

## **Framing Political News in the Chilean Press: The Persistence of the Conflict Frame**

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This article describes the treatment of politics in the Chilean press using five generic frames and indicators: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. The aim of our research was, for the first time in Chile, to detect the use of these frames to determine how generic they are. A quantitative content analysis, based on the indicators adapted from the baseline study and covering three years and six distinct newspapers, enabled us to establish how these frames are presented in the Chilean media, their frequency of use, and whether there are significant variations over time and among the newspapers analyzed.

*Keywords: political news, Chilean press, framing*

More than four decades' analysis of media framing has facilitated an understanding of how journalists narrate and represent events of national and international importance. Entman defines framing as "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation" (Entman, 2007, p. 164), and researchers make the distinction between issue-specific frames—applicable to a particular event, subject, or topic—and generic frames, which broadly encompasses structural aspects and general features applicable to different topics, periods, and cultural contexts (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). To develop an understanding of framing in the Chilean media, this research analyzes if the set of five generic frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000; i.e., attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality) are also used in Chile.<sup>1</sup> Despite extensive international research based on the method of analysis of generic frames used by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), which has been widely replicated in other countries and cultural contexts, similar research in Chile has yet to be undertaken. This study will enable us not only to measure the presence of the generic frames and

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indicators from the baseline study but also to compare the media treatment of the political news with that of other countries, including those in Latin America, where a tradition of analysis based on the work of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) has already been established. This study will therefore help to establish to what extent these generic frames are common to different cultural contexts, a view upheld by the original authors. Accordingly, the question we shall address is that proposed by Godefroidt, Berbers, and d'Haenens (2016) in their research on the coverage of the Syrian war in the media of Great Britain, France, and Russia: "How generic are those generic frames?" (p. 5). Furthermore, the findings of this article may help to explain the origin of the continuing perception by communications researchers of the Chilean media's uniform treatment of the news (Mönckeberg, 2009; Sunkel & Geoffroy, 2001). Their concern is that it leads to an impoverishment of journalism's contribution to society's democratic development by systematically inducing the same interpretation of socially relevant, and, on occasion, controversial events, both common to the political arena and the government.

The objective of this article, therefore, was twofold. First, we wanted to replicate the generic frames analysis outlined by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), determine whether their indicators can be similarly grouped according to the original study, and determine whether their five frames are replicated when applied to an analysis of the political news in Chilean newspapers. Having established how these generic frame indicators are defined in Chile, our second objective was to observe possible trends as well as major differences in the use of the observed frames.

This research is the initial stage of a broader investigation aiming later to observe separately the use of the five generic frames in the citations from each source included in the news items (the newspaper itself also qualifies as a source), given that, as suggested by Porto (2002), a more complex analysis of the structure of messages enables researchers to overcome the tendency to observe media content as homogeneous (Gronemeyer & Porath, in press).<sup>2</sup> To broaden our analysis, at a third stage, we will use an inductive analysis of framing with representative cases from our sample. This should allow us to detect improved definitions of generic frames applicable to news in Chile's print media.

### **Media Framing**

Different conceptualizations of framing and applications of this method of analysis are the subject of ongoing debate (Aalberg, Strömbäck, & de Vreese, 2011; Sádaba, Rodríguez, & Bartolomé, 2012). Notwithstanding, interest in frame analysis in communications research has increased dramatically in many countries (Weaver, 2007), above all in Europe and the United States but also progressively in Latin America. Extensive academic research therefore precedes this study of the generic frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) now applied to the Chilean press—a work that is overdue and that addresses concerns regarding the perception of uniformity in the treatment of news content in Chile. Indeed, Gitlin (1980) says that the news frames reveal the "persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion" (p. 7) of informative details, and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) add that frames mold public perception in political affairs and institutions and the interpretation of the public in newsworthy events. Although Durham (1998) describes

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<sup>2</sup> An exploratory application of this methodology was performed using a selection of the sample. This also provided an opportunity to debate aspects of the theoretical discussion of our study.

the constant repetition of certain frames as professional journalistic routine and asserts that they represent a social narrative that defines social relations in a time-specific context, Tankard (2001) states that the power of media framing derives "from its ability to define the terms of a debate without the audience realizing it is taking place" (p. 97). Kozman (2016) adds that through uniform framing, the media generates a homogeneous agenda that delineates people's capacity to confront issues. Rinke, Wessler, Löb, and Weinmann (2013) conclude that "it is this well-documented reactivity of citizens to frames in the news and other types of communication that makes them consequential and important to study" (p. 475).

Although numerous overlapping definitions of framing coexist,<sup>3</sup> we adopted the definition provided by Entman (2007), using the research of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) as our baseline to establish whether the generic frames analyzed in their research are apparent in the Chilean press, and which, according to the authors, "largely account for all frames that have been found in the news" (p. 95). They reached this conclusion after examining the literature on framing and identifying five frames typically observed in news coverage that they summarized as follows: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. Their conceptualizations are detailed in the Method section.

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) consider their work to be a continuation of research undertaken by Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992), who identified, using multimethod research, the group of dominant frames used by the media in the United States referring to a diverse range of events (i.e., conflict, economic consequences, human impact, and morality). Several studies have detected the simultaneous use of these frames (Neuman et al., 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), and others have observed them separately (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). De Vreese (2004) argues that some are more common to political coverage, such as that of conflict, but others correspond to journalism's structural conventions, norms, and values.

Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) deductive approach, which "involves predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news" (p. 94), required a set of frames likely to be found in the news, similar to the contribution made by Neuman et al. (1992). In their study, the Dutch researchers pioneered a new approach by using these frames comparatively in an international context to determine their generic nature beyond borders and by measuring their prevalence in the news coverage of political leaders during a meeting of the European Union heads of state in 1997. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) considered that, having made a reliable assessment of recurrent frames in the news, as well as establishing a set of validated content analysis indicators, their method can easily be replicated and used with large-scale samples, allowing for the study of "developments in the news over time and similarities and differences in the ways in which politics and other topics of national and international importance are framed in the news in different countries" (p. 94). Igartua et al. (2004) have characterized this study as the most sophisticated method for the consistent assessment of different frames in the news.

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<sup>3</sup>Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) cite and discuss several authors' conceptualizations of framing.

At this stage of our research, the purpose of analyzing the presence of validated generic frames is underpinned by the distinction mentioned before, between an issue-specific frame and a generic frame. Kozman (2016) explains that “whereas issue-specific frames reveal what aspects of an issue were selected and what were left out, generic frames tell us more about the way the media package any issue” (p. 4).

In addition to studies employing generic frames or issue-specific frames, there are other approaches to research on framing. Here, we shall mention just a few. In an extensive line of study, researchers have observed and conceptualized other frames in political communication, mainly in the context of political campaigns. For example, the study of strategic frames (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Snow, Vliegenthart, & Corrigan-Brown, 2007), game or horse-race frames (Lawrence, 2010), the nationalization frame for internationally related issues (Godefroidt et al., 2016), and even the strategic game frame and the contestation frame combined (Rinke et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the theoretical and critical analysis of Aalberg et al. (2011) on the framing of politics as strategy and game refers to the considerable differences in their conceptualizations and practical applications as well as disagreements regarding terms, such as *game* and *strategy* frames, synonymous for some, but not for others. The authors concluded that the different methods applied to further understanding of these frames make it difficult to draw comparisons over time, across borders, or with different studies.

Other work on framing has introduced innovative methodologies, combining analyses of generic and issue-specific frames as part of a single investigation. Kozman (2016) argued in favor of this method, stating that “examining two different aspects of an issue allows for methodological standardization and replication that leads to a deeper understanding of the theory in question” (p. 15).

### ***Research Using Generic Frames in Latin America***

Several studies have been undertaken in Spain and some Latin American countries, based either partially or entirely on the seminal work of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Nevertheless, they remain confined to the work of a few authors, countries, and topics, such that a great deal of academic work has yet to be carried out. Even so, they have demonstrated the usefulness of analyzing, case by case, the behavior of the generic frames to establish the idiosyncrasies of each country, to compare features among them and to distinguish between circumstances and cultural contexts. Moreover, based on the findings of these studies, several methodological approaches to framing have been advanced, being better adapted to local cultural realities, thus enhancing this theory and method (Aruguete, 2010; Ballesteros, 2015; Igartua & Muñiz, 2004; Muñiz, 2011).

A significant proportion of the research on framing in the Spanish-speaking world has been carried out in Spain. Igartua, in collaboration with other researchers, is regarded as the pioneer in a line of research that began by assessing, in the Spanish press, the validity of the generic frames and indicators identified by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000).

An important study for our own research is that of Igartua and Muñiz (2004), who translated into Spanish the frames and indicators provided by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). These were further adapted to the Chilean context and tested in our research. In their application of the original generic

frames to press and television reports on immigration in Spain, together with a further series of studies undertaken with other researchers on the same topic, Igartua and Muñiz (2004) observed a predominant use of the attribution of responsibility, human interest, and conflict frames to reconstruct news on immigration. In a subsequent study, Igartua, Cheng, and Muñiz (2005), who adapted the original indicators to the new context but used the same five frames as Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), established that, in the framing of news regarding Latin Americans in the Spanish media, these same three frames were again prevalent. Moving away from the findings of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), a study by Ballesteros (2015) established the significant presence in the Spanish press of only two of the original five frames in news items related to Catalanian independence: attribution of responsibility and conflict, frames that have steered journalists in their structuring of news items. These studies have demonstrated that the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames are a common feature of Latin American political news and that the other three frames, human interest, morality, and economic consequences, are less recurrent.

Further Latin American studies of framing reported not having identified the five generic frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Moreover, having provided evidence to support this, they adopted methodological changes to identify frames that best characterize the work of journalists from the region.

Following the line of research initiated in Spain, Muñiz (2011) analyzed the news frames on migration in the Mexican digital media, focusing this time on migrants in his country of origin. Using two instruments, the first being a scale of frames relating specifically to immigration from the work of Igartua, Muñiz, and Otero (2006), and the scale of generic frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the researcher identified four frames typically observed in the Mexican press regarding the political debate on migratory regulation, migrant crime and expulsion, migrant regularization processes, and the migratory experience. In terms of the generic frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), after adapting the indicators, Muñiz (2011) reported that these news frames were observable in the following order of recurrence: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, morality, and economic consequences. Muñiz (2011) stressed that the application of the scale developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) had been partially possible, even though certain items were eliminated to achieve greater consistency.

