Main generic frames in the media coverage of environmental popular consultations in Colombia[1]

Principales encuadres noticiosos en la cobertura de las consultas populares ambientales en Colombia

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ABSTRACT

Guided by the Framing Theory, this paper presents the final results of a content analysis performed on a group of news from three cases of environmental popular consultations in Colombia, aiming to find the main generic frames on them to understand how the debate was shaped within the Andean country during 2017. The context of those consultations was that they took place on the first year without armed confrontation, after the peace agreement was signed, with former FARC guerrilla and when the national debate shifted from the war itself to social justice issues.

Results showed that all of the collected stories had, at least, three frames that were mainly human interest, focused on portraying the human side of actors involved; conflict, displaying the disagreement between pro and con sides as well as proclaiming winners and or losers; and attribution of responsibility, putting responsibility on actors and groups involved, and offering solutions such as relying on congress or the highest courts to fill the legal gap. These findings confirm that environmental conflicts constitute a new form of crisis in the post-conflict Colombia.

Keywords: Colombia; popular consultations; post-conflict; Framing theory; Generic frames.

RESUMEN

Guiado por la Teoría del Framing o Encuadre, este trabajo presenta los resultados finales de un análisis de contenido realizado sobre un conjunto de noticias de tres casos de consultas populares ambientales en Colombia, con el objetivo de encontrar los principales marcos genéricos sobre las mismas para comprender cómo se configuró el debate dentro del país andino durante 2017. El contexto de esas consultas fue que se desarrollaron en el primer año sin enfrentamiento armado con la ex guerrilla de las FARC, , luego de la firma del acuerdo de paz, y cuando el debate nacional pasó de la guerra misma a temas de justicia social.

Los resultados mostraron que todas las historias recopiladas tenían, al menos, tres marcos que eran principalmente de interés humano, centrados en retratar el lado humano de los actores involucrados; conflicto, mostrando el desacuerdo entre los

pro y los contras y proclamando ganadores y perdedores; y la atribución de responsabilidad, responsabilizando a los actores y grupos involucrados, y ofreciendo soluciones como apoyarse en el Congreso o en los más altos tribunales para llenar el vacío legal. Estos hallazgos confirman que los conflictos ambientales constituyen una nueva forma de crisis en la Colombia posconflicto.

Palabras clave: Colombia; consultas populares; posconflicto; teoría del encuadre; marcos genéricos.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the Colombian government signed a peace agreement with former guerrilla FARC-EP, the national interest has significantly shifted from issues related to the armed conflict to those related to post-conflict -which are mainly associated to social justice. One of the most remarkable cases in that regard were popular consultations during 2017 in which communities exercise their constitutional right, through a democratic mechanism, to deny the possibility of developing mining and hydroelectric projects in their territories as those could cause severe environmental and social damage. They also showed governmental authorities that they could decide about their own ways of economic development, their relation with nature, and the rights for future generations (El Tiempo, 2017).

Three of the most notable cases were the consultations at Cabrera, Cajamarca, and Cumaral -all of them small towns in the central region of Colombia. In the first case, people voted against a hydroelectric project that was going to be developed close to Sumapaz paramo, which is the largest in the world, by enterprise Emgesa. In the second, the vote was against mining exploitation by AngloGold Ashanti. In the third, people voted against oil drilling in their territories by Mansarovar. In all of those cases a majority, approximately 90% of the people that voted, did so against those projects. That is one of the reasons to study their coverage on Colombian digital media.

Popular consultations are one of the seven mechanisms of participation contemplated in the Colombian Political Constitution of 1991, to guarantee the political exercise by citizens. This mechanism is for people to decide on issues of national, regional and local interest –that is to say, deciding the destiny of the territory they occupy (Semana Sostenible, 2017).

As explained by Congreso Colombiano (1994) and Semana Sostenible (2017), this mechanism works as an established general question regarding an issue of national, regional and local significance, which is subjected by president, the governor, and the major, as the case is, so the people of a town can decide formally and legally on it. Nevertheless, not only the leaders of the executive branch are allowed to convene the consultations, but also gathered citizens initiatives. For the final results to be valid, at least a third

part of the electoral roll must participate, and the winning option is the one that gets the half plus one of the votes (Congreso Colombiano, 1994; Semana Sostenible, 2017).

