

Framing countries in humanitarian crisis. A deductive content analysis of press news

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Abstract

In 1992, after the U.S. military intervention in Somalia, the term ‘CNN effect’ was coined to refer to the media’s ability to focus international attention on a country in a critical situation. Based on a deductive approach to a news sample from four Spanish newspapers, this study examines the news agenda of countries and generic frames used in the coverage of countries facing humanitarian crisis. Results show that most of humanitarian crises are forgotten: While one third of the news sample focused on Afghanistan, nine crises were not present at all. Furthermore, the press does not use the ‘classic’ generic frames when they report humanitarian crises, but a combination of them, for instance ‘conflict for which the government is responsible’.

Keywords: Generic frames, humanitarian crises, Spanish press, content analysis, deductive approach.

Encuadres noticiosos de los países en situación de crisis humanitaria. Un análisis de contenido deductivo de noticias de prensa

Resumen

En 1992, tras la intervención del ejército estadounidense en Somalia, se acuñó el término ‘efecto CNN’ para referirse a la capacidad de los medios de comunicación para dirigir la atención internacional hacia un país en situación crítica. Basado en una aproximación deductiva a una muestra de noticias procedentes de cuatro periódicos españoles, este estudio examina la presencia de estos países en situación crítica en la agenda informativa, así como los encuadres noticiosos genéricos utilizados para retratarlos. Los resultados muestran que los medios ‘olvidan’ la mayor parte de las crisis humanitarias: mientras un tercio de la muestra analizada se centraba en la situación de Afganistán, nueve crisis no recibieron ninguna atención. Además, la prensa no utiliza los encuadres noticiosos ‘clásicos’ (en la literatura científica) cuando informa sobre las crisis humanitarias, sino una combinación de ellos. Es el caso, por ejemplo, del encuadre ‘conflicto con responsabilidad del Gobierno’.

Palabras clave: encuadres noticiosos genéricos, crisis humanitarias, prensa española, análisis de contenido, aproximación deductiva.

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1. Introduction

Humanitarian crises are usually caused by a combination of economic, political, and social factors, and most times it is not easy to determine which ones are the most important contributors. Escola Cultura de Pau (2010) drafts an annual report which es-

establishes, in accordance to a set of indicators, which countries are facing humanitarian crises. To consider that a country is in crises, it has to obtain 'outstanding values' in at least three of the four considered indicators: severity of food crises, number of internally displaced persons by violence, number of refugees, and amount of funds requested by the United Nations in order to deal with the situation (flash appeals) (Escola Cultura de Pau, 2010). Hunger, violence and forced displacement of the civilian population are causes and consequences of humanitarian crises.

More than 1 billion people are undernourished (OCHA, 2009), most of them in so-called 'developing countries.' Although Africa is often portrayed as the continent of hunger, two thirds of those who are undernourished live in Asia, in countries such as China, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Countries in sub-Saharan and northeastern Africa, where chronic drought and low economic and industrial development are combined, are also recurrent famine victims. Not surprisingly, the Sahel region, consisting of Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Sudan, has been frequently referred by the media as 'the hunger belt.' In the Horn of Africa, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea withstand alternating droughts and floods, preventing adequate agricultural development.

Droughts and bad harvest are rarely the sole causes of famine. Increases in the price of basic foods have a great impact on the weaker economies, so that today it can be said that the cause of hunger is not lack of food, but lack of political will to fight it. In the words of Hauenstein and Vaitla (2007), one can speak of a 'market emergency,' where the cause of the food crisis is the dependence of unstable or deregulated markets.

Substantial increases in food prices, especially cereals, during the years 2007 and 2008, which occurred again in 2010, led to a global food crisis affecting the poorest regions of the world, with particular impact in Southern Africa¹. The surge in oil prices, the growing demand for food in Asia and sharp population growth partly explain increases in staple food prices. The development of biofuels, presented as a sustainable alternative to oil, also appears to have influenced the increase in cereal prices, which provide 46% of global consumption of calories. According to a World Bank report brought to light by the British daily *The Guardian*², biofuels have been responsible for 75% of the rise in grain prices during the food crisis.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) considers internally displaced persons (IDP's) to be those individuals or groups who have been forced to leave their places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, or a human-caused disaster, but they have not crossed the borders of an internationally recognized state³ (UNHCR, 1998). In the case that individuals or

¹ FAO (2010, September 7). No food crisis seen, but greater market stability needed. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/45178/icode/>

² Chakraborty, A. (2008, July 4). Secret report: biofuel caused food crisis. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jul/03/biofuels.renewableenergy>

³ Therefore, those who are forced to flee their homes due to poor economic conditions are not considered IDP's.

groups cross a border of a country, they would become refugees or asylum beneficiaries if the host country gives them this status. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2010) warned in 2009 that the number of refugees had risen to over 15 million, and that 27 million more remained within the borders of their countries as IDP's.