Aruguete (2010) conducted research on framing in the Argentinian press and discussed the appropriateness of using the frames observed in other cultural arenas. Amadeo (2008) had already asserted that those used in the presentation of news stories cannot be understood without first appreciating either the conditions of the producers and receivers or the social and cultural environment in which the exchange of meanings takes place. Aruguete (2010) initially used the five frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) to identify their presence and frequency in coverage of the privatization of the National Telecommunications Company (ENTEL) and gave evidence to support their applicability in Argentina. Indeed, she concluded it would be inappropriate to perform direct and uncritical extrapolation of analyzed values in case studies occurring in different political, social, and economic contexts (Aruguete, 2010). She therefore suggested further frames be established in addition to the predefined ones. The researcher also identified two new frames: conflict with a human impact and resolution of conflicts. Aruguete and Koziner (2014) partially repeated the application of the frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) to observe Argentinian press coverage of the enactment of the Audiovisual Communication

Services Law (Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual). As in previous studies, a pilot research project had detected that the presence of the human interest and morality frames was insignificant, and that only the attribution of responsibility, conflict, and economic consequences were used. The findings led Aruguete and Koziner (2014) to conclude that "it is not possible to keep the frames just as they appear in the reference text [by Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000]" (p. 149), and questioned their capacity to cover the treatment of issues taking place in singular, entirely dissimilar contexts.

In Chile, some research on framing has been carried out, but none of these studies have used the entire method outlined by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Dotson, Jacobson, Kaid, and Carlton (2012) analyzed the framing of news stories on climate change based on what they defined as the political ideology of the conservative newspaper *El Mercurio* and the liberal newspaper *La Nación*. They used only two of the researchers' frame categories: economic consequences and conflict. They observed that the paper *La Nación* used more subject-specific and diverse frames than *El Mercurio*, and that, in both newspapers, there was predominant use of the conflict frame. These were similar to the results observed in coverage of the same subject in the United States, Europe, and other countries. Cabalín (2013) conducted research on framing in press editorials on education relating to the 2011 student protests in Chile. The author ascertained that the frames emphasized the political repercussions of the conflict and actions that should have been taken in the context of the political system, with blame attributed to public education officials. He concluded that the education problem was framed as circumstantial rather than systematic in editorial columns. In a previous study, Gronemeyer and Porath (2015) used the attribution of responsibility frame to compare the frames of editorial and press articles relating to the same event. The results revealed a striking similarity to the work of Cabalín (2013), with judgment passed on the agent responsible: rejection is balanced against acceptance, and less criticism is levelled at the government than at civil actors.

Unlike other Latin American countries, where attempts have already been made to establish the validity of the five generic frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), this had yet to be carried out in Chile.

Leading on from this discussion, and bearing in mind the twin objectives of this study, the following research questions were considered:

- RQ1: Can the same indicators for the five frames identified by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) be detected in the political news stories of different types of press media in Chile?*
- RQ2: Which of the frames are most commonly used in Chile, considering the six newspapers analyzed?*
- RQ3: Are there significant differences in the frames' frequency of use according to the media analyzed and the news stories' year of publication?*
- RQ4: In an intramedia comparative analysis, are there significant differences within the same newspaper in the frames' frequency of use, considering separately the three years of study?*

### Method

Six newspapers were analyzed, four from the capital, Santiago, one from the south of Chile, and another from the north. Chile's leading newspapers, including their digital versions, continue to be the most frequently used platforms for accessing political news (Godoy & Gronemeyer, 2012). Research conducted by Porath (2007) on Chilean presidential campaigns also reveals that the capacity of the national press for agenda setting far exceeds that of television, which prioritizes crime, sport, and reports emphasizing the human factor.

This research analyzed coverage in *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, the foremost national newspapers owned by the country's two largest media publishing houses, El Mercurio SAP and Copesa SA. Both companies are typically characterized as disseminating the political and economic thinking of the Chilean right wing (Navia, Osorio, & Valenzuela, 2013). These papers are major contributors to political debate and have the greatest influence on public opinion and media agenda in the country. The latest data show that together in the first quarter of 2014, they represented 53.9% (34.2% *El Mercurio* and 19.7% *La Tercera*) of the average weekly circulation of Santiago's paid morning press ("Boletín de Circulación," 2014). These newspapers were compared with *Publímetro*, Chile's most widely read free commuter tabloid and independent of the two newspaper consortiums mentioned above, and the popular tabloid *La Cuarta*, which allocates little space to the political arena but whose content may be more similar to *Publímetro* than to more sensationalist tabloids. Outside Santiago, the study reviewed two leading regional newspapers: *El Sur* from Concepción (Bío Bío or VIII Region) and *El Día* from La Serena (the IV Coquimbo Region). *El Sur* was included because of its wide circulation in the Bío Bío Region and Concepción, the region's administrative capital. *El Día* is published in the northern city of La Serena and is the Coquimbo Region's most widely read newspaper. *El Día* has a similar level of importance to *El Sur*, allowing for comparisons between both newspapers.

The sample included news articles addressing government-related affairs, the political elite, and political parties as well as those regarding movements and social actors who pressurize for change in public policies. The articles were drawn from the national or political news sections. In the Santiago-based newspapers, the study considered news stories addressing the same news events published in *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* during the research period to ensure comparability between both newspapers. By extension, these were the same items selected from *Publímetro* and *La Cuarta*. From the two regional newspapers, all items published in the main sections during the research period were selected because they primarily cover local political issues. By applying the same selection method as in Santiago, there would have been insufficient material from which to draw meaningful results. Moreover, almost all of these items contain some political issue.

