

**Science in regional journalism's assignment: the science and culture agency
experimental work, at Federal University of Bahia**

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Abstract

The Agency Culture and Science is a instance specialized in Scientific Journalism, part of an Extension Program of Federal University of Bahia (Ufba) called “Art, Science and Culture”. Resided at the Communication College (Facom/Ufba), the Project, has emerged in 2010, is pioneer at Bahia's State, and had its origins in the Facom/Ufba's First Course of Specialization in Scientific and Technologic Journalism. While as an online vehicle, the Agency publicizes the universities' researches from Bahia, with emphases in Ufba's scientific and technological production. All the news produced can be accessed the website www.cienciaecultura.ufba.br. The informative content include

available reports, interviews, CT&I's events publishes, opinion articles and videos. The website lays out, also, a wellspring of information bank with the Bahia's State main researchers. It is about an innovating instrument focused in the journalists interested in scientific themes. Inside the News Agency's objectives is the support to initiatives of scientific publicizing, as also contribute to the student's sensitization and formation in journalism specialized in Science. Presently, the Agency has internships - students from the Communication Bachelor's degree, with habilitation in Journalism - from Facom/Ufba, supervised by one specialized journalist. Along the Agency's daily practice experience, several questions are part of the productive routine, as well as in any instance of the journalistic field. It is an understanding that, only in this way, the society will recognize the investments in Innovation, Science and Technology's value and necessity. Furthermore, the Agency Science and Culture is bound to an optative discipline.

Introduction

The 1980's is a milestone for Brazilian science journalism mainly in the southeastern region of the country. It was in this region that formed masters and PhD in courses of Post-Graduate Program conducted at the Methodist University of São Paulo and the School of Communication and Arts (ECA), University of São Paulo. This period also marks the definition of political communication through the creation of advisory services at public universities and organizations such as the Aeronautics Technologic Institute (ITA), Brazilian Company of Agriculture Research (EMBRAPA) and foundations to support research that consolidated a job in line with the popularization of Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) topics. We also had the emergence of science editorial in press media, and the TV broadcasting, and magazines specialized in science communication, for example the *Ciência e Cultura* (Science and Culture) magazine, *Ciência Hoje* (Science Today), *Super Interessante* (Super Interesting), among other magazine programs.

But the Brazil's northeastern states did not follow this path. The creation of the Specialization in Science and Technology Journalism Course conducted by UFBA was only in 2010 with the support of Foundation for Research Support of the State of Bahia (FAPESB), established only in 2002 that an public notice of support entitled "Empreende Bahia", enable by Ufba – Federal University of Bahia. Thus was born the News Agency in ST&I - Science and Culture, now institutionalized as one of the

products from the Art Culture and Science Program, Extension's Dean program from Federal University of Bahia, being the only vehicle to make daily science communication and to consolidate the publication of several reports in the newspaper A Tarde, only press vehicle that has a page entitled Ciência&Vida (Science&Life) at Salvador.

This article deals with the daily practice of intern students from the Ufba's School of Communication supervised by a specialized journalist, under the coordination of Prof^a. Dr^a. Simone Bortoliero, from FACOM/UFBA, researcher for 30 years in this area, with Mariana Menezes Alcântara supervision, specialized in Science Journalism and Masters in Scientific Culture and Science Popularization.

The News Agency stands out mainly as a communication channel between the press and academy, becoming a pioneer with a building collection of Bahia's researchers' sources database from institutions like Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), State of Bahia University (UNEB), Federal University of Recôncavo (UFRB), Gonçalo Muniz Research Center, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation unit at Bahia (FIOCRUZ/BA), among others. The bank of specialized sources in various areas of knowledge is available on the portal www.cienciaecultura.ufba.br and is already being made available as a mobile application. The website, which is updated periodically, contains reports and interviews done by students, trainees and researchers interested in scientific dissemination. In this sense, the experience in this News Agency in ST&I seeks to bring together journalists and scientists, boosting coverage of local communication in vehicles science topics, in addition to functioning as a "laboratory" for training future science journalists in the Bahia's state.

Methodology

At Bahia, Salvador more precisely, the lack of editorials in local media, absence of disciplines or science journalism workshops in communication courses, a productive routine in media limited by the time factor, the absence of political communication dissemination of scientific institutions research throughout the state, among other, are appointed by BORTOLIERO and COSTA (2010), as the main problems for the treatment of incipient scientific and technological subjects. But we recognize that the problem is not just in the "Bahia's media", generally inattentive to what is scientifically produced at Bahia.

At another point within the UFBA, accordingly to BORTOLIERO and COSTA (2010), there is no actions or efficient and or effective channels for dissemination of research, and some researchers are unresponsive, if not reluctant to grant interviews about their findings.

The challenge is, therefore, to reiterate the citizen role played by science communication, initially within the Federal University of Bahia, the News Agency headquarters. Recently, in 2012, the National Research Council (CNPq), funding institution to research in Brazil, released within *Curriculum Lattes* (named after the physicist César Lattes) a space for Brazilian researchers convey their experiences with the popularization of ST&I (ALCÂNTARA, 2013). Hopefully, this CNPq's political vision may contribute for the News Agency seeking by Bahia's researchers as an area of accountability and democratization of access to knowledge produced inside their institutions.

