

BOOK REVIEW

Jornal Nacional:

A notícia faz história

ORGANIZED BY ZAHAR EDITORS

Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2004, 407 pgs.

REVIEWED BY **Beatriz Becker**

Television news is the most impelling product concerning information in the Brazilian contemporary society. It is the main source of information to the majority of the population. It offers both a representation of social facts and a reconstruction of reality. As an important space for the construction of the senses and identities of Brazil and of the world, TV news creates a daily experience shared by the nation, favoring a closer approach of diversified social and regional sectors, promoting values, encouraging conflicts and developing new potential perspectives.

Television news has an important role in the way different institutional powers in the country express their political orientation. It provides a space for control and exposure of public interests, including government and communities' demands, consciously mediating everyday social conflicts, therefore performing the function of a contemporary State. Those apparently contradictory actions reinforce and justify the very existence of TV news in Brazil and its precise social function of dictating daily life, mediating problems and social discrepancies. It would not be an overstatement to say that television news has affected government acts, has influenced people on their voting options and definitely changed what people think of Brazil. Over the course of the past five decades, TV has achieved enormous relevance in the national scenario.

During the 1970s, it acted as an important political-ideological resource by strengthening the general idea of a State-Nation. *Jornal Nacional*, the first network newscast, inaugurated in 1969, has had since then a strategic role, definitely working as an integrating instrument that features the new national order negotiated by the main representatives of social power. Throughout the past 35 years, it has become the most important information product in Brazil, undeniably successful due to Globo Network's constant improvement on technology and professional

resources network, providing the station an amazing opportunity for ultimate development.

Jornal Nacional, which is aired during prime-time, is Globo's most important national newscast. It is watched daily by 31 million people in Brazil and it is well-known internationally. Its coverage of the most important facts in Brazilian history has been subject both to criticism and applaud. Some coverage elicited a sharp public discussion such as the regional elections in Rio de Janeiro and the Proconsult case in 1982; the movement for free national elections, particularly the popular open assembly at the Sé Square in São Paulo in 1984, in conjunction with the celebration of the city's 430 Anniversary.

The biased editing of the presidential debate between candidates Lula and Collor clearly favoring the government's favorite in 1989 was also a source of public argument as well as the overstated report on the birth of TV host Xuxa's baby girl named Sacha, in 1998, which took ten minutes of prime time while the coverage of important public auctions of telecom carriers Telebrás and Telesp that would take place the following day lasted only four minutes. Apart from its controversial coverage of certain events, The *Jornal Nacional* has improved its performance and has found its way to establish credibility and to improve social responsibility in television journalism.

The recent release *Jornal Nacional, a notícia faz história (Jornal Nacional, the news as history)* was the result of five years of research by the so-called Globo Memory, a project of the Globo Communication Network, published by Jorge Zahar Editor. The book reviews how the most important TV newscast in the country transmitted the most important facts of our history over the past three and a half decades, gathering over a thousand interviews of its leading figures. The book includes a CD with 14 special series and 63 screen records, a chat with the main telecasters and a making-of of its own production, in addition to 420 photographs and illustrations that are part of this significant work, divided into 5 different pieces:

Part I (1965-1974) – “Nasce o JN: O Brasil e o mundo unidos pela notícia” (Globo TV creates the first News Broadcast – Brazil and the world connected through the news).

Part II (1974-1983) “O JN em época de abertura lenta e gradual” (The JN in times of slow political opening during the military rule).

Part III (1984-1990) “JN: O Brasil e o mundo” (JN : Brazil and the world).

Part IV (1990-1995) “*JN*: Impeachment no Brasil e guerra no mundo” (*JN*: the Impeachment process in Brazil and war around the world).

Part V (1995-2004) *JN*: Democracia, globalização e terror (*JN*: Democracy, globalization and terror).

The item is meant to become a reference book for students, professionals, professors and scientists in the field of journalism. It is also recommended to those interested in understanding the participation of television news in the history of Brazil's national integration while preserving its relationship with strong social forces and promoting social control. The book will provide insights to readers as to how Globo TV network and its *Jornal Nacional* have acted as a unifying agent in the Brazilian society by offering throughout the years a range of references about the daily life that revealed conflicts and suggested structural changes.

Beatriz Becker holds a PhD in Communications and Culture from the Postgraduate Program of Rio de Janeiro Federal University - UFRJ's Communications School. She is also an associate professor at that university, where she acted as the Coordinator for the Journalism Program over the past three years. In addition, she coordinated Lab-TV/CPM-ECO for two years in a row. Her PhD thesis has recently been published as a book, and it was selected as the best Thesis on Journalism in Brazil at INTERCOM 2002. This academic background is coupled with her experience as a journalist and TV Professional for over twenty years.

SUBMISSION

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