The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) are funding application processes that aim to address the humanitarian crises considered as being the most severe or the most needed for international cooperation. The response of donor countries is varied, but in general their contributions are far below the required quantities. In 2009, UN raised 6.9 billion dollars allocated to tackle the crises in countries like Afghanistan, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Palestine, Yemen, or Zimbabwe (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2013). Consolidated Appeals favor the geopolitical concept of humanitarianism, as donors can choose which countries they want to help.

2. News framing and the second level of the agenda setting theory

News stories are textual and visual constructions developed around a central axis of thought, a certain perspective (frame) created by journalists that provide a framework which the public will use in order to interpret the message. 'Framing' can be defined as a process in which some of the perceived elements of reality are selected to construct a narrative that highlights connections between them, thereby promoting a particular interpretation on an issue or problem. Aiming to contribute to the solid conceptualization of the concept, Entman (1993: 52) proposed a definition that still serves as a reference for a large part of the studies employing this framework:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.

News frames, as Entman suggests, define the problem, analyze its causes, make a moral judgment and propose solutions. Entman warned in 1993 of the absence of a unified paradigm of framing which successfully explains how frames are constructed, how they manifest in the news or how they influence the attitudes of the public. Fourteen years later, attention is still drawn to the fact that the term 'frame' lacks a clear conceptualization (Weaver, 2007) and has become a 'passe-partout' (Van Gorp, 2007), which includes the framework *-schemata-* for the interpretation of an event, the agenda of attributes of an issue or object, and the process by which messages influence the public's opinions, attitudes and behaviors.

3. Generic and specific frames

Literature on framing distinguishes between *generic frames* (e.g. Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, 1991; Rhee, 1997; Hwang et al., 2007) and *specific frames* (e. g. Neuman et al., 1992; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Noakes and Wilkins, 2002; Edy and Meirick, 2007; Igartua et al., 2005). While specific frames can be applied only to the news coverage of particular topics, generic frames work on a wide range of events, even in different physical, temporal and cultural contexts. A typical deductive research strategy is to consider those news frames that have been already defined and/or operationalized by other researchers-especially generic frames. One of the first studies

operationalizing generic news frames was developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), who implemented a 20-item scale to measure the presence of news frames previously defined in literature in a news sample: 'Attribution of responsibility' emphasizes who is responsible for the problem or who should solve it, whether individuals, social groups or any level of the government; 'conflict' presents the problem in terms of polarization and confrontation, sometimes using a war language; 'human interest' brings the issue closer to any kind of receiver by personalizing it and showing its human side; 'economic consequences' emphasizes the economic impact that a particular matter may have on the general public or a particular group; and 'morality' gives prominence to religious or moral implications of an issue, or tells how to properly behave, as a group or an individual.

4. Humanitarian crises and the media agenda

Humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has reported, since 1998, how a large number of humanitarian crises are ignored in media and politics. In a similar vein, Sande (2011) believes that the south of the Sahara desert -also known as Sahel belt- is a region traditionally neglected by the media.

According to the literature, it can be said that not all countries have the same opportunities to join the international news flow: the more peripheral a country's position in the world economic and political order, the lower its chances to enter the international news agenda (Chang, 1998). Events in impoverished countries are newsworthy only when they are tragic and deviate from normality (Shoemaker et al., 1991), or when they can somehow affect the rich world (Chang, 1998). In the case of Africa, the economic importance of a country and its volume of trade turnover with the United States are two variables that determine U.S. media attention (Golan, 2008). Based on the preceding literature this study poses the first hypothesis and research question:

H1.- Countries facing humanitarian crisis receive asymmetric news coverage. The media agenda focuses on a few crises and devotes less attention -or none at all- to other.

RQ1.- What is the media agenda of countries facing crises? What countries receive more attention and what others are excluded?

Generally speaking, news reports about impoverished countries focus on a limited list of topics: social unrest and discrepancies, war, terrorism, crime, military coups and assassinations, natural disasters, etc. (Larson, 1979). But, according to the framing theory, the same objects can be framed differently: an earthquake with thousands of casualties, for example, should not necessarily be framed in terms of human interest. The economic consequences for the country that suffered it or attribution of responsibility for the poor management of the disaster prevention could be alternative frames. To the author's best knowledge, no study about generic frames of humanitarian crisis as a whole has been done. The second research question is then formulated:

RQ2.- What generic news frames predominate in the news coverage about humanitarian crises in Spanish media?

