


## RETHINKING NEWSWORTHINESS FROM THE DIASPORA: FOR A PROPOSAL OF AFROCENTRIC AND DECOLONIAL CRITERIA IN JOURNALISM

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### ABSTRACT

By analyzing the news-values of reports published in hegemonic media, the urgency of developing new newsworthiness criteria from the Afrocentric and decolonial perspectives was perceived. Thus, CEP - Context, Empathy and Sharing was born. In this article, the objective is to examine publications of alternative media based on theories such as Stuart Hall, Aníbal Quijano, Abdias Nascimento and the new criteria proposed. An attempt, therefore, to verify the relevance of this contribution to the field of Theories of Journalism.

**Keywords:** Theories of Journalism. Decoloniality. Alternative Media. Diaspora.

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## INTRODUCTION

### OPENING THE WORKS

All communities of African origins in the diaspora today claim two complementary things: inclusion in societies that enslaved their African ancestors and their descendants not in the assimilationist sense, but recognizing at the same time their identity anchored on the one hand in African continuity, hence the importance of teaching African history and culture and, on the other hand, in the cultures of resistance that they created in the New World in defense of their human dignity and freedom, hence the importance of also teaching black history and culture in the diaspora.  
Munanga

It cannot be denied that the identity constructions of black people, especially in Brazil, will trace a path before the society established on a colonizing foundation. The individual's referential, subject to admiration and reproduction of his acts, is white. In the racist thinking rooted in our relationships, the aesthetic, cultural and identity black aspects are not seen positively. Blacks are therefore destined to destroy everything that ancestry has built and to rebuild their actions from a Eurocentric conception. This means abandoning one's language to assume the language of a foreign body that tells you how to behave. To explain some causes of this violence, the theorist Aníbal Quijano starts from the concept of coloniality of power:

What its globality implies is a basic floor of social practices common to the whole world, and an intersubjective sphere that exists and acts as a central sphere of evaluative orientation of the whole. That is why the hegemonic institutions of each sphere of social existence are universal to the world's population as intersubjective models. Thus, the nation-state, the bourgeois family, the company, Eurocentric rationality. (QUIJANO, 2005, p.124).

First, we need to recognize that we consider current social behavior to be individualistic. The truth is that individualities have always existed, but the way of exercising them has been transformed along with the subjects. However, the new identity constructions are not a free choice of society. These changes are consequences of the historical and cultural conditions that are accessible to it. In this sense, Hall states:

(...) and individuals could in no way be the 'authors' or the agents of history, since they could act only based on historical conditions created by others and under which they were born, using the material and cultural resources provided to them by previous generations. (HALL, 2003, p.35).

It is important to note that such conditions were created by whites, especially men, cisgender and heterosexual, who are assigned the highest positions in business leadership, major media and public power. Therefore, it is the one who has been given the power of decision. It is understood that the constructions of identities do not start from a rational conception. We are formed by various social, psychic and cultural impacts that define our individual being.

When we build the imaginary of the journalistic practice established today, there is a disparity about these social transformations. If we understand that, from the emergence of the internet, there has been a revolution in the way of producing, conveying and consuming information, why does the process of elaborating the guidelines still follow the same so-called traditional molds?

To account for a society that is more active in journalistic processes, questioning and demanding, it is necessary to reformulate the criteria of newsworthiness and news-values applied. Just as Nelson Traquina revisited the first criteria of newsworthiness developed by Galtung and Ruge and updated them based on their perceptions, a continuous review is needed based on the demands that emerge in society.

In Brazil, where the population is mostly black, with 54% of black and brown people, aspects related to interaction with social news must be analyzed from this perspective. In a society marked by the African diaspora and still deeply wounded by the legacy of colonization, journalism, by its very nature, should not contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and racist relationships. As sociologist Carlos Alfredo Hasenbalg states, "racism, whose essence lies in the total or partial denial of the humanity of blacks and other non-whites, constituted a justification for exercising domination over colored peoples" (HASENBALG, 1982, p. 69). The advance of this colonizing process occurs through the imposition of a model of domesticity, that is, of a behavior molded as "correct". This framing seeks to standardize cultural, ethnic, and aesthetic manifestations, consequently promoting a form of racial cleansing.

It is worth adding the collaborations of professor and researcher Muniz Sodré. In the film *Half an Hour and the Headlines That Become Headlines*, he states that journalism does not have the function of an educator, but it is still a great opinion maker. When the lives of people who belong to the community that consumes this information are diminished, the entire problematic structure established is reinforced. It is not an ethical process, since it assumes the responsibility of maintaining prejudice and violence against

this community. Along these lines, a statement by the professor of Communication at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), Sylvia Debossan, draws attention: "It is not raising the intellectual level, it is raising the level of consciousness. Because the newspaper is the intermediary between the facts and the public."

