



INTERNATIONAL
PRESS COMMITTEE

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ABSTRACT

This paper purpose is to introduce the proceedings of UFRGSMUN's International Press Committee to those who applied as journalists at our United Nations' simulations. The readers will be informed about the journalism's field of action in an international event as a UN conference, as much as the types of publications that will circulate at our event and the materials available to produce them. They will be presented to the guidelines of the world's top news vehicles in order to learn how to fit the facts in many different points of view. As our Model United Nations intends to be faithful to a real UN conference, the journalistic body should know how to behave gracefully, managing to do their reporting job according to a high posture.

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1 PURPOSES

Information is essential to a society's democratic development. The main scope of any media is to deliver the information of some event to the public in order to present the situation. Usually, in conferences as important as the United Nations, the only way to do this mediation is through the news and reports provided by the press. This journalistic body does not belong to the UN: it is compound by journalists from all around the world representing many press agencies; and they are present there to cover the discussions by collecting and sharing the information. Therefore, the press is not subjected to any other committee or their willing, and can't be censored by any country or even by the UN itself.

It is impossible for media vehicles to be totally impartial on their reports. The reporter always has some sort of connection with his or her beliefs, political position, agency policies or country position – which is the reason why there are many different impressions about one situation. It would be unrealistic to think that the publications, the opinion and the behavior of journalists in such events would not affect the general public. That is why there are many different vehicles in the IPC: to share as much different views as possible about a fact.

Understanding that, UFRGSMUN created its own International Press Committee (IPC) where its main objective is to provide a real experience about the effects of the press in such important worldwide conferences. Those who chose to subscribe to this committee will be dealing directly with journalism, and should be faithful to the idea of providing clear information to the public, considering the background history about the activities happening in the simulations, also trying to fit this content in some type of approach that each editorial policy requires. At the same time, the other delegates, participating in different committees, will be challenged to deal with the repercussions of their decisions being spread to the event media – correspondingly to this, what is informed to a journalist cannot have its disclosure forbidden, unless previously accorded (what is called, by the international media, as off the record). The committees are responsible for what they tell the media, as the Press Committee is responsible for the veracity of what is being broadcasted.

During the conference, the delegates of IPC will have different ways of approach, to make the event as real as possible, by interviewing the delegates, taking pictures and making use of social media. Each delegate will be assigned to one of the eight other committees to report the discussion and, eventually, other facts that may influence the conference itself. When presenting these reports, they should choose one or two editorial policies that fits better to the position of the

country they are writing about [view 4]. The reports can be made using text, photography or video, and the responsible journalist should debate the best platform to deliver each information with the IPC board. Besides covering the simulation, the journalist may be asked to help the chairs to make a fictitious news or “crisis” in order to contribute to the delegate’s debate and keep their discussion in its path.

Those reports and “crisis” should be sent to the IPC editorial board, compound by its directors, as soon as possible, in order to be printed. The news will pass by a quick revision, as they would in any real newspaper. Its content will not only be revised in order to correct grammar or typographical errors, but also to identify if the content fits the editorial policy intended. It is not up to the directors of IPC or the directors of the committee simulated to agree with the way the news was written, yet, it is their job to certify if the contents are faithful to the ideals of the press the journalist chose to simulate.

Besides the reports, closer to the coffee breaks, that happens at 4pm, the delegates will be asked to have prepared a small abstract about that day in the committees in order to be filmed as daily briefings [see 2.6].

2 RESOURCES

2.1 REPORTS

News reports are the work instrument of any journalist. They are the most common format of sharing information and should bring the most recent facts to the general public. The IPC will be working with reports, whose public should mainly be the delegates of the committee the journalists are covering, even though they are not restricted to such delegates. The publication of those reports will be made immediately after written and revised by the editorial board, in order to keep the flow of information continuous. The editors of IPC should place a header on each news given to them, so the readers will know in which newspaper those reports would be published, accordingly with the editorial choices that were made to write the report. In order to do so, each journalist must prepare its news based in one editorial policy [see 4], which can change along the sessions, indicating it at the report sent to the editorial board.