The traditional reliance of most of the media on external sources, especially in the international section, may have increased as a result of the poor economic situation

faced by many of them. Even before the international financial crisis that began in 2008, Van Gorp (2007) argued that the media seems to speak to the public with a single voice, because information production routines mean that the same subjects are treated in the same manner. If one considers that most newspapers use news wires as the main source of international information, and that news tickers are often published with little or no changes at all (Galtung and Vincent, quoted by Rauch, 2003), it is likely that news frames used in the coverage of humanitarian crises are essentially the same in different newspapers, despite their differences in editorial lines.

In the U.S., the media discourse on the crises that occur abroad and affect the national interest is usually homogeneous, as it transcends political and partisan divides (Baum, 2002). In Spain, a content analysis of the International section of the major daily newspapers -*El País*, *El Mundo*, *Abc*, and *La Razón*- showed that 100% of the information in the headlines came from news wires (Gelado Marcos, 2009). The study concluded that, despite the ideological differences between newspapers, the speech is the same: “[...] The number of publications [is] irrelevant, since what matters in the end is the number of news wires that provide information to the media” (Gelado Marcos, 2009: 270). This study poses then the second hypothesis:

H2.- News frames used in the coverage of humanitarian crises are similar in the four newspapers studied, despite their ideological differences.

5. Method

5.1. Sample

The universe of analysis comprised all news stories⁴ centered on countries facing humanitarian crises⁵, published in the second half of 2009 in the Spanish general press circulating in the whole country. The study focused on the print editions of the dailies *El País*, *El Mundo*, *Abc* and *Público*. These newspapers were selected according to the criteria of ideological diversity and social influence, the latter assessed from the basis of circulation and distribution data. The sample ranges from a conservative and monarchist newspaper, *Abc*, to a clearly progressive one, *Público*, and further includes center-right wing newspaper, *El Mundo*, and center-left wing *El País*. In 2009, the four newspapers had a combined circulation of just over a million copies per day.

The New York Times has been selected in most agenda setting research after the seminal McCombs and Shaw (1972) study because it represents the U.S. media agenda

⁴ All pieces of news presenting the characteristics of ‘classical’ informative and interpretative genres: news, photonews, news reports, feature articles, interviews, and news flashes. Comments and opinion were excluded.

⁵ For the selection of countries, the criteria of Escola Cultura de Pau (2010) were used. Escola Cultura de Pau releases an annual report which includes the complete list of countries suffering a humanitarian crisis, according to four indicators they take into consideration. In 2009 there were 30 countries affected by these situations: Colombia, Guatemala, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, North Korea, Burma/Myanmar, Philippines, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

as it “sets the agenda for many other media” (Shoemaker, 1996: 88), and also because it is one of the top three daily newspapers in the United States in terms of circulation (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2012). In the same vein, the aforementioned newspapers represent the Spanish media agenda as *The New York Times* does in the U.S. and, because of their ideological diversity, they also represent the main Spanish media frames.

The period of analysis (July-December 2009) was selected according to the criterion of proximity in time, as it was the newest information at the time of data collection, excluding 2010. It was decided to avoid 2010 because in January and July two natural disasters took place: the earthquake in Haiti and floods in Pakistan. These could have been an element of distortion in media coverage. Excluding 2010 was done in order to select a period where no *megadisasters* (e.g. Etkin, 1999) had taken place. As a consequence of the number of victims and the exceptional nature of these events, other countries could have been left off the media agenda and the prevailing news frames could have been modified.

A representative sample of the stated universe, consisting of six weeks of the second half of 2009, was randomly selected. Each week corresponded to one of the analyzed months, in such a way that one Monday, one Tuesday, one Wednesday, one Thursday, one Friday, one Saturday and one Sunday from each month were included. A review of the news stories published in the selected days resulted in 566 units of analysis concerning any of the 30 countries facing a humanitarian crisis.