It can be seen, then, that most hegemonic vehicles, when communicating directly with the public that permeates the entire debate of this work, establish communication with a vertical hierarchy, directing the behavior of those who Stuart Hall will call 'subalternized' - the diaspora.

In *From the Diaspora: Cultural Identities and Mediations*, Stuart Hall talks about the difference between Multicultural society and Multiculturalism. He explains that, in a community with wide diversity and cultural exchanges, multicultural subjects are inherent to this reality. For him, the diaspora creates cultural displacements, from which identities are continuously reformulated and renegotiated. In this way, people in diaspora do not maintain a single, unchanging identity, but develop new ways of being from their experiences of displacement. The focus is on the continuous process of formation and transformation of cultural identities, without a final resolution, but with constant renegotiation and adaptation.

The history of the black movement in Brazil is marked by struggles, erasures and resistance. Reflecting on this path, as Abdias Nascimento does, requires us to face the precariousness of information available on the subject. This historical erasure of black cultures, structured over centuries, represents one of the greatest challenges for the construction of effective analyses and the claim of rights. However, as one of the Afro-Brazilian values is circularity, there is no need for this story to follow a linear narrative. The important thing is to recover ancestral memories to reclaim the spaces that have been systematically denied. As Nascimento observes, one should consider:

The precariousness of the correct record of the trajectory of a community deprived of economic and political power, and of a movement composed of entities almost always subject to instability and lack of resources, infrastructure, physical space, and support from other sectors of civil society" (NASCIMENTO, 2000, p. 203).

The African presence and contribution are structural elements of the country, and the fight against racism and slavery has always been an intrinsic part of this trajectory. For Abdias do Nascimento, "there is no Brazil without the African, nor does the African exist in Brazil without his protagonism in the anti-slavery and anti-racist struggle." (NASCIMENTO, 2000, p. 204).

However, the role of journalism in recording and narrating this history has faced challenges that date back to the colonial period and still endure. Often, large communications, subordinated to market interests, prioritize serving a restricted group, failing to fulfill their social function of public interest. This commercial logic not only deprives society of fundamental information, but also consolidates narratives that reinforce prejudices. A classic example is racist headlines, which marginalize and criminalize black bodies, perpetuating stigmas deeply rooted in the social imaginary.

Against this current, alternative media emerge as essential tools for the anti-racist and decolonial struggle. Because they are independent, they are not subject to the interests of big brands, companies or politicians, but, on the contrary, they aim to inform and challenge structures that maintain social exclusion. In this context, anti-racist outlets play a crucial role in destabilizing the proposed disinformation aimed at racial segregation. Abdias Nascimento highlights the historical importance of an active black press at the beginning of the twentieth century:

Before the 1920s, a black press had already emerged that continued to be very active, especially in São Paulo, with newspapers such as *O Menelike*, *O Kosmos*, *A Liberdade*, *Auriverde*, and *O Patrocínio*. In 1920, 'O Getúlio' was born, founded by Lino Guedes to deal with issues of interest to the Afro-Campinas community. The *Clarim d'Alvorada*, founded by José Correia Leite and Jayme de Aguiar in 1924, already announced the cry of protest that would crystallize in 1931 with the foundation of the Black Front Brazilian. (NASCIMENTO, 2000, p. 204 )

These pioneers paved the way for a new generation of contemporary outlets, such as *Mundo Negro*, *Alma Preta Jornalismo*, *Nós*, *Mulheres da Periferia*, and others that follow this same combative logic. Outlets such as *Mídia Ninja*, *Intercept Brasil*, and *Intervozes* also align themselves with this perspective, even when they are not exclusively aimed at the black community. The history of these alternative media is an extension of what the Brazilian Black Front symbolized: "the greatest expression of Afro-Brazilian political consciousness at the time, a consciousness formed by reacting against the most evident aspect of racism, the system of segregation and exclusion based on racial criteria." (NASCIMENTO, 2000, p. 206)

When analyzing the role of alternative media in the construction of decolonial and anti-racist newsworthiness criteria, we need to consider the strength of these platforms as part of an ongoing struggle for the democratization of communication and the rescue of stories that have been silenced. This is a narrative that resists and reinvents itself, breaking

with the Eurocentric ties that still permeate Brazilian society. To continue on this subject, it is essential to resort to the concept of coloniality of power by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano:

Already in its condition as the center of world capitalism, Europe not only had control of the world market, but was able to impose its colonial domination over all regions and populations of the planet, incorporating them into the "world-system" that was thus constituted, and into its specific pattern of power. For such regions and populations, this implied a process of historical re-identification. (QUIJANO, 2005, p. 121).