2.2 PRESS RELEASES

Press releases are articles sent by institutions or agencies in order to provide information to the media. In UFRGSMUN, we will consider the material given

to the journalists by the chairs of the committees as press releases. As said before, chairs usually create “crisis” in order to contribute to the debate. These “crisis” should be received by the journalists as a press release and rewritten to adapt its content to a press vehicle with a journalistic goal. After written, the report, which will be based in the release, should be approved not only by the editorial board of IPC, but also by the chairs of the committee, they are responsible for.

2.3 PHOTOS

Although photojournalism will not be the main format to UFRGSMUN press, it is highly improbable that such events would not be covered using pictures. Journalists may use their own equipment (smartphones, tablets, iPods, compact cameras, DSLR cameras, disposable cameras), even if they are not professional, to keep track of the simulations. Gadgets connected to the internet will be able to share content via Instagram and Twitter.

It is important to know what to photograph. There should not be more than one or two shots of the whole room for a day, unless something exceptional happens. An outstanding delegate could be the subject of a picture, so is a delegate who receives some news about its country, or even a very fierce discussion. At social media websites, like Twitter and Instagram, we usually keep things lighter: something fun a delegate did, or maybe someone who is not paying much attention to the discussions. Make things simple, you should not use any filters or frames, but always pair the image with a caption.

If the photograph is covering one very important fact, it should be sent to the editorial board for it to be printed with a report. On the other hand, if the picture is only updating an already printed news, or just covering ordinary facts, they should be published only on Twitter [see 2.5].

2.4 INTERVIEWS

Interviews are one of the many forms of investigation. We highly encourage the journalists of IPC to perform many interviews with the delegates before writing the reports. Those interviews, however, should not disturb the debates and discussion of the simulations. We must remember that the journalist is a guest on those discussions and should not interrupt it. This way, interviews must be realized outside the conference rooms, at the end or the beginning of a session, or even when he/she is at the halls.

Journalists, sometimes, may be called by a delegate to perform an inter-

view. This is very common on all political areas, and it is a way to create important relationships with the delegates. However, journalists should be aware of the intentions of the information given to them. Some press conferences may happen where all the journalists on IPC may be called. At a press conference, a journalist should not only be alert to whom is speaking, but also collect past information to formulate complex, smart questions to the delegates. Depending on the editorial policy, the journalist may have chosen to represent, their questions can lead to one or other conclusion, so it is important to decide for which vehicle the journalist will write for before performing any interview.

We must remember that many of the UN sessions are closed to the public and even to the journalists. As someone seeking information, the IPC delegates could wait for the session to open or for someone to leave it. If some other delegate gives you a declaration at the halls, or are simply discussing facts with a colleague, you can use that to produce a report, always respecting the source and their wish to remain anonymous or not.

2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

The International Press Committee will be responsible for a Twitter and an Instagram account. The journalists of IPC, as well as the editorial board, will be given access to those accounts, from where delegates of all committees could rely on to get information of what is happening in the simulations faster than with a report, for example. The delegates of IPC should focus on updating stories about the committee they are covering, but they can also publish news of the event in general. Outside news should not be featured in this tool, and the tweets, differently from the reports, will not be guided by any editorial policy.

In order to keep the readers interested, many journals and news sources use social media as a space of creativity and entertainment, and for the Press Committee that is what these two features should be. The delegates of other committees love to find themselves as the center of the attention, but also our posts are often used to start arguments inside the committees. One must be careful to not seek favoritism, but also keep things light, leaving the great political discussions for the reports, where we can analyze more deeply a situation.

It is important to remember that tweets and captions can't be edited after posted, so it is very important that the delegates use those tools carefully. Delegates may not exclude or modify other delegate's tweets and pictures, and the editorial board would not modify any tweet content. If a post somehow does not follow the rules or offend, affront or insult a delegate, a staff member or any person or brand

related to the event is allowed to immediately delete it through the editorial board.

2.6 DAILY BRIEFINGS

It is usual at political conferences that lasts more than a day that the press be responsible for making daily briefings about how are the discussions going. Thinking about that, the IPC journalists should be prepared to provide information about the most important facts of a day until four in the afternoon (4:00 pm), which is the time of our coffee break.

These briefings will be filmed as a “stand up” where each journalist explain to the general public the main events of the sessions of that day and the evening before. Understanding that each journalist will be responsible for covering one committee, they should prepare a short text about the simulations they are accompanying and be ready to film starting from two hours before the coffee break, which will be about two in the afternoon (2:00 pm).

