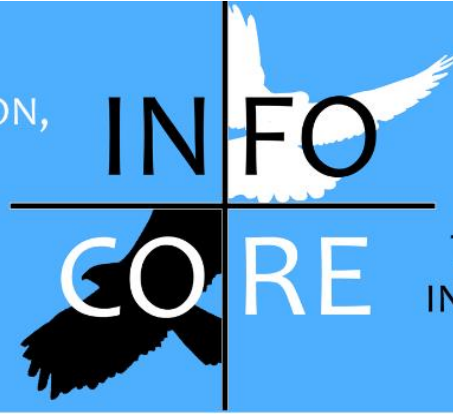


(IN)FORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:



THE ROLE OF MEDIA
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

INFOCORE Definitions

“News Production”

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News Production

NEWS

In framing the news as an activity, the International Encyclopaedia of Communication describes news as ‘the product of teamwork in media outlets (Nossek, 2008),’ but the definition of ‘news production’ goes beyond such definition through looking at certain criteria that include **tasks, structures, processes, routines, and influences on the news.**

News, according to Harrison (2006, p. 13), is ‘is judged to be newsworthy by journalists, who exercise their news sense within the constraints of the news organizations within which they operate.’ Defining news production as a process is uneasy difficult task, as there is no generic definition of news, but it all depends on the context and the need for such news. News production as begins as a process of editing ‘as soon as a journalist sees and hears of something newsworthy’ (Wilson, 1996, p. 29) and is produced by ‘journalism professionals (of which there are different types with different journalistic subcultures, for example, reporters, producers, technical staff and managerial staff) working in a routine day to-day manner within a news organization’ (Harrison, 2006, p. 99).

NEWS PRODUCTION

News production can be seen as the process of transforming events through systematic criteria into news that is publishable in the media. **News production tasks** are activities ‘where news workers/journalists engaged in the production of the written, visual, or audio texts designated as news and information appearing in print media and on broadcast and cable television, radio, and the Internet’ (Ettema, 2008). The tasks these news workers do are mainly to ‘report, research, write, and edit reports as well as produce and assemble visual images and the graphic forms for news and information’ (Ettema, 2008). The selection of news goes through another process often beyond news workers’ decisions, and this is where editors, producers and news directors get involved on another level of news production. News production is described by Weischenberg and Matuschek (2008) as ‘the process where in the modern newsroom, a journalist controls everything – the electronic gathering of information (e.g., through an online news ticker), the text processing software, the layout, and the printing which in essence is the description of the process for the news production.’

Most news is produced within the constraints of news organizations. There are generally three levels within the **editorial hierarchy** with regards to decision-making power: Rank-and-file journalists form the lowest level, consisting of reporters with limited autonomy. These journalists gather and produce the news and information, and they usually have no or very little editorial responsibility. “Junior managers” constitute the middle level of the editorial hierarchy. These journalists have operative authority and they make operative decisions on a day-to-day basis. They are typically responsible for smaller divisions within the newsroom, such as a department, a beat, a desk, or a bureau. Senior or executive managers, finally, have strategic authority in the newsroom. They have the power to shape the strategic goals of their news organizations.

With regards to **news production structures**, one can say that division of labour is a typical characteristic of most news rooms. In the Anglo-Saxon world, newsrooms typically distinguish between news gatherers (reporters), news processors (editors), and news commentators (columnists). In many countries in continental Europe, on the other hand, division of labour is often organized along different beats or topics of coverage (Esser 1998).

News routines are 'repeated practices and forms that make it easier for journalists to accomplish tasks and ensure immediacy in an uncertain world while working within production constraints' (Lowrey, 2008). There are various types of news routines, including routines of news gathering, news selection, news writing, news editing, news layout/design, fact checking, as well as routines of editorial coordination and management.

Influences on news production emanate from various layers, most notably from the levels of the individual, media routines, organization, the extra-media level and the ideological level (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). A comparative study of journalists' perceptions of influences found six distinct levels: political influences, economic influences, organizational influences, professional influences, procedural influences, and reference groups (Hanitzsch et al., 2010). Organizational, professional and procedural influences were seen to be more powerful than political and economic influences.

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