To guarantee the acceptance of the popular decision, and its later application, the entities in charge must implement what is decided through the consultation in a period of three months. In case it does not happen, the Senate is obliged to do what it takes to respect the people's decision. In case the previous is not complying, the President, the Governor, or the Major must execute an order in a period no longer than three months (Semana Sostenible, 2017).

Until now, popular consultations have been used mainly to ask for the development of mining-energy projects, and the answer *yes* has always won (Semana Sostenible, 2017). Only in 2019, it was applied on a national level for a different matter –namely, a discussion on new measures to fight corruption in the country, which was named Popular consultation anti-corruption. Although more than 11 million of Colombians voted, and 99% of those voted Yes to the proposed measures, the consultation was 535,776 votes short of the quorum of 12,140,342 (BBC News, 2018; Semana, 2018)

The rise of those manifestations comes from people that found in the popular consultations the only way to express their opinions on mandatory decisions and plans made for them by the National Government in Bogotá, far away from their lands (Semana Sostenible, 2017). In 2017, seven (7) popular consultations were held while 54 were expected to take place in 2018 (Redacción La República, 2018).

There were several conundrums in that regard due to the legal gap. On the one hand, a state that owns the subsoil vs. towns that can decide what exist or does not exist over it (Semana Sostenible, 2017). On the other hand, think tanks like DeJusticia[2] indicated that the popular consultations are constitutionally validated, binding, and does has effects over mining concessions (DeJusticia, 2017); whereas Ministry of Mining and Energy and representatives from companies state that only the Nation has the competence to manage the natural resources of the country and the subsoil, so local authorities can only organize the territories above it (Semana, 2017).

Despite the increase of popular consultation in Colombian since 2017, months after the signing of peace agreement between the national government and the FARC guerrilla, as well as an extensive coverage of the issue by media outlets in traditional and digital platforms, there is a lack of research into news reporting the phenomenon and there is not analysis from media effects theories such as Framing.

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[2] DeJusticia is a center for legal and social studies located in Bogotá. They focus on the strengthening of the rule of law and the promotion of human rights in Colombian as well as in the Global South.

For that reason, this research is an important contribution to the understanding of the sociopolitical and environmental conflicts in the post-conflict Colombia. Hopefully, it will incentivize the research on the topic in the Latin American region since it has not been studied consistently, especially with the intersection on Media studies.

Theoretical framework

Post-conflict Colombia: what came after the peace agreement was signed.

To revise the history of Colombia is to review the history of a country flagellated and harmed by more than half a century of armed conflict, a confrontation between more than two actors where the most armed have been the members of civil society (Osorio Matorel, 2018). In 2016, a remarkable event happened after many years of war between two Colombian actors: the Colombian government -guided by the administration of then president Juan Manuel Santos- signed a peace accord with the representatives of the former guerrilla group FARC-EP.

Since then, the country started a complex transitional period. The complexity comes from various aspects, but the one that concerns the issue approached in this research is that demands on social justice have not been met yet. After many years of conflict, the focus was put into the internal armed conflict itself, but right after the peace process began in 2012 until these days' citizen started to demand attention to other dimensions of their lives in Colombian society.

In fact, when looking at Colombian media, as explained by Osorio Matorel (2017; 2018), right after the peace accord between Colombian government and FARC was signed, the country started a transition from a society whose main concern was the internal armed conflict to one in which the focus is into other forms of violence, namely: armed (gangs, homicides, etc.), structural (state abandonment and corruption), and cultural-symbolic (gender- based, ethnic and racial discrimination, among others)[3]. While some of the traditional forms of direct violence, such as massacres, forced and mass displacements, and selective homicides, decreased noticeably, others—such as threats and attacks against social leaders—have increased in recent years. The environmental conflict is part of all of the conflicts our country faces. According to Ortega-Guerrero (2018) the issue about the conflict in Colombia is that it takes place in a territory that has with a high richness in biological, ecosystem and cultural diversity. That is precisely part of the conditions that involve the complexity of the conflict and the struggle to find not so complex solutions (p. 166). For such reason, having an environmental approach when

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[3] Understanding the three types of violence from the triad proposed by Galtung (1989).

studying the post-conflict Colombia is crucial for understanding the fundamental issues.