5.2. Scale and coding process

To determine and measure the presence of generic news frames in the sample -‘attribution of responsibility,’ ‘human interest,’ ‘conflict,’ ‘morality,’ and ‘economic consequences’- the questionnaire developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) was used. In the original study, the scale consisted of 20 questions (items) that needed to be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ and then coded as dummy variables. This binary coding increases intercoder reliability, but also results in increased measurement error: The correlation between the variables will be lower than in the case of ordinal or interval variables. In this study it was decided not to use dummy variables, in order to increase the probability of detecting correlations between variables (scale items). Coders assigned the following values:

0: The answer to the question from the item is ‘no.’ Therefore, the text does not suggest or mention the aspect or issue to which the item refers.

1: The answer to the question from the item is ‘yes.’ The text suggests or mentions only once the aspect or issue to which the item refers.

2: The answer to the question from the item is ‘yes,’ and more than once. The text suggests or mentions two or more times the aspect or issue to which the item refers.

The news articles were coded by the author of the study. To ensure a high reliability of the scale, a graduate student coded 10% of the sample. The average percent agreement of all variables was 90.08%, with individual variables ranging from 75% to 98.2%. The average inter-coder reliability value in terms of Cohen’s Kappa ranged from .61 to .90. All but two variables reached values higher than .70.

Only the fourth question of the ‘attribution of responsibility’ item -Does the story suggest that an individual or social group has responsibility in the matter?- was inversely coded: If the story did not mention that an individual or group had responsibility in the problem, the item was coded ‘1’; and if the story did mention who was responsible for the problem, it was coded ‘0.’ This criterion was used to replicate Semetko and Valkenburg’s study, so that “a high score on the attribution of responsibility scale indicated that the story suggests that some level of government has the ability to alleviate, or is responsible for causing, a certain issue or problem” (2010: 101). A distinction between individual/group responsibility and government responsibility is therefore made. If a story mentions that an individual or social group has responsibility in the matter, the score of the news in that frame will tend to be lower.

5.3. Statistical analyses

To examine RQ2 -which asks what generic news frames predominate in the news coverage about humanitarian crises in Spanish media- and H2 -which suggests news frames used in different newspapers are similar, despite their ideological differences- the factor structure of the scale by Semetko and Valkenburg was analyzed. Since this study deals with a completely different issue -humanitarian crises instead of European politics- in another temporal and spatial context, Semetko and Valkenburg’s factor structure may be different in this sample.

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was conducted. The first five factors explained 59.8% of the variance of the original scores. For measuring appropriateness of factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was calculated, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was performed. KMO value was .75, while the chi-square Bartlett was statistically significant ($p < .001$). These values indicate that there are correlations in the data set that are appropriate for factor analysis.

6. Results

6.1. The media agenda of countries facing humanitarian crises

H1 predicted asymmetric news coverage of the different countries facing crises, so that some countries would be overrepresented and others absent. The results support this hypothesis. The news sample includes references to only 21 of the 30 countries that were suffering humanitarian crises. A uniform distribution of the information would have resulted in 19 news stories relating to each country. But coverage is far from uniform, and one single country (Afghanistan) accounts for over 36% of the news stories of the sample. While 6 countries account for nearly 80% of coverage, 9 receive no mention at all. Table 1 answers RQ1: What is the media agenda of countries facing crises? What countries receive more attention and which others are excluded?

Table 1. Number of news stories by country

	Frequency	%
Afghanistan	206	36.8
Somalia	61	10.9
Palestine	56	10.0
Colombia	49	8.8
Pakistan	41	7.3

	Iraq	32	5.7
	Mauritania	18	3.2
	Mauritania-Mali	16	2.9
	Burma / Myanmar	14	2.5
	North Korea	11	2.0
Country	Philippines	8	1.4
	Nigeria	8	1.4
	Sudan	8	1.4
	Guinea (Conakry)	7	1.3
	Yemen	7	1.3
	Zimbabwe	5	0.9
	Guatemala	4	0.7
	D. R. of Congo	3	0.5
	Eritrea	3	0.5
	Kenia	2	0.4
	Uganda	1	0.2
	Total	560*	100.0

* Six news stories could not be associated with a particular country

6.2. Generic frames

Five components were retained in the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. For the interpretation of the rotated components (factors), only those items obtaining factor loadings greater than .30 were considered. In this first factor solution three of the generic frames considered by Semetko and Valkenburg -‘attribution of responsibility,’ ‘morality,’ and ‘economic consequences’- are kept. In 2 of them -‘morality’ and ‘economic consequences’- all the items from the original scale remain together, according to their factor loadings. ‘Attribution of responsibility,’ however, loses one of its original items -Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem?- which becomes part of the ‘human interest’ frame. Furthermore, the first and the third items of the original ‘attribution of responsibility’ frame exceed the trigger value of .30 on two factors: ‘Attribution of responsibility’ and ‘conflict.’ Thus, these two items will be part of the scales measuring two of the frames. Because of the entrance of these two new items in the ‘conflict’ frame, it has been renamed.