Later, these videos will be available at our many social media platforms and can be presented at the sessions if it is a wish of the delegates of certain committee.

3 GUIDELINES

It is a field of “production and circulation of senses” (Benetti 2008, 107). When producing news, journalism affects reality since it reproduces a past event using one of many available points of view. Thus, it is not impartial or just a mirror of reality, since it takes part on changing the way an event is told to people. Telling a history using certain kinds of words or focusing on certain details instead of others are choices that demonstrate reality comprehensions. With that said, we will analyze how news are made, its characteristics and particularities.

3.1 NEWS VALUES

News values are criteria used by journalists in order to list what should be reported and what should not. They operate a selection and construction of what is selected (Bourdieu apud Traquina 2002, 186) – in other words, they demonstrate and interfere in a given event. They are fundamental to understanding news production and the choices that editors and other journalists face when deciding which piece of information is news while another is not. They are the basis from which the journalist will select the occurrences, which should be transformed in

news. On the other hand, construction news values operate at the “backstage”, suggesting “what should be stressed, what should be omitted, what should be priority in this construction” (Traquina 2002, 186-187).

The news’ values, according to Traquina (2002) are: **Prominence**: meaning that occurrences featuring well-know individuals or institutions are more newsworthy than occurrences with some other person; **Proximity**: considering that a news vehicle is geographic based, the occurrences more close to their readers will be news, while if the same fact occurs in other country it may not; **Impact**: the number of people whose lives will be influenced must be taken in consideration; **Novelty**: the journalistic word is interested by what is rare or what happens for the first time; **Timeliness**: as the proximity, the more recent events are more newsworthy. Sometimes, a recent discovery of something that happened a long time ago is considered news too; **Notability**: is the quality of being visible is a value which guides journalists, what can be best pictured by the public is notable and is a news value; **The bizarre**: more than rare, the unusual, unorthodox, or unexpected attracts attention; **Conflict**: controversy and open clashes are newsworthy, inviting attention on their own, almost regardless of what the conflict is over; and **death**: according to Traquina (2002), death is a key-news value, since it breaks life normality. And, a priori, where there is rupture, there are news.

3.2 NEWS LEAD

In journalism, what is known as “lead” is, usually, the first paragraph of a reporting. It is wrote considering that not every reader will be able to read the entire report, and so, it should feature the most important information of the news. Usually, it can be constructed by answering simple questions as “what?” “who?”, “where?” “how?” and “why?”. Sometimes, not every aspect is essential to the information and should be left to explain along the text. More elaborated context, as such previously information about a subject or consequences that a decision could bring, can be addressed on other paragraphs. When you write the lead, you must expect that a reader with not so much information about the subject will be able to understand what happened by just reading the first paragraph or your text. If they do so, they may find themselves interested and read the rest of the reporting.

3.3 STRUCTURE

When talking about printed news, many newspapers have their writer’s guides in order to maintain a pattern. At UFRGSMUN, we will not ask you to fit

your text into previously thought boxes, but we hope to present a simple structure that you can base your writing if you are not used to this.

As we explained previously, the most important aspect of a news is usually presented at the beginning of your text, but also should be featured in your title. The title is an important aspect that should be independent of the text, meaning that you should not use it as a first line. Misleading titles break the information flow and are often used to manipulate the news. When the essential information is not on the title this causes confusion on the reader and incredibility. You should also remember that a title is a powerful feature to present the point of view of a news vehicle [see item four].

There are no news without the title and the lead, and only after that you should approach the more specific details. At the UFRGSMUN, we expect the reports to be brief, but meaningful. In longer reports featured in magazines, for example, is possible to make comparisons, bring historical context and similar situations, however, the texts you will produce at our model should be more than half a page and, still, should bring brief context.

4 EDITORIAL POLICIES

In order to participate in UFRGSMUN International Press Committee you will be asked to choose where to publish your reports in one or more big communications companies. Each one of those has its own editorial guidelines and interests, and will be more or less inclined to cover different subjects of our United Nations committees. We selected different newspapers, channels and agencies that you will possibly be simulating. The more you know about these vehicles, the easier will be for you to know which report will fit better their interests. Here we briefly explain how the news you will make should be edited, based on the official guidelines provided by these companies, as also the profile of the readers or viewers the news usually made for.