Framing theory

Framing theory has been established in the last 20 years as a fundamental theoretical approach in Media Studies. In fact, next to other two models of Political communication -namely, Agenda Setting and Priming- it "has signaled the latest paradigm shift in political-communication research" (Scheufele & Tewksbury , 2007, pág. 10). But while Agenda Setting refers "to the idea of a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues" and the importance attributed these issues by mass audiences (Scheufele & Tewksbury , 2007, pág. 11), and Priming refers to transformations in the standards that people use to make political evaluation (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury , 2007, pág. 11); Framing is based on the idea that "how an issue is characterized in news reports can have influence on how it is understood by audiences". (Scheufele & Tewksbury , 2007, pág. 11).

According to Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007), the origins of Framing "can be traced back to the roots of psychology and sociology" (pág. 11). The concept of frame first appeared in Psychology with the experimental work carried by Kanhneman and Teversky, in which they examined how different presentations of identical decisions influence people's choice and evlauation of them (Sábada, 2001; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Then, it was Goffman -along others- who added sociological shades to explain that individuals cannot understand the world completely and struggle to interprete their life experiences as well as to make sense of the woerld around them (Sábada, 2001; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Goffman understood frames as frameworks and outlines to give context of reality and to add external information, respectively (Sábada Garraza, 2001). In that way, a theory developed on the grounds of interpretative sociology was transfered to communication as journalists also interpret realities for their audiences (Sábada Garraza, 2001).

Even though there were previous studies, Framing began to be studied as a framework in communication research thanks to Entman (1993), who first exposed it as *fractured paradigm* because of the lack conceptual precision regarding what framing was, how it emerged, and how it affected audiences. So that, Entman proposed turning "an ostensible weakness into a strength" (pág. 51). He defined framing as "a way to describe the power of a communicating text" (pág. 51) and as a process that consist on selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality [and making them] more salient in a communicating text in such way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment

recommendation" (pág. 52). According to Sábada Garraza (2001) Entman's contribution was decisive because, as he proposed turning frame into a research paradigm, it permitted understood it nowadays regardless of its fractures for what is it and how it operates (Scheufele, 1999).

As a result of that fracture, scholars from Media Studies and Communication offer a variety of definitions, hence, there is not a sole and concensual definition (Sábada Garraza, 2001). Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007) argue that Framing is "the way we think about an issue" (pág.14) and named it as an applicability effect because "the outcome of a message suggests a connection between two concepts such that, after exposure to the message, audiences accept that they are connected" (Price & Tewksbury, 1997), as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury , 2007, pág. 15).

McCombs (2004) discusses that framign is a "second level of Agenda-Setting" (pág. 1965) because it means making aspects of an issue more salient through different forms of presentation in order to shift people's attitude. Gamsom and Modigliani (1989) state that frames are the *"central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is an issue"* (p. 67).

For the matters of this research, the author subscribes the definition of de Vreese (2005) who understands frames as *"parts of political arguments, journalistic norms, and social movements' discourse. They are alternative ways of defining issues, endogenous to the political and social world"* (p. 53); namely, frames are ways of understanding a phenomenon.

According to De Vreese (2005), "the term framing is referred to with significant inconsistency in the literature" (p. 51). Accordingly, he proposes to researchers and scholars to addapt a more general typology with reference to the nature and content of the frame, based on two distinctions: *issue-specific frames* and *generic frames.*The first one refers to frames that are pertinent only to specific topics or event, whereas the second one alludes to the frames that trascendt thematic limitations (De Vreese, 2002; 2005).

Generic news frames are divided in two groups. One focuses on the coverage of politics -specifically, election campaigns- while the other concentrates on news frames that are inherent to the conventions of journalism (De Vreese, 2005). In this research, the focus is on the last one as the interest of the author is "to explore general attributes of news coverage, namely, journalistic conventions, norms, and news values" (De Vreese, 2005, p.56).