As a result of this factor analysis, two new generic frames are obtained: ‘Conflict for which the government is responsible’ and ‘human impact caused by an individual or social group.’ The first of them refers to a controversial issue that generates different positioning towards it and produces disagreement and criticism among the different actors involved. Besides, some level of the government is responsible for the issue or problem. For its part, the ‘human impact caused by an individual or social group’ frame refers to an issue that affects individuals and whose most emotional side is highlighted, generating feelings of outrage, empathy -caring, sympathy or compassion. In addition, an individual or social group is responsible for the impact of the issue on people. Note that the sixth item which has been included in the frame -the story suggests that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem- has a negative value. As it was inversely coded (0 = individuals are responsible for the problem, 1 = individuals are not responsible for the problem), the ne-

gative sign indicates that when the other items have values other than 0, this tends towards 0, and vice versa.

After grouping the items in scales and redefining the frames a reliability analysis was conducted with the objective of debugging the scales if necessary. Scales were debugged as much as possible, in order to obtain higher alpha values keeping at least 3 items per frame. After the debugging process, only the ‘morality’ and ‘economic consequences’ frames kept all their original items. ‘Attribution of responsibility’ lost its last item, ‘Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?’ The second news frame, ‘Human impact caused by an individual or social group’, recovered its original name, ‘human interest,’ after losing the items that referred to attribution of responsibility. ‘Conflict for which the government is responsible’ lost the fourth item, ‘Does the story refer to winners and losers?’

The alpha values of debugged scales were .69 for ‘attribution of responsibility’, .87 for ‘human interest’, .85 for ‘conflict for which the government is responsible’, .67 for ‘morality’ and .82 for ‘economic consequences. Two of the frames reach values close to .70 although they do not get it. Although it would have been desirable to obtain higher alpha values, these two frames were kept according to the exploratory nature of the study and the diversity of the sample-many countries and topics were analyzed together.

The scales finally employed are shown in table 2. Based on these definitive scales, the presence of each news frame in each unit of analysis -news story- was measured. Following Morales Vallejo (2011), factor weights were not taken account, but direct, unweighted scores of the items which better characterize each factor-in this study, those with a factor loading higher than .30 and that were consistent with the rest of the scale after the reliability analysis. This procedure is appropriate because factor scores are not perfect, as minor factors, not related to the characteristic which one wants to measure, affect inter-item correlations that in turn affect item-factor correlations (Morales Vallejo, 2011). This method simplifies the calculations without affecting its validity, since “the reliability of the factor scores usually is consistently higher than the reliability of direct scores, but not much more” (Morales Vallejo, 2011: 18).

According to this criterion, 5 new variables were created by adding direct values obtained by each of the items in each factor (each frame). The problem that now arises is that the ‘conflict for which the government is responsible’ frame is on a different scale than the rest, as it is composed of 4 items instead of 3. So while the rest of the news frames can reach values between 0 and 6 in each news story, this one ranges between 0 and 8. To address this problem, 5 new variables measuring the presence of each frame on each news story on a 0 to 10 scale were created.

Table 2. Generic news frames. Final scale

Framing items
<i>Attribution of responsibility</i>
Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?
Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?
Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?
<i>Human interest</i>
Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?

Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy or compassion?

Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?

Conflict for which the government is responsible

Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?

Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?

Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the issue/problem?

Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?

Morality

Does the story contain any moral message?

Does the story make reference to morality, God and other religious tenets?

Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?

Economic consequences

Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?

Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?

Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?

Original source: Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Scale obtained after the debug process.

6.3. Intensity of generic frames in the sample

H2 stated that news frames used in the coverage of humanitarian crises are similar in the newspapers studied, despite their ideological differences. To test it, multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted. ‘Newspaper’ was the independent variable, while ‘news frame’ was the dependent. Significant differences were found, Wilks’ lambda = .96, $F(5, 15) = 1.72, p = .042, \eta^2 = .015$. In the univariate tests, however, only a significant effect of the independent variable on the ‘human interest’ frame was found, $F(3, 562) = 3.92, p = .009, \eta^2 = .015$. For the rest of frames no significant effects were observed. Results are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Intensity of each generic frame, by newspaper