Our research covered two constructed weeks for each of the three years analyzed: 2007, 2011 and 2015. The first ranged from the end of March to the beginning of May (to avoid the impact of the annual presidential account of May 21 on media agendas); the second ran from the beginning of October to the end of November. The time frame was long enough to detect patterns, but choosing normal periods, during which no government had recently taken office and no elections had been held. Nevertheless, the period did include an alternation in coalition governments: Michelle Bachelet (center

left), Sebastián Piñera (center right), and Michelle Bachelet again. The constructed-weeks sampling method is recommended to estimate the content of newspaper editions over a six-month period, being more efficient than a simple random sampling or sampling of consecutive days. It also avoids the peculiarities of journalistic routines, the cyclical nature of the news, and the effects of a topic remaining on the media agenda for a specific time (Hester & Dougall, 2007).

The unit of analysis for detecting the generic frames was each news story from the sample. A total of 1,164 stories were categorized as follows: 281 from 2007, 285 from 2011, and 598 from 2015. Twice as many stories were selected from 2015 due to the extensive media coverage of corruption cases that year. The distribution of units of analysis by newspaper was *El Mercurio*, 175; *La Tercera*, 171; *Publímetro*, 152; *La Cuarta*, 45; *El Sur*, 310; *El Día*, 311.

### ***Frame Measurement***

Data entry primarily involved context variables for analyzing news articles such as date, newspaper, and headline. To determine whether the same indicators of the five frames observed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) were replicated in the news of Chile, we used 19 of the 20 baseline indicators in the form of standard questions oriented to each unit of analysis (see indicators in Table 1). The question on visual aspects of television news was omitted. Coders had to respond to the questions with a 1 (the answer to the question is yes) or 0 (the answer to the question is no), to ensure that the expressed content of the material analyzed corresponded with the fixed questions oriented to the specific news item.

Each question, three to five per frame, was designed to indicate the presence of any of the five frames from the baseline research: attribution of responsibility, referring to the responsibility of a government, individual or group in a particular event or issue; conflict, referring to disputes between individuals, groups or institutions; human interest, offering a human face or emotional perspective in the presentation of issues or problems; economic consequences, covering an event or issue in terms of the economic consequences for a particular individual, group, institution, region, or country; and morality, which frames the event in terms of religious acceptance or moral prescription.

To detect these frames, scores had to be sufficiently high for at least three of the questions corresponding to each one. Following the work of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), only indicators with a minimum factor of 0.5 were considered, as the parameter most frequently used by researchers.

Initially, a factor analysis was performed to determine the frames, followed by the appropriate statistical analyses addressing the research questions.



*Table 1. Holsti Index of Intercoder Reliability Test Per Year.*

Framing items (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000)	2007	2011	2015	Average 3 years
<b>Attribution of responsibility frame</b>				
Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?	.900	.754	.772	.809
Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?	.878	.848	.824	.850
Does the story suggest solution(s) to the issue/problem?	.828	.801	.764	.798
Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem?	.622	.485	.523	.543
Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?	.933	.982	.948	.954
<b>Human interest frame</b>				
Does the story provide a human example or "human face" on the issue?	.972	.947	.935	.951
Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?	.939	.942	.969	.950
Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?	.822	.860	.787	.823
Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?	.967	.959	.946	.957
<b>Conflict frame</b>				
Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?	.767	.743	.761	.757
Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?	.900	.895	.878	.891
Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the issue/problem?	.694	.789	.831	.771
Does the story refer to winners and losers?	.994	1.000	1.000	.998
<b>Morality frame</b>				
Does the story contain any moral message?	.889	.871	.852	.871
Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?	.989	1.000	.659	.883
Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?	.883	.918	.844	.882

Economic frame				
Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?	.944	.982	.943	.956
Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?	.956	.977	.946	.960
Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?	.928	.947	.904	.926
Averages	.885	.879	.847	.870
Averages without the 3 indicators removed	.891	.894	.856	.880

### ***Coding Procedures and Analysis of Intercoder Reliability***

Quantitative data entry was conducted by a trained team of four coders. These were independent of the researchers, as suggested by Krippendorff (1990) to improve reliability. Experienced coders were selected from among final-year students or graduates of the Universidad Católica's Department of Communications. A code book operationalized the categories of analysis, and successive training sessions were held with the coders prior to the coding itself. Translations of the original indicators into Spanish were provided by Igartua and Muñiz (2004), and these were tested during the coders' training period and adapted for use in Chile.

Coders underwent three reliability tests during the coding process, one for each year analyzed. A subsample was selected, comprising 11% of the total number of coded cases, and subjected to the reliability test using three trained coders. Table 1 shows the average coincidence indices for the three-year period (Holsti index). Previous research has shown that there are no established standards when defining the required coefficients in a reliability test of this kind. However, Neuendorf (2002) reviewed the rules of thumb suggested by several methodologists and concluded, "coefficients of 0.9 or greater would be acceptable to all; 0.8 or greater would be acceptable in most situations; and below that, there exists great disagreement" (p. 145). The criterion of 0.7 is often used for exploratory research. In our own research, most of the average coincidence indices (Holsti index) among the three coders for each year were greater than 0.9, and most of the other indices were above the 0.8 coefficient. The lowest coefficient corresponds to one question, but, as we will see, this variable was eliminated from the final analysis.