This line of generic was later developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), who divided them into five: 'Conflict', 'Human interest', 'Attribution of responsibility', 'Morality', and 'Economic consequences'. These can be understood as:

Table 1. Generic frames

Generic frame	Definition
Attribution of responsibility	Presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving to either the government or to an individual or group.
Human interest	Brings a human face, an individual's story, or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem
Conflict	Emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries.
Morality	Interprets an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions.
Economic consequences	Presents an event, problem or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region or country

Source: (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

Last, as a disclaimer, the author stresses that in spite of the discussion regarding Framing theory as an emerging and fractured paradigm (Entman, 1993) that needs more *"precision in the operationalization and measurement of frames"* (de Vreese, 2005, p.60); it was used in this research as a framework taking into consideration that *"it has established itself on the media and communication agenda"* (p.60), became one of the main research approaches in media studies in less than three decades, and does contributes to theory for media analysis. Henceforth, this research follows the recommendation of de Vreese (2005) on specifying the conditions under frame emerges, in this case, looking at the context of the phenomenon and to the characteristics of the media outlets.

Methodology

Since the main goal of this research is to analyze the main generic frames in the media coverage of environmental popular consultations in Colombia, the author developed a tool for analysis that reunited the characteristics of this theory in order to understand this chapter of Colombian history.

Method

Most of the studies identified in the literature review used the content analysis, whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed, as research method. It is a method or tool to interpreting texts (from images and videos to written information) such as data, interviews, news, and speeches, to mention some. In other words, is a method that nourishes from any kind of material that has information that allows to access features within a specific context (Andréu Abela, 2000).

Nevertheless, scholars interested on content analysis of digital media face challenges due to the new characteristics of time and space. When it comes

to digital media -either migrated or native- researchers must take into consideration that those do not follow pre-planned patterns (Herring, 2004). As a result, new media requires new forms of analysis that can be meeting points between the techniques and tools applied to traditional media, and new ones created with the new web logics (Herring, 2004). It also means researchers must be flexible when developing tools to collect and analyze the data.

Inasmuch as that, the author applied a mixed content analysis, accordingly with the features of this study, because it allowed collecting and classifying sample objectively and precisely so the research could identify the main generic frames. A mixed method enabled to systematize the collected news, identify the frames in each one of them, and analyze the findings.

This research acknowledged the virtues of both methodologies, so they were mixed as a complementary exercise, which allowed getting the expected results. The project met the characteristics outlined in this type of research as it transgresses the methodological dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research through the implementation of a mix method that allows mediation between both approaches (Díaz López, 2014). Certainly, this allows getting a more complete and flexible result –which is essential for identifying the frames and analyzing them using both qualitative and quantitative tools.

As Andréu Abela (2000) suggested, the encounter between two methodological designs was fundamental to not only interpreting the sample, but also to deepen into the content itself and in the sociopolitical context where the message -within the news- was build. For that reason, the analysis was made from the proposals of Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) and Vreese (2002, 2005).

One of the limitations of this method is that it would not allow analyzing the effects of the news on users. The previous does not constitute a problem in this case since the aim was not analyze media effects, but rather news-building process, namely, the news *per se.*

Sample

The sample for the study was selected through a key word search in the media's own websites as well as Google News. The search words used were: consulta popular Colombia 2017, consulta popular ambiental Cabrera, consulta popular ambiental Cajamarca, and consulta popular ambiental Cumaral. The time sample consisted of news published from the date one of the three popular consultations was held until two weeks after eight, which in all of the cases was from a Sunday to another Sunday. The study focused only in Colombia but looked at cases from different regions of the country

characterized for a close relation with nature and for relying on agricultural economic systems that felt threatened for a mining or hydroelectric project approved by government.