Frame	Newspaper				
	Total	<i>El País</i>	<i>El Mundo</i>	<i>Abc</i>	<i>Público</i>
Attribution of responsibility	5.03 (3.38)	5.06 (3.42)	5.07 (3.47)	4.96 (3.30)	5.02 (3.36)
** Human interest	6.46 (3.72)	6.92 (3.74)	*7.05 _p (3.42)	5.91 (3.96)	5.96 (3.70)
Conflict for which the government is responsible	5.85 (3.59)	5.82 (3.56)	6.00 (3.60)	5.16 (3.44)	6.27 (3.64)
Morality	0.68 (1.64)	0.82 (1.90)	0.74 (1.59)	0.64 (1.64)	0.56 (1.46)
Economic consequences	1.22 (2.45)	1.29 (2.46)	1.27 (2.52)	0.96 (2.25)	1.33 (2.53)

Note: The theoretical range of variation of the dependent variables -generic news frames- ranges from zero (no presence of the frame) to 10 (maximum presence of the frame). $n = 566$. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 3 shows that the newspapers analyzed, with few differences, frame countries in humanitarian crisis in terms of human interest. This generic frame has a mean intensity of 6.46 out of a maximum of 10 on the whole sample. Only *Público* prefers a different frame, 'conflict for which the government is responsible', with a mean intensity of 6.27 points compared to 5.96 for 'human interest'. On the other side, *El Mundo* is the newspaper that most uses this last frame, obtaining a mean of 7.05 points. The only significant difference that arises from the analysis is found precisely in this frame: *El Mundo* makes a significantly greater use of it than *Público*.

Economic consequences of humanitarian crises do not seem to interest the Spanish press: The low mean intensity of this frame -1.22 points, without statistically significant differences between newspapers- confirms this. The presence of the 'morality' frame 'is merely symbolic in the sample. H2, therefore, is partially verified: When portraying countries facing humanitarian crises, different newspapers use news frames in a similar way, at least from this deductive approach.

After assessing differences between newspapers, the predominant frame/s in every humanitarian crisis was calculated. Then a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Each of the five frames was considered as dependent variables, while the 'country' where the humanitarian crises were taking place was taken as the independent variable. Countries with $n < 10$ were grouped into the variable 'rest.' Globally, significant differences in the use of generic frames were found, Wilks' lambda = .86, $F(50, 2511.75) = 1.72, p < .01, \eta^2 = .015$. In the univariate tests of between-subjects effect, variation between countries in terms of the predominant frames were significant for 'human interest,' $F(10, 554) = 3.14, p < .001, \eta^2 = .054$, and 'morality,' $F(10, 554) = 2.41, p = .008, \eta^2 = .042$. For the rest of generic frames, there was a significant effect of the 'country' variable on the type of frame. Descriptive statistics are shown in table 4. Significantly higher means -post hoc Bonferroni test- are in bold.

As table 4 (see next page) shows, most countries are predominantly represented by the 'human interest' frame. In pairwise comparisons, Iraq and Somalia have significantly higher means in this frame if compared to Colombia. Only humanitarian crises in Colombia, Palestine and North Korea are not under the predominance of this news frame focused on human emotion. These three countries are predominantly represented in terms of 'conflict for which the government is responsible.' The news stories that obtained the higher values in this frame were related to controversial issues such as the installation of U.S. military bases in Colombia, the unresolved conflict between Hamas and Fatah after the legislative elections of 2006, the land occupation by Israeli settlers in Palestine, or the North Korean nuclear race (see table 5).

Table 4. Intensity of each generic frame, by country

Frame	Colombia (c)	Mauritania (m)	Afghanistan (a)	Palestine (p)	Iraq (i)	Pakistan (pk)	Somalia (s)	North Korea (k)	Burma (b)	Mauritania-Mali (mm)	Rest (r)
Attribution of responsibility	5.69 (3.29)	4.81 (3.70)	4.81 (3.38)	5.18 (3.76)	4.74 (2.91)	5.41 (3.43)	5.27 (3.46)	6.82 (3.11)	5.36 (3.47)	5.21 (3.27)	5.04 (3.38)
*** Human interest	4.76 (3.99)	6.94 (2.82)	6.51 (3.67)	5.98 (3.68)	8.13 (2.89)	6.34 (3.80)	7.79 (3.61)	4.09 (3.11)	6.79 (4.16)	6.56 (3.82)	6.16 (3.70)
Conflict for which the government is responsible	6.38 (3.87)	6.53 (3.52)	5.46 (3.57)	6.76 (3.35)	5.78 (3.67)	5.88 (3.48)	6.05 (3.38)	8.07 (2.76)	6.52 (4.25)	6.02 (4.01)	5.08 (3.49)
** Morality	0.52 (1.62)	2.03 (3.05) * _c , * _a , ** _s , * _p	0.70 (1.55)	0.57 (1.57)	0.52 (1.37)	0.61 (1.66)	0.30 (0.89)	0.00 (0.00)	1.31 (1.75)	0.52 (1.32)	1.02 (2.05)
Economic consequences	1.46 (2.24)	0.65 (1.73)	1.04 (2.33)	1.34 (2.49)	0.68 (1.98)	1.10 (2.35)	1.78 (3.03)	1.36 (2.34)	1.79 (3.03)	1.25 (2.47)	1.37 (2.69)