## **Findings**

### ***Measurement of News Frames***

We conducted a principal component analysis using varimax rotation on the responses to the 19 framing indicators applied to the Chilean press sample to identify frames. The general tendency was to replicate most of the framing indicators from the baseline research. Nevertheless, the distribution of the indicators was somehow different in three of the original frames, while two frames were replicated, as in the original study. The two most prevalent factors were those of conflict and attribution of responsibility. The total variance identified by the frame indicators was 47.2%.

We reiterate that only indicators with factors greater than 0.5 were considered for final analysis. In Chile, 16 of the original indicators fulfilled this standard, distributed amongst the five generic frames of the baseline study (see Table 2). Three of the 19 original indicators did not obtain the minimum and were discarded: "The story suggests someone outside government is responsible for a particular success or failure"; "The story refers to morality, God, or religious tenets"; and "The story refers to winners and losers." In the work of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), two indicators were discarded: "The story suggests the problem requires urgent intervention" and, coinciding with the Chilean case, "The story refers to winners and losers."

**Table 2. Rotated Factors for the 16 Framing Indicators Considered in Chile.**

Framing items	Factors				
	Conflict	Attr. of resp.	Econ. cons.	Human interest	Morality
<b>Conflict frame</b>					
Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?	.818	.071	.014	.028	.045
Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?	.756	.213	-.010	.024	.122
Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the issue/problem?	.555	-.037	.234	.021	.278
<b>Attribution of responsibility frame</b>					
Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?	-.000	.768	.019	.001	-.083
Does the story suggest solution(s) to the issue/problem?	.206	.659	-.020	-.033	.067
Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?	.189	.584	.025	-.029	.094
Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?	.019	.546	.073	.054	-.005
<b>Economic frame</b>					
Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?	.000	.097	.748	.048	-.065
Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?	.058	-.104	.745	-.015	-.012
Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?	.063	.142	.663	-.110	.152

Human interest frame					
Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?	.045	-.126	.045	.727	.009
Does the story provide a human example or "human face" on the issue?	-.149	.133	.031	.712	.065
Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?	.139	-.094	-.006	.647	.094
Morality frame					
Does the story contain any moral message?	.184	.047	-.079	.094	.706
Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?	.256	.068	-.026	.060	.705
Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?	-.282	.308	.184	.216	.531

*Note.* Extraction method: Principal factors analysis. Method of rotation: Varimax standardization with Kaiser.

Composition of the economic consequences frame was the same in both the Netherlands and Chile. Its three original indicators were always grouped in the same way with factors greater than 0.5. The conflict frame, which features most prominently in the Chilean press, also correlated with the results of the baseline study, with the same three indicators composing this frame, as used in the original study's final analysis. We should also recall the exclusion in both the Netherlands and Chile of the same indicator considered originally in this frame. Nevertheless, in the latter, it was classified under the moral frame with a factor of less than 0.5. Furthermore, the indicator "The story suggests someone outside the government is responsible for a success or failure" was initially classified in Chile within the conflict frame, despite also being eliminated; in the baseline study, however, it corresponded to the attribution of responsibility frame.

The other three factors were replicated in Chile with variations in the indicators composing them. In the attribution of responsibility frame, three of the four indicators from the baseline study's final analysis were replicated. In the Netherlands, a fifth indicator from the attribution of responsibility frame had been discarded, given that it failed to reach the minimum factor of 0.5—"The story suggests that the problem requires urgent intervention"—although in Chile, it did classify under this frame. One possible explanation is that the attribution of responsibility frame is characterized by greater importance given to the government, and a greater demand for urgency. Moreover, in Chile, the original indicator of this frame—"Does the story suggest that an individual is responsible for the issue/problem?"—was classified under the conflict frame and was discarded, having accounted for less than the minimum factor of 0.5.

The distribution of human interest frame indicators shows that one of the four original indicators was clustered into the morality frame, but the three remaining indicators correlated with the study of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Certainly, the distribution of morality frame indicators varied

substantially from the baseline study. In Chile, this frame category was redefined because, as mentioned, the original indicator, asking whether "The story refers to morality, God, or religious tenets," was discarded, two of the three original indicators were clustered into the morality frame and, finally, the third was reallocated from the human interest frame: "The story emphasizes how individuals or groups are affected by the issue." This may be explained contextually in terms of the differences between the Catholic values inherent in Chilean society and the Calvinist traditions of the Netherlands. The third indicator in the morality frame can be traced to the tendency of Latin American societies to associate morality with welfare provision for individuals and communities. It makes sense that, from a more Calvinist or enlightened tradition, morality is associated with the indicator "The story refers to morality, God, or religious tenets." In Chile, however, this indicator was associated with the human interest rather than the morality frame, with a factor of less than 0.5.

For each of the five categories, Cronbach's alpha, which measures the frames' internal consistency, produced the following results: conflict, comprising three indicators, Cronbach  $\alpha = .68$ ; attribution of responsibility, four indicators, Cronbach  $\alpha = .59$ ; human interest, three indicators, Cronbach  $\alpha = .53$ ; economic consequences, three indicators, Cronbach  $\alpha = 0.56$ ; and morality, three indicators, Cronbach  $\alpha = .50$ . The values are acceptable for the conflict frame and partially for the attribution of responsibility frame; there are, however, certain internal consistency problems with the other three frames, indicating both the need for caution in interpreting results and limiting the possibility of universalization, at least for the Chilean case.

#### *The Level of Use of the Generic Frames in Chile*

Having established the level of replication and redefinition in the Chilean press for the indicators and generic frames drawn from the baseline study, we can analyze their frequency of use and identify any significant patterns and variations among the newspapers analyzed over the entire research period.