The outlet sample was constituted by four online media outlets that have the biggest acceptance rates among Colombian opinion leaders, according to Cifras y Conceptos (2017). The poll revealed they were: El Tiempo (20%), Semana (17%), El Espectador (14%), and La Silla Vacía (11%). Some of the characteristics of those media are:

a) _El Tiempo_. Colombian newspaper from conservative tradition, founded in 1911. Property of Casa Editorial El Tiempo, owned by the richest Colombian businessman Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo. It has daily circulation. Its web edition is eltiempo.com (Monitor de medios, 2015).

b) _Semana_. The only Colombian magazine on circulation focused on political analysis. It has weekly circulation. Its website, semana.com, is the main one when it comes to opinion and political analysis. It is own by Felipe López Caballero, son of former president Alfonso López Michelsen, and its director is Alejandro Santos Rubino, nephew of President Juan Manuel Santos (Monitoreo de medios, 2015).

c) _El Espectador_. The oldest circulating Colombian newspaper. It has always been associated with the defense of liberal ideas. It is property of Grupo Empresarial Santo Domingo, which also owns Caracol Radio, Blue Radio, Cromos, Revista Shock, and other media outlets. Its web edition is elespectador.com (Monitoreo de medios, 2015).

d) _La Silla Vacía_. Informative and interactive native digital media for those with interest in Colombia's current political affairs. Juanita León, a Colombian journalist and lawyer, is the founder, editor, and biggest stakeholder. It focuses on investigative journalism and gets funds through crowd funding, grants, subscriptions, donors, consulting services, etc. Its website is lasillavacia.com (SembraMedia, 2015).

The stories published in these media platforms during the established period of time were used as corpus for this research, regardless of their genres, subgenres and formats. They were used, as they constituted historic documents that could help understanding the phenomena from a specific context and during a period of time.

Furthermore, these four outlets fit in a two-dimension taxonomy, with La Silla Vacía representing native digital media, and El Espectador, El Tiempo, and Semana representing migrated media. The main characteristics that allowed determining the taxonomy of each network was the platform where they were created and how they get funds. As explained by Rey & Núñez

(2012), migrated media are those who come from another platform and that have also a web edition, as it is the case of media outlets that emerge on television, radio, and print media. On the other hand, native media are those that appear as exclusive alternative of traditional media so its products are 100% thought for the web (Rey & Núñez, 2012). To these days, Colombian migrated media characterizes for having broader scope, whereas native media have better engagemen with users (Martínez & Zuluaga, 2016).

This research was conducted in a period of seventeen days from March 29th to April 15th, 2018. A total of 28 online news was analyzed, which included the previous mentioned four Colombian media outlets and its different sections. The author did the coding procedure with Spanish as native language and fluency in English[4]. A second coder was trained for testing. The intercoder reliability[5] score was 0,98% for the characterization variable and 0,95% for the generic frames variable, which confirms a level of agreement almost perfect.

Variables

The variable and descriptors of the Characterization were:

Table 2. Characterization

Variable	Sub variables of analysis	Operational definition	Descriptors
Characterization		Identification and location of the information (Marín Agudelo, 2016)	• Code • Title • URL • Media Outlet • Type of media • Case • Genre • Subgenre • Formats

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The variable, sub variables, and descriptors of the Generic frames were:

Table 3. Generic frames typology

Variable	Conceptual definition	Sub variables	Operational definition	Descriptors
		Attribution of	"Presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving to either	– Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem? – Does the story suggest that some level of

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[4] Although the collected data was in Spanish, the paper was written exclusively in English.
[5] Cohen's Kappa.

Variable	Conceptual definition	Sub variables	Operational definition	Descriptors
Generic Frames	Frames that transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts. These frames can be labelled generic frames (de Vreese, 2002).	responsibility frame	the government or to an individual or group" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000. P 56).	government is responsible for the issue/problem? – Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue? – Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem? – Does the story suggest that the problem requires urgent action?
		Human interest frame	"Brings a human face, an individual's story, or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000. P 56).	– 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? – Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors? – Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring, sympathy, or compassion?
		Conflict frame	"Emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000. P 56).	– Does the story reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups/ countries? – Does one party/individual/group/cou ntry reproach another? – Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue? – Does the story refer to winners and losers?
		Moral frame	"Interprets an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000. P 56).	–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?

Variable	Conceptual definition	Sub variables	Operational definition	Descriptors
		Economic consequences frame	"Presents an event, problem or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region or country" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000. P 56).	– 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?

Source: Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) and Vreese (2002; 2005).

Research questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

RQ1: What is the historical context of the current popular consultations?

RQ2: Where are located those territories?

RQ3: How different has been the coverage between native digital and migrated media?

