

A news values analysis of viral news on post Covid19 pandemic anti-government protests – a journalist and audience perspective

With social media, news outlets have lost control over the production and the distribution of news, because news is now also generated by news audiences who can share and comment on it (Bruns, 2007; Wadbring and Ödmark, 2016). This collaborative sphere has opened a new door into the exploration of news values, which from a discursive point of view, are not criteria for news selection but angles for news treatment (Bednarek and Caple, 2017). Shared news reflects both how discursive news values resonate in the digital sphere and how they play a role in the selection of events for audiences to share on social media. From this perspective, news selection and news treatment become interrelated. Combining a discursive news values approach and a survey experiment on the most shared news article on six worldwide post Covid19 pandemic antigovernment protests, this study will explore how news outlets and sharers perceive and shape an event that has become viral on social media. Triangulating those two research methods aims to observe first to what extent journalists' news values correspond to news consumers' perceived news values, and to shed light on the social priorities and concerns that have increasingly concerned governance issues lately (Press and Carothers, 2022). The dataset includes over 5,000 respondents and six news articles reporting political contested elections in six countries: the United States, Iraq, Peru, Chad, Kenya, and Benin, from the start of 2021 to the end 2022. The interrelationship between discursive news values and the audience perspective also raises new considerations on the place and evolution of news values in the digital sphere.

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