

The front page of a daily newspaper provides an interesting case study in how news values play a part in the selection of stories by news editors. *News values* are a range of story characteristics which explain why particular stories are given prominence. A list of news values was first identified by Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge in 1965 but has since been modified and added to by other media researchers. This essay looks at the front page of *The New Zealand Herald* on 26 April 2013. In particular, the essay looks at how the values of personalisation, elite persons, negativity, follow up, prescheduled events and meaningfulness to the audience.

Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified twelve factors which were likely to make a news story more prominent. Their research was based on international news stories (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, p. 64) and so it might not be entirely applicable to national news. They also warned that their list of factors was not complete (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, p. 65). Nonetheless, although Galtung and Ruge's factors have revised and added to over the years, their list is still the starting point for news values researchers (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009, p. 165).

One of the most noticeable of these factors present on the front page of the *Herald* on 26 April 2013 was of *reference to persons* or *personalisation*. Galtung and Ruge argue that readers are more likely to relate to a story if it is about persons or is explained in terms of persons. There are six stories on the Herald front page and four of them are about persons. In the top left corner there is an item about a proposal for Prince Harry to join the Australian army ("Harry: A new ANZAC?" 2013). In the top right corner there is an item about a prank performed on the New Zealand Prime Minister John Key by an actress ("Photo prank: PM reacts," 2013). Taking up the left side and the middle of the page there is the largest item, an article about a car hitting a house and almost injuring the family inside ("Car v house," 2013). On the right side there is a small item about allegations that the New Zealand Prime Minister of the 1980s, David Lange, lied about the breakup of the ANZUS treaty (" 'Lange lied'," 2013). In each case there is a photo of the person concerned. (Actually, most of the items consist of only a photo and a headline, with the full story covered further on in the paper; only the car accident item includes a few paragraphs of article text). There are only two non-personalised items, which are very small and below the Lange item.

Further, one of these items refers to a Prince, one refers to a Prime Minister, and one refers to both a Prime Minister and an actress, each *elite persons* who are more likely to be reported on (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). In the John Key item there is also the element of an elite person's 'fall from grace' or humiliation (McGregor, 1996). Key was humiliated because the actress Chelsie Preston Crayford held a piece of paper saying "I'M WITH STUPID→" while posing for a photo with Key (Glucina, 2013, p. 42). In the Prince Harry item there is also the element of *elite nations* (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Harry is from Britain, a powerful nation, whereas an ANZAC story could just as easily focus on someone from Turkey.

*Negativity* is another important news values. Negative events are said to be more likely than positive events to grab readers' attention because the shock they sense of life's predictability and threaten the readers' security (Golding & Elliot, cited in O'Neill & Harcup, 2009, p. 166). This is the case with the car accident article, which might make families worry that their house might also be crashed into by a car. Galtung and Ruge also identified a similar but slightly different value, that of the *unexpected* (cited in O'Neill & Harcup, 2009, p. 164). This value is most applicable to one of the non-personal items an item about a McDonald's hamburger which remained in a preserved state for 14 years inside a man's jacket ("The 14-year-old hamburger," 2013, pp. 1, 5). Three of the other stories are also negative insofar as they relate to *conflict* (McGregor, 1996). The Key article refers to the Prime Minister being insulted (Glucina, 2013, p. 42), the Lange article refers to a former Prime Minister being accused of lying (Young, 2013, p. 8), and the poppy article refers to a company being accused of commercially exploiting ANZAC Day (Tait, 2013, p. 3).

Other important news value identified by Galtung and Ruge (1965) are *continuity* with past stories, and *consonance*, which refers to the ability of one story to generate future stories on the aftermath of the event reported on. Harcup and O'Neill (2001) merge these factors into the single factor of *follow-up*. This value is present in the second non-personal item, which is about the commercialisation of ANZAC poppies ("Poppy apology," 2013). The Nivea cosmetics company posted on its website an image of an ANZAC poppy with its company logo in the middle. Nivea has been criticised for using a solemn remembrance day to promote its brand (Tait, 2013, p. 3). This has continuity about past news stories about the ANZAC poppy production being shifted from New

Zealand to overseas to save money (Conway, 2011; Newton, 2010). The story about John Key is a follow-up item. The story about the prank had already been reported, and this item is more about Key's reaction (Glucina, 2013, p. 42). There is also consonance in the Lange item. A new book has been published alleging that the former Prime Minister lied about ANZUS (Young, 2013, p. 8). The *Herald* is probably hoping that there will be further debate and reaction to the book and that this will generate more news stories.

A *pre-scheduled event* is another important news value. Newspapers are more likely to cover pre-scheduled events because the editors know that something is going to happen. With pre-scheduled events, news editors can plan for their reporters to cover events and can also prepare some articles in advance (Bell, cited in O'Neill & Harcup, 2009, p. 169). This is certainly an important factor in the case-study *Herald* front page. Three of the six items refer to ANZAC Day: there is the poppy item, the item linking Prince Harry to the ANZACs and the item about Lange and the ANZUS Treaty, which included the ANZAC countries of Australia and New Zealand (Young, 2013, p. 8). ANZAC day happens on the same day every year and is something the newspaper can prepare for. In the case of the Lange article, this is a historical article, but is something the newspaper could prepare in advance and then print on the day after ANZAC day.

Another important news value is *meaningfulness* to the audience. Galtung and Ruge (1965) argued that news stories were more likely to be meaningful to readers if they were related to the audience's country or national culture. This can be seen on the *Herald* cover. Of the six stories, all are related to New Zealand, except for the hamburger story. Even then, the hamburger is a type of food common in New Zealand. In the case of the Prince Harry item, the story is made to relate to New Zealand, although it does not really have much to do with this country. The headline refers to Harry becoming a new ANZAC ("Harry: A new ANZAC?" 2013). However, the more detailed article inside the paper reports that the proposal is for Harry to join the Australian army, rather than a joint Australia-New Zealand force, and he would serve in Darwin (Ansley, 2013, p. 10), which is a long way from New Zealand.

In conclusion, there are many news values which are present in the front page news stories every day. This essay has chosen to focus on several of these factors which are

present on the front page of the *New Zealand Herald* on 26 April 2013. The most noticeable factor is *personalisation*, as four of the six items on that page are related to persons. Further, reference to *elite persons* is another important factor, with two articles about Prime Ministers and one about a Prince, who is also from an *elite nation*. Another important factor is *negativity*. The item which takes up the greatest page space is about a car accident which threatened the life of a family. Most of the other articles are also negative in that relate to *conflict*. In three of the items, *follow-up* is also an important factor, in which the newspaper is either continuing coverage on a subject or anticipating future news. A *pre-scheduled event* is also important in three of the items, because they are related to ANZAC Day, which happens every year. Finally, *meaningfulness* is an important factor in news selection. Nearly all of the items are either related to the New Zealand audience, or made to seem to have some connection in the case of the Prince Harry story.