RQ4: What are the main generic frames used by those media outlets?

RQ5: Is media taking sides in the dichotomy of economic development vs. environmental sustainability?

RQ6: Are there political and economic groups of the country influencing journalism in this regard?

RQ7: Is this a new type of conflict or crisis in the post-conflict Colombia?

Hypothesis

These were the proposed hypothesis at the beginning of the research:

H1: Native media privileged interpretative journalism while migrated media preferred the informative genres.

H2: The main specific frames were Attribution of responsibility, economic consequences, and conflict.

H3: There is significant negative framing towards the people that voted against mining projects in Colombia.

H4: Popular consultations were framed as a threat for the economic safety of Colombia.

Research findings and analysis

Categorization

In total, 28 pieces of news were collected from the three cases. According to Graphic 1, El Espectador had a 21% (n=6), El Tiempo 36% (n=10), Semana 25/ (n=7), and La Silla Vacía 18% (n=5). That makes El Tiempo the biggest news producer, in this regard, and La Silla Vacía the least newsmaker.

Graphic 1. Total of news per media.

Regarding the number of news per cases, Graphic 2 shows that 11% (n=3) corresponded to Cabrera's popular consultation, 64% (n=18) to Cajamarca's, and 35% (n=7) to Cumaral's. That makes Cajamarca the one with most news, likely, due to all of the mediatic involvement of politicians, support from social activities and public figures of all over the country, the confrontation against the owners of the project –namely, AngloGold Ashanti.

Graphic 2. Total of news per cases.

According to Graphic 3, out of the total of news (n=28), 19 were informative, 5 interpretative, and 4 opinionative. That said hypothesis one (H1) is refuted because the only native media, which was La Silla Vacía, did not privileged

interpretative genre. Rather, from its total of news (n=5), 4 were opinion while just 1 was an interpretative and extensive article. The other four interpretative pieces belonged to the studied migrated media (Semana, n=2; El Tiempo, n=1; and El Espectador, n=1).

Graphic 3. Genres.

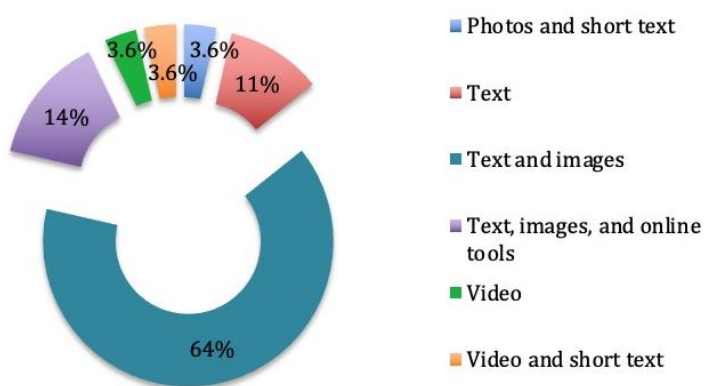- Informative ■ Interpretative ■ Opinative
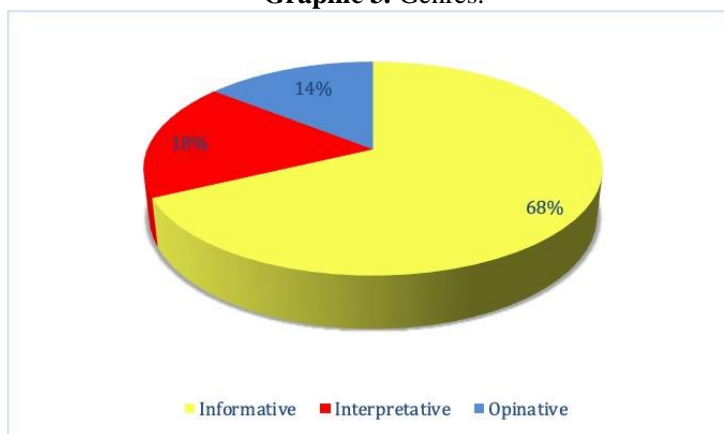
Interpreting Graphic 4, the prominent subgenres were news in a third of the total of pieces (n=9), followed by interpretative articles (n=5), articles (n=4) interviews (n=3), and opinion columns (n=3). On the contrary, photo gallery, video summary, debates, and article-interview were present once (n=1, respectively). The prominence of the first mentioned subgenres is directly related to use of genres, as seen in graphic 3, which were informative (60%) and interpretative (18%).