Note: The theoretical range of variation of the dependent variables ranges from zero (no presence of the frame) to 10 (maximum presence of the frame), $n = 566$, $***p < .001$; $**p < .01$; $*p < .05$. Subscripts make reference to countries: Colombia (c), Mauritania (m), Afghanistan (a), Palestine (p), Iraq (i), Pakistan (pk), Somalia (s), North Korea (k), Burma (b), Mauritania-Mali (mm), and 'rest' (r). For each significant difference, subscripts indicate compared to which countries means are significantly higher in pairwise comparisons.

Table 5. Examples of news headlines with high scores in each generic frame

Frame	News headline	Score
Attribution of responsibility	Uribe agrees to host five U.S. military bases in Colombia (<i>Público</i> , 17/7/2009)	10.00
	Ecuador and Colombia begin a timid alliance (<i>Público</i> , 24/9/2009)	10.00
	Pyongyang resumes atomic dialogue (<i>El País</i> , 7/10/2009)	10.00
Human interest	Paris tries to free its two spies captive in Somalia (<i>Público</i> , 22/7/2009)	10.00
	Zakira, the drama of being three years old and weighing four kilos (<i>El Mundo</i> , 12/8/2009)	10.00
Conflict for which the government is responsible	Uribe fails to break the opposition to U.S. military bases (<i>Público</i> , 7/8/2009)	10.00
	Only the death of Arafat brings together Al Fatah (<i>El Mundo</i> , 7/8/2009)	10.00
	North Korea accelerates its atomic program (<i>Público</i> , 5/9/2009)	10.00
Morality	“I am not a person, I am a weapon” (<i>El País</i> , 20/12/2009)	6.67
	Mullah Omar launches a code of conduct for the good Taliban (<i>Abc</i> , 22/7/2009)	10.00
Economic consequences	UN calls upon G-8 to provide development aid and not only aid to banks (<i>Abc</i> , 10/8/2009)	10.00
	Colombia will receive money from the U.S. for the military bases (<i>El Mundo</i> , 7/8/2009)	10.00
	Pirates bring the fishermen to land to force negotiations with the government (<i>El País</i> , 8/11/2009)	10.00

‘Attribution of responsibility,’ although it is not the dominant frame in any of the crises, has comparatively high values. In most of the crises it is the third frame in terms of intensity, except in the cases of Colombia and North Korea, where it is the second most intense after ‘conflict for which the government is responsible.’ These last two countries, therefore, are framed in terms of ‘conflict for which the government is responsible’ and ‘attribution of responsibility,’ while the ‘human interest’ frame is relegated to third position.

The ‘economic consequences’ and ‘morality’ frames have, in all countries, very low values when compared with other frames. In the ‘morality’ frame, Mauritania obtains the higher means, significantly higher than Colombia, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Palestine. Many of the news stories that have high values in this frame relate to religious conflicts or kidnappings carried out by Muslim fundamentalist groups. News stories regarding the kidnapping of several Europeans in Mauritania and the presence of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) also obtained high values in this frame. In the ‘economic consequences’ frame, although differences are not significant, comparatively high values for Burma, Somalia, and Colombia are obtained. The presence of this frame was more intense in the news on economic sanctions on the Burmese Junta, negotiations with the Somali ‘pirates’ to release kidnapped fishermen, and alleged FARC election campaign of President Correa financing. Table 5 shows examples of news that scored high in each of the frames.

7. Discussion and conclusion

The results of the study validate many of the ideas developed in a more intuitive manner -without the support of empirical studies- in the specific literature on the media representation of developing countries. Although a lot has been written on the South and the media, we found no scientific literature dealing, from a global perspective, with the news frames of humanitarian crises, so this article makes a contribution in this respect.