The generic frame used most regularly in the Chilean political news is that of conflict ( $M = 0.49$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ) followed by attribution of responsibility ( $M = 0.36$ ,  $SD = 0.31$ ). The two next most commonly used are the economic consequences frame ( $M = 0.16$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ) and the redefined morality frame ( $M = 0.17$ ,  $SD = 0.24$ ). In the political news in Chile, the human interest frame is the least used ( $M = 0.08$ ,  $SD = 0.20$ ).

If the frequency of the frames in the four Santiago-based newspapers is measured separately from their use in the two regional newspapers, we can see a substantial similarity overall in the framing of political news in the Chilean press. The only major difference occurs in the use of the conflict frame, which is considerably greater in the capital's newspapers ( $M = 0.56$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ;  $M = 0.42$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ , respectively).

The post hoc tests showed that the rate of use of frames from one year to another for the sample media changed significantly in all but one year in the period under analysis (Table 3). The conflict frame, for instance, peaked in 2007, decreased in 2011, and dropped to the lowest frequency of use in 2015. The attribution of responsibility frame also reached its highest level in 2007, dropping in 2011 and recovering

in 2015, although not at the same rate as 2007. There was a clear drop in 2011 in the use of the economic consequences frame and that of human interest was the only one without significant variations. The same year saw the morality frame reach its highest level of frequency over the research period. The situation changed in 2015, when the use of the economic consequences and human interest frames increased once again, but there was a marked decrease in use of the morality frame.

**Table 3. Level of Use of Frames in the Chilean Press Per Year.**

Newspapers <sup>a</sup>		Conflict	Attr. of resp.	Econ. cons.	Human interest	Morality	N =
2007	<i>M</i>	.549	.400	.168	.085	.130	281
	<i>SD</i>	.374	.329	.287	.191	.206	
2011	<i>M</i>	.482	.325	.107	.068	.255	285
	<i>SD</i>	.355	.291	.215	.177	.286	
2015	<i>M</i>	.461	.363	.179	.088	.143	598
	<i>SD</i>	.379	.303	.272	.209	.226	
		$F(2, 1161) = 5.41,$	$F(2, 1161) = 4.32,$	$F(2, 1161) = 7.59,$	$F(2, 1161) = 1.01,$	$F(2, 1161) = 25.95,$	
		$p = .005$	$p = .013$	$p = .001$	$p = .364$	$p = .000$	

<sup>a</sup>*El Mercurio, La Tercera, Publimetro, La Cuarta, El Sur y El Día.*

A search for trends in frame usage during the period of study (Table 4), separated by newspaper, indicates that the highest rates in the use of the frames corresponds to the only newspaper of record, *El Mercurio*. *La Tercera*, Chile's second most important newspaper, follows a similar trend to *El Mercurio*, though with lower frequency rates for each frame. Of the two regional newspapers, *El Sur* showed the highest rate of frequency for the frames, a similar pattern to the Santiago-based *El Mercurio*. It also correlates with *El Mercurio* in terms of its clear use of the economic consequences frame.

In accordance with the post hoc tests conducted (Table 4), observation of each indicator's use during the research period as a whole, and separated by newspaper, showed clear and significant differences among papers in three of the five analyzed frames: conflict, attribution of responsibility, and economic consequences. No significant differences were observed among the different newspapers for the human interest frame and the morality frame.

**Table 4. Frames Disaggregated by Media in the Study Period.**

Newspapers		Conflict	Attr. of resp.	Econ. cons.	Human interest	Morality	N =
<i>El Mercurio</i>	<i>M</i>	.657	.426	.204	.097	.192	175
	<i>SD</i>	.358	.326	.307	.209	.249	
<i>La Tercera</i>	<i>M</i>	.616	.396	.189	.080	.183	171
	<i>SD</i>	.339	.324	.282	.193	.264	
<i>Publimetro</i>	<i>M</i>	.461	.280	.090	.066	.132	152
	<i>SD</i>	.336	.273	.199	.176	.227	
<i>La Cuarta</i>	<i>M</i>	.326	.328	.096	.111	.096	45
	<i>SD</i>	.386	.291	.220	.236	.169	
<i>El Sur</i>	<i>M</i>	.449	.379	.202	.089	.171	310
	<i>SD</i>	.370	.297	.279	.211	.244	
<i>El Día</i>	<i>M</i>	.395	.338	.116	.073	.168	311
	<i>SD</i>	.370	.307	.233	.181	.241	
		<i>F</i> (5, 1158) = 18.86, <i>p</i> = .000	<i>F</i> (5, 1158) = 4.85, <i>p</i> = .000	<i>F</i> (5, 1158) = 7.55, <i>p</i> = .000	<i>F</i> (5, 1158) = 0.81, <i>p</i> = .545	<i>F</i> (5, 1158) = 1.97, <i>p</i> = .080	

#### ***Intramedia Frame Analysis Separated by Newspaper and Year***

The question about patterns in the use of frames within each newspaper throughout the period of study refers to the constant perception that Chilean newspapers are similar in their treatment of political news. Table 5 shows the trend in the level of use for the five generic frames analyzed, grouped according to newspaper and year. We excluded *La Cuarta* from this analysis per year because of the few items that fulfilled the selection criteria, thus preventing us from obtaining valid results.