Graphic 4. Subgenres.

■ Article ■ Interpretative article ■ Article-interview
■ Opinion column ■ Debate ■ Interview
■ News ■ Photo gallery ■ Video summary
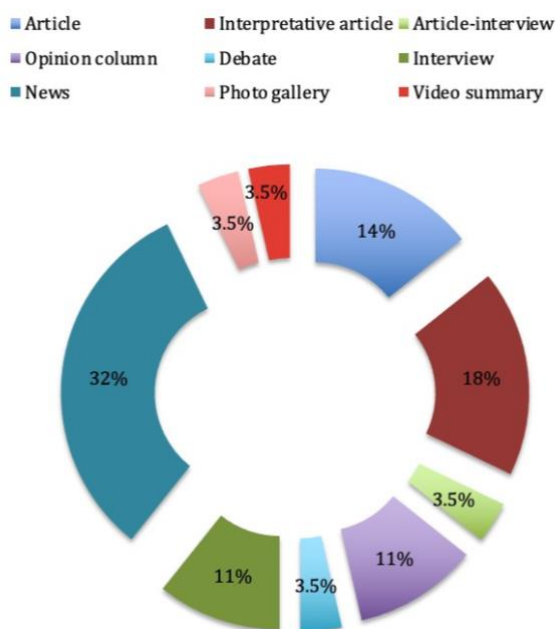
The formats in the corpus also showed interesting results. Although the pieces were taken from the media outlets' websites, so the author expected mixed of formats, the most used was text and images (n=18). Text, images, and tools from the Internet appear in only 14% of the news (n=4), and only text 11% (n=3). The only text format was used specifically for opinionative articles, where experts would express their thoughts, so images were not too necessary. Notwithstanding, it concerns that those media outlet did not mixed formats in the notes they share, exploiting the advantages of the web 3.0. The author believes they adhere to text and images because, as observed in Graphic 3, 68% of the corpus of this research was constituted by informative pieces, mainly news. For that purpose, media privileged informing with text and images, as they normally do on their original platforms[6].

Graphic 5. Formats.

- Photos and short text
- Text
- Text and images
- Text, images, and online tools
- Video
- Video and short text

Generic Frames

Table 4. Average presence of generic frames in the corpus of news.

Used/	Five generic frames				
Not used	Attribution of Responsibility	Human Interest	Conflict	Morality	Economic Consequences
Not used	0	0	0	0	0
One frame	0	0	0	0	0
Two frames	0	0	0	0	0
Three frames	8	8	8	0	0
Four frames	10	10	10	5	5
Five frames	10	10	10	10	10
Total	4,666666667	4,666666667	4,666666667	2,5	2,5

The use of generic frames in the corpus of this research showed a series of particularities. First, all of the news from this study were framed. Second,

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[6] Except for La Silla Vacía, the othe three media outlets are originally from printed media (Semana, a mazazine; El Espectador and El Tiempo, newspapers). For that reason, they could prefer -event in digital platforms where they migrated- some of the formats they traditionally use.

there was not a single-frame use or a two-frames use, but rather three or more. Third, Human Interest, Conflict and Attribution of Responsibility were the prominent ones. Fourth, the least present were Morality and Economic Consequences.

That being said, hypothesis two (H2) is partially corroborated since Attribution of responsibility and Conflict frames were some of them main generic frames, but Economic consequences frame was not. Even though the phenomenon is essentially economical, it also has a social and political component. Hence, the generic frames, as developed by Semetko & Valkenburg (2000), were rather focus on presentation the human face and emotional angles of the stories, attributing responsibility on some of the actors that were involved -or finding solutions- and emphasizing on the conflict between two sides.

There was also a partial negative framing towards the people that voted against mining projects in Colombia, but not significant as stated in the hypothesis three (H3). This was prominent on stories that privileged opinions and facts stated by government officials that openly supported those projects, as well as members of the mining enterprises, that did not hesitate to question intentions or intellectual features from supporters and voters of *No*. Generally, they were blamed for putting in risk the economy of the country, for accepting support of public figures (especially representatives from the left), for wasting time and money invested on exploring phases, for campaigning and encouraging people to vote, and for denying ways of development unrelated to agriculture.