This work consolidation over the last three years, has been promoting new opportunities for closer relations between journalists and scientists who were always conflicting and, concretely, to ensure a mutual search for understanding. We enable also a learning experience for journalism students involved, creating democratic spaces outside the universe of media companies and promoting public debate that good publicizing does not depend exclusively on the expertise of the journalist or the goodwill of the scientist. We are building science journalism in Bahia, which rethinks our role as transformation agents of a society where scientific model used yet causes the exclusion of afrodescendants in scientific careers.

The Agency's routine includes an online search on Post-graduate courses websites headquartered in the state of Bahia, weekly agenda discussions, taking into account the reality of research in its social, economic, cultural, environmental aspects and their integration into society. Although the search to the Bahia's researchers Lattes database, we do not prioritize "lattelized" sources, common practice in the Brazilian scientific journalism. The agenda's criteria by the staff within the Agency are not limited to researcher's classification hierarchical levels at CNPq. What we consider at this time of journalistic verification is whether the sources and the researches bring relevant contributions from a social point of view to society.

Besides the production of reports on scientific topics, the News Agency also provides press office services for the scientific community that holds events in Bahia. This idea arose from the experience of a journalist and editor in chief of News Agency

Science and Culture, Mariana Menezes Alcântara, with coverage of scientific meetings, and has also presented work on this pioneering practice at Bahia in the 2nd Congress Media Literacy and Citizenship, held in 2013, at Pavilion of Knowledge - Ciência Viva in Lisbon, Portugal. (ALCÂNTARA and others, 2013). Other News Agency practices are to perform Questions and Answers interviews, production of videos 60 seconds with researchers, providing researchers with Podcasts, plus serve opinion articles from researchers on scientific and technological issues relevant to the state. Moreover, conveys series of special reports in the field of human health, ST&I policy, alternative energy, food, studies of marine pollution, heavy metal contamination in the Bahia's Recôncavo region and gender studies. Among the special series produced covering the worst drought in 40 years in the Northeast, hearing researchers and people involved. Our practice has enabled the growing idea that to do science journalism we need to hear other holders of other knowledge sources, such as the popular and traditional knowledge of the communities involved in research conducted by the academy.

Results

The commitment to guide the local press materialized in 2013 – in fact more sharply – when News Agency Science and Culture has partnered with the editorship Science&Life, which affects news of a scientific nature in A Tarde Journal, one of the most traditional vehicles at Salvador. Other reports were already reverberating, spontaneously, in the local and even national press. In 2012, Scientific and Cultural Agency was made part of the university extension program Arts Culture and Science, which coexists with Web TV Science and Culture and the UFBA's Art and Culture Calendar.

Gradually, the team has made the Agency's dissemination more efficient, through social media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), participating in coverage of scientific meetings and exhibition fairs. For two consecutive years we are the instance that reverberate the activities of the UFBA's Week of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (ACTA).

The developed work also changes the way the academic community in the state of Bahia access the researches from other universities. And in the specific case of the students from the School of Communication with an emphasis in Journalism, we contribute to issues around ST&I demystification, as difficult or impenetrable field idea formed from a vision of science education in Brazil's secondary education.

Conclusion

Even with the support of experienced professionals, News Agency trainees are also faced with a double challenge: to overcome the unpleasant encounters with researchers reluctant to give interviews and the work of journalist disdain or disrespect to the situations inherent in the training of students, what requires persistence and ability to seek alternative sources and, of course, critical vision for themes contextualization.

Another challenge lies in building the new profile of these students/trainees in the Agency, who notes on a daily production the weaknesses of their training. It is natural that to talk and write about science it is made necessary a multidisciplinary training that puts us on a level of critical beings from the standpoint of understanding the social, cultural, scientific and political phenomena of our time. If we stick to the query and reading scientific articles before interviews with researchers, we will not know the implications of their research. This is the great challenge UFBA's News Agency in ST&I - Science and Culture: to go beyond the search for each researcher Lattes.

Despite not having the same speed as the drafting of a common newspaper company, the news agency is concerned with quality work, on a consistent basis with the number of members involved and the equipment available. The idea has already started the building of an online TV with scientific theme, and can give an innovation magazine. The core of this proposal is to create popular science laboratories as producers of materials that allow increasingly access by the Bahia's population to technologies and knowledge - what brings social justice and enables higher quality of life.

Another impact will be from the point of view of the formation of an innovative occupational profile in the state of Bahia, ie, the formation of press officers of universities and research institutions; training of scientists as communicators interested in writing for the media, or writing books about publicizing; training of specialized reporters and columnists in the media in ST&I. From the point of view of the technical profile of our students the Agency, the impacts will be in the training of writing about science for the press, interviews with scientists, writing of publicizing articles specialized journals, and the design of institutional science communication plans publicizing and publish articles in the local media .

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