*El Mercurio* showed statistically significant variations in its use of the two most recurrent frames, conflict and attribution of responsibility, given that their frequency of use dropped over time. In 2007, the conflict frame was by far the most frequent, dropping substantially in 2011 and once again, though to a lesser extent, in 2015. The pattern was repeated in the use of the attribution of responsibility frame between the study's first and third years. The three remaining frames showed a different pattern of occurrences without significant variations.

In contrast to *El Mercurio*, which revealed major differences in the frequency of the most commonly used frames in Chile during the research period, *La Tercera* emerged as the most persistent quality newspaper in terms of the application of the five frames, with only slight variations, except for the attribution of responsibility frame. The changes observed for this frame, however, were not especially

significant either. As with *El Mercurio*, use of the attribution of responsibility frame decreased successively over the three-year period.

**Table 5. Value of the Average Indices of the Five Frames Comparing Their Variation Over Time Within the Same Medium.**

Newspapers	Year	Conflict	Attr. of resp.	Econ. cons.	Human interest	Morality
<i>El Mercurio</i>	2007	.768	.527	.167	.080	.181
	2011	.637	.463	.137	.039	.235
	2015	.611	.363	.246	.126	.182
		$F(2, 172) = 3.14,$ $p = .046$	$F(2, 172) = 4.35,$ $p = .014$	$F(2, 172) = 2.04,$ $p = .133$	$F(2, 172) = 2.44,$ $p = .090$	$F(2, 172) = 0.63,$ $p = .535$
<i>La Tercera</i>	2007	.686	.515	.108	.137	.206
	2011	.568	.385	.207	.054	.216
	2015	.610	.360	.210	.070	.163
		$F(2, 168) = 1.12,$ $p = .327$	$F(2, 168) = 2.99,$ $p = .53$	$F(2, 168) = 1.77,$ $p = .173$	$F(2, 168) = 1.98,$ $p = .141$	$F(2, 168) = 0.70,$ $p = .499$
<i>Publmetro</i>	2007	.511	.306	.070	.059	.091
	2011	.420	.255	.043	.043	.261
	2015	.432	.267	.167	.098	.053
		$F(2, 149) = 1.18,$ $p = .309$	$F(2, 149) = 0.52,$ $p = .593$	$F(2, 149) = 5.09,$ $p = .007$	$F(2, 149) = 1.18,$ $p = .311$	$F(2, 149) = 12.73,$ $p = .000$
<i>El Sur</i>	2007	.437	.466	.362	.103	.115
	2011	.472	.335	.128	.087	.267
	2015	.446	.368	.178	.084	.155
		$F(2, 307) = 0.16,$ $p = .851$	$F(2, 307) = 3.36,$ $p = .036$	$F(2, 307) = 13.54,$ $p = .000$	$F(2, 307) = 0.19,$ $p = .826$	$F(2, 307) = 7.21,$ $p = .001$
<i>El Día</i>	2007	.480	.311	.106	.086	.116
	2011	.441	.272	.079	.065	.283
	2015	.331	.391	.143	.072	.121
		$F(2, 308) = 4.84,$ $p = .009$	$F(2, 308) = 4.89,$ $p = .008$	$F(2, 308) = 2.26,$ $p = .106$	$F(2, 308) = 0.27,$ $p = .764$	$F(2, 308) = 16.63,$ $p = .000$



The commuter newspaper, *Publimetro*, followed a more similar pattern to that of *La Tercera*, without major variations being identified during the research period in its use of the most recurrent frames: conflict and attribution of responsibility. Neither was there any significant variation in the use of the human interest frame. In *Publimetro*, however, statistically significant variations were observed in the economic consequences and morality frames. A significant increase in use of the economic frame can be seen in 2007 and 2015, and that of the morality frame in 2011.

Analysis of the regional newspaper, *El Sur*, once again reveals a somewhat different behavior to the other newspapers. It is the most constant in its use of the conflict frame during the research period. Use of the human interest frame exhibits no significant variation. Nevertheless, use of three of the five analyzed frames varied considerably: the attribution of responsibility frame and, even more markedly, the economic consequences frame and that of morality, following similar patterns in these two frames to those observed for *Publimetro*.

The northern newspaper, *El Día*, tends to replicate the behavior of the newspaper *El Mercurio* in its use of the conflict frame and that of attribution of responsibility, both with significant variations over the period under study. In this newspaper, in contrast to the other five, there is also a marked use of the attribution of responsibility frame, which peaked in 2015. Year-to-year variations in use of the morality frame were also significant for this regional newspaper, whereas that of the economic consequences and human interest frames remained constant.

In summary, and readdressing the question as to whether different types of Chilean newspapers tend to employ the same generic frames over time and thus potentially generate a perception of persistent uniformity or homogeneity in the press media's treatment of political news, this analysis demonstrates that Chilean press coverage is indeed exercised according to the same frames of interpretation. Nevertheless, of the country's two flagship newspapers, *El Mercurio* has tended to vary significantly its political and government focus over the years when applying the two most recurrent frames: conflict and attribution of responsibility. No significant changes, however, can be observed for the three remaining frames. On the other hand, *La Tercera* is notable for its persistent use of these frames over the three years of analysis. For this newspaper, only the attribution of responsibility frame exhibits any degree of statistical significance, albeit relatively minor. *Publimetro* differs from *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, with a singular pattern when exhibiting highly visible changes in the use of the economic consequences and morality frames. As this investigation shows, it is also interesting to note that it is the two regional newspapers that show the most significant changes in the use of the five analyzed frames, with variations occurring in three of the five.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The methodological aims of this research were to determine whether the five generic frames identified by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) as a common feature of news coverage in other countries and cultural contexts are also prevalent in the political news stories of Chile's different types of newspaper publication. Essentially, following the same procedures as the original researchers, we were able to establish that most indicators from the baseline study were also replicated in Chile and grouped in the

original five generic frames—conflict, attribution of responsibility, economic consequences, human interest, and morality—even though some proved to be more generic than others. There were differences in the distribution of certain indicators that, as with the studies in Spanish-speaking countries reported in the theoretical discussion, implied making local adaptations. This relativizes the expectations of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), who considered the five generic frames and their set of indicators for framing analysis to be globally recurrent in news items.