4.1 THE NEW YORK TIMES

One of the main newspapers of the United States, The Times was founded in New York in 1851 with the name “The New York Daily Times” and would have the title we know in 1857. At its launch, the purpose of the journal was written: “we shall be ‘Conservative’, in all cases where we think Conservatism essential to

the public good;—and we shall be Radical in everything which may seem to us to require radical treatment and radical reform. We do not believe that ‘everything’ in Society is either exactly right or exactly wrong;—what is good we desire to preserve and improve;—what is evil, to exterminate, or reform” (Machine 2014).

The New York Times is considered a liberal newspaper, which openly defends the same-sex marriage and gun control, for example (Okerent 2004). The paper had positioned itself against Bush politics and the Iraq war and has a project to get proximate to their Russian readers, what is notable after a publication of a letter written by Vladimir Putin, giving Russia’s point of view about Syria (Putin 2013).

4.2 CNN

Cable News Network (CNN), a subsidiary of Time Warner Inc., was television’s first 24-hour all-news service, created in 1980 in the United States. With headquarters located in Atlanta – Georgia, the company matured and expanded along with the cable industry itself, maintaining a loyal following by offering what the major networks at the time did not: full, continuous coverage of all news events, both large and small, increasing attention to scandals and other dramatic events. As of February 2015, CNN is available to approximately 96,289,000 cable, satellite and telco television households (82.7% of households with at least one television set) in the United States. CNN International makes its global coverage in over 200 countries and territories.

Endeavoring to accommodate its worldwide audience, CNN adopted a policy of banning such exclusionary words and phrases as “foreign” and “here at home” from its newscasts. Although the channel has been subject of allegation of liberal bias in the United States, having made harsh critiques towards the Republican Party and the Bush administration, this situation changed a little after 9/11 with the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars. The Executive Vice President and General Manager of CNN International at the time, Rena Golden, said, “it wasn’t a matter of government pressure but a reluctance to criticize anything in a war that was obviously supported by the vast majority of the people”⁶, about the self-censorship that most of the American media was accused after changing the approach on Bush.

4.3 BBC

The British Broadcasting Corporation, founded in 1922, is the oldest and

⁶ Interview to Press Gazette, August 2002.

biggest broadcaster in the world. Created under a Royal Charter⁷, its main goal was to spread the British culture, reinforcing the motto “Nation shall speak peace unto Nation”. It is maintained, mainly, by an annual television license fee, which is charged to all British households, companies, and organizations using any type of equipment to receive, or record live television broadcasts. It offers five radio networks in Britain, ranging from popular music to news and information services, as well as national television channels and international online news. By the early 21st century, the service broadcast in more than 40 languages to roughly 120 million people worldwide.

Under its charter, the BBC may not advertise or broadcast sponsored programs. On paper, it is required to refrain from broadcasting any opinion of its own on current affairs and matters of public policy and to be impartial in its treatment of controversy. Nevertheless, the majority of accusations received are the critics of bias against the center-right politics and the Conservative Party, and their journalists have handled with a positive view complicated issues such as immigration and the legalization of drugs.

4.4 FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO

Created in 1960, Folha de São Paulo came from a fusion of three primary “Folhas” launched in 1921. Considered a modern newspaper by its technology in printing, they characterize their journalistic style as critical, non-partisan and pluralistic, with the purpose to expose the news by different point of views. However, it is known that they have a centre-right wing approach when it comes to politics and others polemical subjects.

4.5 EL CLARÍN

El Clarín is the largest Argentina’s newspaper. Created in 1945, it was first published with a national approach. Clarín group also owns radio stations and television channels, including ARTEAR producer and broadcaster of various TV channels, one with the biggest audience in the country. El Clarín is known for disputes with current President Cristina Kirchner, who is trying to implement media regulation law projects, and for its right-wing approach when it comes to social and political issues.

⁷ It is a formal document issued by a monarch as letters patent, granting a right or power to an individual or a body corporate.