It is also worth bringing to the discussion Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's concept of unique history, in which she argues about cultural diversities within groups that are usually seen in a generalized way. For the intellectual, who brings in her thoughts the Afrocentric perspective, the single story is a concept developed to understand the behavior of white bodies with people of African descent. The author then highlights how the media creates a unique history of this people to the point that Western society has a limited view of the cultures and experiences of these people. From the moment the media categorizes the people many times as one thing, the people become that truth.

In Brazil, we can consider the recurrent association of black people with marginality, criminality, poverty, anger, aggressiveness and, in some places, laziness and trickery, or all the negative aspects related to the stereotypes of black people in Brazil. The danger of the single story lies in reducing an entire community to a single possibility.

This universe is reinforced by the system and constantly reconstructed in the social imaginary in our cultural relations. In a way, our subjectivities are constructed from these Westernized perspectives of our bodies. It is also interesting to note that the processes of identity construction of these racialized people are not the same as those of the Westernized, or the so-called majority groups, which in this case are associated with the groups that impose their hegemonies. "In this sense, the Eurocentric claim to be the exclusive producer and protagonist of modernity, and that all modernization of non-European populations is therefore a Europeanization, is an ethnocentric claim and above all provincial." (QUIJANO, 2005, p. 123)

By bringing this discussion to the field of issues of journalism theories, more specifically, the criteria of newsworthiness and news-values, it is noted that it is urgent to formulate new criteria of newsworthiness from Afrocentric and decolonial perspectives. Thus, the proposal of three new criteria arises to produce news committed to the anti-racist

debate: Context, Empathy and Sharing (CEP), which serve as a theoretical foundation for the analysis of reports published in the mainstream press.

## ZIP CODE

It is important to note that the acronym CEP is similar to the Postal Address Code, created by the Brazilian Post Office Company in 1971 to facilitate the separation and delivery of mail. Coincidence or inspiration, here we will deal with Context, Empathy and Sharing.

There are recurrent cases of naturalized murders of black people in public spaces. It does not mean that, before digital media emerged as a solution for reporting these crimes, the facts did not happen. The previous reality was that the hegemonic media did not treat these episodes as relevant to society, exposing racist positions applied to the ideology of the outlets. The pressure groups that are formed on the internet demand more and more that the hegemonic media take a stand and report on these crimes so that cases like this are no longer naturalized.

About the role of press professionals in selecting what is news, in "To think about newsworthiness criteria", Gislene Silva brings her vision of how newsworthiness is configured:

any factors potentially capable of acting in the process of producing the news, from characteristics of the fact, personal judgments of the journalist, professional culture of the category, favorable or limiting conditions of the media company, quality of the material (image and text), relationship with sources and the public, ethical factors and also historical, political, economic and social circumstances (SILVA, G., 2014, p. 52)

Leonel Aguiar also conceptualizes the term. For the author, "if newsworthiness is a set of criteria and operations that controls the quantity and quality of events, to select those that will be produced as journalistic information, its application is based on news-values" (AGUIAR, 2014, p. 227). These news-values will be the basis for several studies in the field of Theories of Journalism.

To be able to pay attention to who we are talking about, we need to analyze the context of the news. Who is this news relevant to? Who needs to know this news? Why does the public need access to the news? In what social context are the people related to the news? What impacts will be generated for people related to the news and the public



inserted in the same social context? These factors need to be analyzed in the process of constructing the news. Thus, the criterion "context" arises.

When addressing the Pan-Africanist movement, Abdias Nascimento highlights that "the Pan-African Revolution must assume as a priority task the responsibility of ensuring the rescue of black consciousness, which has been violated, distorted and attacked in many ways and ways" (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 104.). Inspired by the movement, the criterion of newsworthiness "empathy" was born, which is placed as a way of thinking about the individual about the news and the way of representing that body. Given this, in the process of producing the news, by this criterion, it is necessary to analyze the fact from the point of view of each person related to it.

With the "sharing" criterion, the intention is for journalism to be active in strengthening black people. This criterion drives attentive journalism, which understands that, through this community, it is possible to feed the media with content provided by these people and foster their cultures. Taking care of organizing the struggle is an imperative of survival as a people.