For instance, the distribution of morality frame indicators varied substantially from the baseline study. This may be explained by cultural differences, such as the Catholic values that characterize Chile, and the Calvinist traditions underlying culture in the Netherlands. From the five frames analyzed, the most generic was that of economic consequences: three indicators from the baseline study replicated in Chile obtained factors greater than 0.5.

These findings of our research provide a valuable methodological contribution to the development of framing research in Chile. The study provides empirical evidence regarding the replicability of the five generic frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), used in numerous academic studies from around the world, and which Igartua et al. (2004) qualified at the time as the most sophisticated content analysis approach to consistently measuring frames in the news. This should be reason enough to continue assessing the universality of the generic frames in journalism, to establish comparisons with other countries and cultural contexts, and to enhance the methods used here with new frames that will be better adapted to our Chilean and Latin American reality.

The fact that the five generic frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) could be identified in the political news of the Chilean press also allowed us to measure and compare their level of use in six newspapers throughout the period of study. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the newspapers *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, the two largest contributors to public debate with the greatest impact on the news agendas of other media, it was also important to be able to establish how these papers frame a broad range of political news over a prolonged period and to compare their treatment of news with other Chilean newspapers. This is especially relevant given that they are the target for the bulk of criticism emanating from communications analysts and researchers, who refer to them as flagship papers from the economic and ideological duopoly comprising the Mercurio SAP and Copesa SA media companies; adhering to the neoliberal economic model and to the conservative value system (Sunke & Geoffroy, 2001), they are persistently blamed for their uniform treatment of news.

Even though, as our research demonstrates, substantial similarity exists in the framing of political news in the Chilean press, analysis of potentially significant differences in the frequency of use of the five frames according to the news stories' year of publication showed that *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* exhibited the greatest similarity overall during the three years analyzed. Detection of this persistent similarity in the framing of both flagship papers may explain the perception of their uniform treatment of news, which analysts attribute to the lingering suspicion of shared interests among owners and media sources in a system criticized for being antipluralist (Mönckeberg, 2009; Sunke & Geoffroy, 2001).

Nevertheless, it is important to consider when interpreting these findings that the constant use of certain frames in the media, and the consequences for fostering a particular interpretation of reality, have been attributed to multiple factors, many of them concurrent. In fact, bias in the political press has been blamed on media consolidation and the influence of owners on journalistic approaches (Bagdikian, 2000; Pritchard, 2002) but also has been ascribed to the prioritization and uniform dissemination of statements from official sources, both public and private, in which the media reproduces the dominant visions and experiences of governments and the political elite (Romero, 2013; Villamarín, 2013). Furthermore, in her research on newspaper coverage in small, uniform communities, similar in profile to Chile, Crawley (2007) argues that they tend to exhibit a narrower range of viewpoints, thus limiting the journalists' capacity to use alternative frames of interpretation. Entman (2010) maintains that where political power and the current administration are anchored in two coalition parties, as in the United States and Chile, these two rival factions dominate the news framing that prevails in most political discourse. And Cavallin (2000) holds the professionalization of journalists responsible for much of the problem because it implies sharing the same vocational training, standards of evaluating newsworthiness, ethical principles and routines.

Regarding the question of the most recurrent frames in the coverage of political news, our study showed, across the six newspapers analyzed, that the Chilean press makes frequent use of the conflict and attribution of responsibility frames, independently of the coalition government in office. The morality and economic consequences frames are scarcely observed in the political news in Chile. Unsurprisingly, there was a rise in the use of the economic consequences frame in 2015, when cases involving major political and corporate corruption came to light. Visibility of the human interest frame in the Chilean quality newspapers remained at insignificant levels during the three years of research.

In summary, newspapers tended to behave similarly over time in their application of the two most recurrent frames, conflict and attribution of responsibility, particularly the former. Nevertheless, they tended to exhibit different patterns in the use of the three remaining frames, albeit less visible in the Chilean press.

The most striking fact is therefore the use of the conflict frame, given its systematic predominance in the political news of the Chilean press. It has been shown that the conflict frame is, overall, more typical of political coverage (Ballesteros, 2015; de Vreese, 2005; Hertog & McLeod, 2001). If we assume, however, that framing reveals key information about the media-prioritized news values (Kozman, 2016), and that the continuing prevalence of the conflict frame may generate disaffection toward politics and the media, understood to be key stakeholders in a democratic system, then this type of coverage might not only help to explain the uniform treatment of Chilean news but also influence public debate in a democratic context. In the words of Rinke et al. (2013), it is a context in which "journalists try to package the news in a way that is attractive to their audiences rather than trying to fulfill the prescriptions of theorists of deliberative democracy" (p. 476).

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