4.6 THE HUFFINGTON POST

Founded in 2005 by American activist Arianna Huffington, The Huffington Post is a network created initially to provide a liberal counterpart to the Drudge Report, a conservative news-and-commentary website. The website is free to users and generates revenue from advertising, featuring blogs from more than 1,600 unpaid bloggers drawn from the worlds of politics, entertainment, and academia. The website has content-sharing partnerships with TMZ.com, People, Rolling Stone, Variety, and Yahoo!, among other content providers. Bought in 2011 by AOL, transformed into the Huffington Post Media Group, expanded beyond the United States, having launching editions in Canada, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Japan, Greece, Brazil, India, Korea and Tunisia. Focusing also on themes as women issues, gay rights, black voices and minorities, the company released Huffington, a weekly digital magazine that offer subscribers exclusive feature-length articles supplemented by video clips, infographics, and other multimedia. In 2012 launched HuffPost Live, an online network that rejected typical television programming formats and encouraged viewer participation.

4.7 LE MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE

Created in 1944 thanks to the efforts of General Charles de Gaulle, who wanted France to have a big and internationally respected newspaper, the newspaper was first designated to diplomatic circles and international organizations, but after gaining autonomy, its critical position became a world reference in the contribution to the critique of one thought and the construction of new paradigms. Le Monde has become the largest journal in France.

Considered a middle-left wing journal, Le Monde usually covers Africa and Middle West issues, since France still has a cultural influence among countries of those regions. Still, it openly criticizes neoliberal globalization and its writing has the ultimate goal of bringing the analysis and reflection of the facts than the news itself (Diplomatique 2014).

4.8 PREMIUM TIMES

Premium Times is a Nigerian online newspaper. It was founded in 2011 in order to help the country to be a more consolidated democracy – as the founders believe media is a fundamental part of that –, respecting and enriching cultural practices and human rights. Its proposal is to be analytic and reflective, not sub-

missive to any occidental view but precisely advocating for people in Nigeria and addressing their interests. It is a highly politically engaged media organization, and right now, their official Twitter account asks to end Boko Haram, saying “Premium Times demands that the Nigerian government act to stop the Boko Haram carnage”.

4.9 XINHUA

This Chinese online news provider was created in 1997 with the purpose to set a good image of China abroad and report news from all around the world. Xinhuanet, established in 2000, is most often the first to report China’s major breaking news events (Xinhuanet 2010). The journal is the state press agency related to the Communist Party and due to this fact, the paper publishes some news in a diplomatic writing. Some news from Xinhua are published in another government media, People’s Daily, which is known by an authoritative character that is not seen in Xinhua releases. In this context, the term “authoritative” refers only to commentary that speaks for People’s Daily as an institution and, by extension, for the People’s Communist Party Central Committee (Godwin and Miller 2013).

4.10 AL JAZEERA

Created in 1996 by the Royal Qatar family, the channel mixed Pan-Arabism, Islamic feelings and a liberal perspective and was a very important vehicle in the democratization of the Middle East. Embracing the slogan “the opinion and the other opinion”, the paper intends to show both sides of the event, although the same sentence has lead them into controversy regarding the accusations in reflecting Qatar’s interests in political and economic issues (Daher 2011)

Al Jazeera is the most popular Arabic television channel an independent television company supporting the people of the region in their struggle. One example of that is the Arab Spring, which lead Egypt cut their transmission in the country. Yet, some countries accuse the channel of promoting Arab propaganda and supporting region groups as Al-Qaeda (Week 2011). However, the channel main goal is to emphasizing news from the developing world, without an Anglo-American world-view (Samuel-azran 2010).

4.11 SPUTNIK INTERNATIONAL

Sputnik International News is a state agency launched on November 2014

by the dissolution of the previously news agency RIA Novosti and the radio station Voice of Russia. The Russian president Vladimir Putin signed a decree that transferred all RIA Novosti properties to a company called Rossiya Segodnya, which would be responsible to provide coverage of Russian state policy and public life in the federation. Dmitry Kiselyov, current head of the new media conglomerate is known as to be ultraconservative.

With the former agency having had some issues with Russia's politics, it is expected that Sputnik, targeting foreign countries, to strongly defend the independent politics and national interests of Russia, showing the world the Russian truth, using modern language and new technologies. Today, Sputnik radio broadcasting operates in 34 countries, with 30 languages as so as its web multimedia content.

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