As argued by the humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders in the report they release every year since 1998, some crises are 'forgotten' by the media. According to Doctors Without Borders (2010), 'forgotten crises' in 2009 took place in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen. Results of the content analysis show that, during the second half of 2009, more than one third of news dealing with humanitarian crises focused on Afghanistan, a country which was invaded by the United States in 2001 and with the presence of Spanish troops as part of the International Security Assistance Force. Countries such as Somalia, Palestine, Colombia or Pakistan also received significant attention, although much less than in the case of Afghanistan. At the same time, countries such as Zimbabwe, Guatemala, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda each appeared in less than 1% of the cases. Other countries -most of them African- are even less fortunate, as they disappeared from the news agenda.

Crisis concerning Spanish 'allies' -mainly the United States, NATO, the European Union or any of its members- or those in which national interests are at stake are preferred by newspapers. As mentioned, in addition to Afghanistan, six countries facing crisis attracted considerable media attention: Somalia, Palestine, Colombia, Pakistan, Mauritania and Mali. Somalia, away from the spotlight of the international media for many years, gained again the interests of the press in the aftermath of fishing vessels hijacked by Somali 'pirates' in the Indian Ocean. Also because of a kidnapping of Spanish nationals, newspapers began talking about Mauritania and Mali, countries traditionally outside the spotlight of the media. The bulk of the news about these two countries focused only on the kidnapping of three Spanish aid workers belonging to the NGO Barcelona -Accio Solidària- and, a month later, of an Italian couple.

Palestine, Colombia and Pakistan also appeared quite often in the newspapers under consideration. The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been one of the most covered by the media for decades, while Colombia and Pakistan entered the media agenda in relation to U.S. foreign policy interests: Colombia decided to make their territory available for the establishment of at least five U.S. military bases, which led to the rejection of most of the countries in the region; and Pakistan suffered the consequences of the U.S. 'war on terror,' including drone missile attacks and the arrival of the Taliban fleeing Afghanistan through the long border that separates both countries.

7.1. Framing humanitarian crises

Even more important than the frequency of the news coverage of a given country is the way that country is portrayed in the media. Analysis of news frames through a de-

ductive approach showed that the press does not use the ‘classic’ frames when they report humanitarian crises. Humanitarian crises are commonly described in terms of conflict or human interest, with a tendency to search for those responsible among the government. The ‘attribution of responsibility’ frame, suitable for a serious, in-depth approach to issues, plays a minor role, compared to those two mentioned above. These findings could be interpreting as meaning that newspapers prefer to cover the impact of the crisis while neglecting its explanation, making it hard to rationally elaborate the contents the news stories.

Laboratory studies have found that the ‘conflict’ frame tends to activate distrust and cynicism in the audience (Capella and Jamieson, 1997), while ‘human interest’ may make it more difficult to remember the facts related⁶ (Mundorf et al., 1990). Although there are not experimental studies about the effects of the ‘hybrid’ frames presented here, framing humanitarian crises in terms of ‘conflict’ and ‘human impact’ does not seem the best strategy to explain and contextualize the situation. Countries facing humanitarian crises are doomed to be covered in an episodic way-from time to time, when human impact events take place. Individuals exposed to episodic news coverage tend to blame individuals for their problems, instead of looking for more systemic explanations (Iyengar, 1991). In this case, a lack of contextualization and of in-depth information can encourage the belief that nations or people facing humanitarian crises are the only ones responsible for their situation.

It is somewhat surprising that the ‘economic consequences’ frame was barely used, especially at a time when the front pages of all western newspapers deal with the economic crisis affecting much of the developed world. Many of the problems of nations facing crises stem from the unequal political and economic relations dictated by the developed economies. Peripheral countries have experienced an ‘extraverted development’ (designed to meet the needs of the central, developed economies) and suffer the consequences of the lack of economic diversification (Colom Jaén, 2007). Economic consequences for the impoverished country do not come under the media spotlight.

Dominant frames in the portrayal of countries suffering humanitarian crises were similar in the four newspapers studied, despite their different editorial lines. The statistical analysis showed significant differences between newspapers in just one of the frames -human interest- for just one of the newspapers -*Público*: virtually identical frames were used in the four newspapers-. This could be explained if one considers that the three major news wires and a few news media with global influence build the agenda and social representation of the Southern countries for the North and even for the South itself, thus imposing an uniform vision and marginalizing any alternative consideration (Antón Valero, 2002).

⁶ When Mundorf et al talk about “related facts,” they refer to the data of the news article, to what the news story was about. Of course, heartbreaking events featured in news stories are likely to be recalled, but the story behind them –and also its causes– can be easily forgotten.

8. References

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