cameras and contained dialogues which were chosen and highlighted by editors at JN for making the news.

These reports were also registered with the intent to provide proof of bribery claims (in the case of the judge) and to further evaluate how the Rocinha operations went down. The footage at USP was probably recorded in order to collaborate with the police officers' version of how the events unfolded at the university, that there had been no unnecessary arrests or imprisonments.

A citizen identified as Gustavo Leite (or as “amateur cameraman” in the text) was the only co-producer whose name was identified during the analysis period. This information was confirmed when his name was listed on the screen, giving him credit for the images. Normally, at Rede Globo, when an image is handed in, and no fee is paid for it, and the co-producer does not run any risk to his or her life if their identity is revealed, their name might appear in the credits. This only happens if both parties are in agreement and prior consent was given. Paid images do not usually have the author’s name released along with them.

The results of the content analysis mentioned here were analyzed according to participant observation and semi-structured open interviews, focusing on standards of newsworthiness. We based this decision on the importance of Jensen and Jankowski’s (1993) collective triangulation approach:

The characteristic use that gives ethnography its many data sources saves it from the danger of being ecologically invalid, something that occurs in any investigational methodology that trusts results from only one data source, and increases the danger of having the results depend on the method. The multiple character of ethnography, produced from different techniques (observation, interviews etc.) which can be systematically compared, give ethnography its added advantage (Jensen, and Jankowski, 1993, our translation).

After the analysis from different techniques we were able to ascertain that the journalists selected these images with the intent to create *effects of real participation*. It is called an *effect* because it is something which is created or produced. In television, journalists are the ones who select the images sent in by co-producers, they act as mediators in an indirect process of “participation”. They create an *effect of participation*.

Co-producers are closest to the newsmaking process when they capture images. People who watch the telejournals are also involved in this process to some degree. They act as eyewitnesses to the *represented reality*.

The audiovisual information recorded by co-producers is not actually real, but a representation of reality, built by TV journalists and broadcast in the format of news.

Following this rationale, we also worked with the emergence of a new news-value behind the selection process: the news-value of the *unique flagrant of co-production*. These recordings are selected

because broadcaster journalism teams, press agencies and news agencies were not available or present at the scene. They did not experience that unique moment, and are unable to recreate it without the aid of simulations and graphic effects.

These might be recordings of an accident, a fire, a crime, a flood or something of the like which broadcasters did not have time to cover. The only recordings that exist are those from co-producers, in other words, they are *unique flagrants*. Nonetheless, this is not a stand-alone standard, it is employed in conjunction with others.

### Considerations

The production process in telejournalism has different characteristics, one example being various mediums. Mediating between the facts and co-producer recordings requires the active participation of journalists. Things need to be verified, both sides of a story need to be heard before being aired on TV news. There is no room for rough co-production unless it is meant for the internet.

The decision on what will or will not be aired and how it will be broadcast belongs to journalists. They are the ones who will decide if the co-production will remain anonymous, if an image will be shown on television or if the image will be part of a larger report.

Within this decision power lie the standards of newsworthiness applied on a daily basis in television newsrooms. There is a need to establish new selection criteria due to the increase of co-produced material being offered through *WhatsApp* or social networks. Why does one particular story make the news and hundreds of others do not? It is within this new scenario that the news-value of *unique flagrant of co-production* emerges; and it does not cancel out the others. It can be used as a standard to demand that journalists be extra careful when verifying information so as to avoid any problems like releasing false images or any legal proceedings resulting from unlawful use of images. After all, they need to confirm who recorded the *unique flagrant of co-production*. If authorship is not able to be determined, journalists from each broadcaster will establish rules for using and broadcasting said information to the viewer.

The *unique flagrant of co-production* can be considered as a new news-value according to JN editor, Charles Tricot, in a semi-structured open interview. He referred to the example of images taken

of the Noar airline crash in Recife in 2011 which was broadcast on JN. The images showed the plane just before it crashed. The images were recorded by a co-producer. Charles Tricot said:

What did we have to edit the material on Noar with? There was the airport. There was a similar jet. There was an image of jets taking off...then to edit the crash site...there was the plane on the ground, the ashes, the police investigating and looking at the bodies. What wasn't there? The crash that this citizen had recorded on his mobile phone. A cellular phone "shot" the crash. There wasn't footage of it on the ground, but there was footage of it falling out of the sky. So, that was the image needed for a perfect editing job. (verbal account).

Applying the *unique flagrant* can also be seen in the semi-structured open interview with Jornal Nacional editor-in-chief, William Bonner. He mentioned the co-producer recordings aired on JN on the death of Muammar Kadhafi, the former dictator of Libya:

The images of the death of Kadhafi were terrible, but you could still see his face. They were recorded on a mobile phone, this is clear, and it wasn't even a good phone yet it was good enough to see Kadhafi trembling, see the panic, the people, heads, noise and, once again, the image of Kadhafi, no cuts, so we aired it. The whole world aired it (verbal account).

In this case, the unique flagrant was not exclusive to JN; it was a recording of a single important event in history captured by a co-producer. The footage was used for this reason.

As we have seen, the unique flagrant of co-production deals with a new news-value which has been used in newsrooms as one more element towards deciding what will or will not make the news.

It is important to make it clear that the recordings are not used because they register a single event. We must look at other aspects. The use of fake or inaccurate images might seriously affect the credibility of communication mediums. If this does happen, what journalists considered to be a *unique flagrant of co-production* might turn out to be a huge headache once it has been aired, leading viewers to discredit the broadcaster and also lead to legal proceedings depending on the particular case.

\*This paper was translated by Lee Sharp

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