## **ALL WE HAVE IS US<sup>4</sup>**

This work adds to other reflections that point to the need to produce representative news. What makes the news representative, we know, is also related to the places in which it was broadcast. To meet the demand of a society that lacks information produced from a decolonial perspective, with an Afrocentric perspective, some alternative outlets have emerged. Among them, we highlight *Alma Preta Jornalismo*, *Mundo Negro* and *Nós Mulheres da Periferia*. In "Journalism from the decolonial logic: the case of We Women of the Periphery", the authors reinforce the need for a review of journalistic knowledge, based on the understanding of the importance of social representations:

We can see how within the journalistic media, subjects who were not authorized to communicate with society, to be heard and heard, start to dispute the media environments to make voices that go through colonial, racial and economic subordination daily more audible. (LAGO, GONÇALVES, KAZAN, 2023 p.141)

On the "Black World Site", we can observe that the vehicle manages to contemplate the Afrocentric journalistic values CEP in most of its productions. It is important to highlight

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<sup>4</sup> Verse from the song "Principia" (2019), by São Paulo rapper Emicida, featuring Pr. Henrique Vieira, Pastoras do Rosário and Fabiana Cozza.



the diversity of editorials in which such agendas are formulated, such as politics, education, culture, fashion, business and columns — not only in the police pages. In this way, the three criteria of newsworthiness and news-values are applied, in which it considers: the context of the people related to the news, with a real capacity for empathy, the transfer of non-stigmatized emotions, and the sharing of Afro-centralized collective knowledge, as we see in the examples below.

BELEZA E AUTOCUIDADO



In the news agency "Alma Preta Jornalismo", there are stories that are not directly related to racialized content. But, starting from the context in which we are structured, in which all social and informational aspects pass through racial subjectivities, the news is produced from an Afro-centric perspective. In this way, everyday news is portrayed differently, from the definition of the relevance of the news, treatment and dissemination.



CULTURA

**Pesquisa: 83% dos filmes dirigidos por negros no Brasil surgiram de 2010 a 2020**



AGENDA

**Museu Afro Brasil Emanuel Araujo e BATEKOO celebram orgulho LGBTQIAPN+ com oficina gratuita**



POLÍTICA

**Comissão da Câmara aprova aumento de pena para crime de abuso de incapaz**

'We women from the periphery', which defines itself as "a newsroom of peripheral women recording their way of seeing the world", is a very clear example of the criterion of newsworthiness "sharing". The vehicle has a wide production of interviews, opinion texts

and reports that contemplate invisible gender and race agendas. Here, we have selected a few:



14 ABR 24

### Quem vive tempo suficiente para se aposentar no Brasil?

Conversamos com a especialista Ana Paula Mauriel sobre o agravamento das desigualdades a partir da Reforma da Previdência e sobre os prejuízos para as mulheres. Confira!

NOTÍCIAS **APOSENTADORIA**  
DIREITOS TRABALHISTAS



14 ABR 24

### O relato de uma mãe que há uma ano busca diagnóstico para o filho

Karoline Miranda é mãe de Gael, que tem episódios frequentes de febre, e reflete sobre a situação das mães de crianças com doenças raras.



20 MAR 24

### Piri Confeitaria: jovem faz sucesso vendendo bolos com mensagens divertidas

Milene Oliveira é dona da Piri Confeitaria, localizada em Pirituba, zona noroeste da cidade de São Paulo (SP)

HISTÓRIAS **MULHER NEGRA** **PERIFERIA**

According to data from the 2022 Continuous National Household Sample Survey, black women correspond to 28% of the total Brazilian population. Given this, the question remains: how is it possible for the mainstream media not to evaluate such agendas as urgent and necessary as informative content for this large layer of the population?

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

To deal with the relationship between the black community and theories of journalism, the reflection intended here highlighted the theoretical contributions by analyzing the social behaviors of the postcolonial diaspora to understand the power relations established vertically and oppressively towards black people in society.

From this and aware of the need to break with a system that oppresses and distances the black community from social integration and reinforcing stereotypes, the criteria of newsworthiness CEP - context, empathy and sharing - were presented, characterized by an Afrocentric and anti-racist perspective. In a second moment, based on this theoretical proposal, we analyze some communication vehicles, which bring in themselves a careful look at the subjects that are being portrayed in the news. It was revealed in practice how an alternative media behaves that produces news and information with social, affective and collective responsibility. When observing these movements in the journalistic media, it is up to the professional to analyze which newsworthiness criteria are being used in the processes of news construction.

Journalism needs to break with the colonial heritage, or rather, with coloniality, to use Quijano's concept. Only from this turn will it be possible to exercise journalism committed to social, race and gender issues. In this way, the concern will become about who we are talking about, the context in which it is inserted and the implications and developments of the publication of the journalistic text.

For there to be a true social transformation, all social groups must understand the mechanisms of oppression that have existed since colonization. In the face of all reflection, the importance of journalism in this process is undeniable, whether in the selection of agendas, in the representation of black people in the reports and the defense of democracy and human rights in the approach to journalistic texts. Therefore, one must have the conviction to dispense with values that are based on economic and political interests, understanding what news is and its social role.

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