For that reason, when looking at hypothesis four (H4), it can be spotted that popular consultations coverage was, indeed, occasionally framed as a threat to the economic safety of Colombia. Nevertheless, Economic consequences frames was not significantly used as the others.

Graphic 5. Generic frames per media.
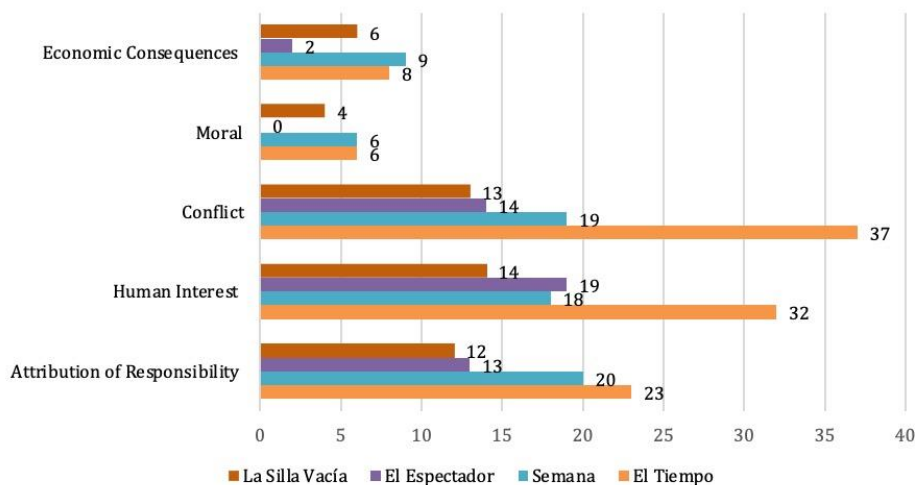
When looking at the presence of generic frames in the corpus of this research, the author found many similarities between them as explained down belong:

El Tiempo
As seen in Graphic 5, 35% of the time stories from El Tiempo displayed conflict frames focused on the dichotomic battle people vs. enterprises or people vs. government and a side questioning the other. 30% of the stories showed human interest by portraying how locals who voted, or did not, assumed the process in their day to day. In 22% of the cases, the focus was made on how a group was responsible for the problem, which was in most cases the owners and supporters of the project.

El Espectador
The stories of El Espectador showed the highest percentage regarding Human Interest framing (40%). Those were centered on the feelings of people involved, both government officials and citizens who voted against projects. That frame was followed by Conflict frame (29%) that, comparable with El Tiempo, navigated the battle between people and enterprises or people and government, portrayed disagreement between pro and against sides, and refered to people that voted No as winners; and by Attribution of responsibility frame (27%) where the responsibility of the issue was put by government on locals and by locals on government and enterprises. Likewise, the solution was put into the High Courts and Congress.

Semana
The stories of Semana presented Attribution of Responsibility, Human Interest, and Conflict in similar percentages (28%, 26%, and 25%, respectively). Correspondingly to El Tiempo and El Espectador, the first frame focused on the feelings of people involved, both government officials, representatives of enterprises, and citizens who voted against projects; and the second frame concentrated on a party putting responsibility on the other actor, or both parties agreeing that only the High Courts and Congress could solve and protect their authorities. Nevertheless, Conflict frame in Semana presented an addition to the others: instead of only addressing navigated the battles between people and enterprises or people and government, the media also centered on the dichotomy development with nature vs. development using the nature to explain why locals wanted to live on agriculture and why government needed to exploit the subsoil.

La Silla Vacía
The frames in the stories of La Silla Vacía outstand for bringing the Human-interest frame whenever they portrayed the issue from the locals themselves, emphasize how the decisions could affect one of two parties, and had visual or personal information to generate empathy or compassion. There was also the presence of Attribution of responsibility frame when stories emphasized that the problem required urgent action, solutions to the problem (by ruling

of the Highest courts and Congress), and that for a group the other was responsible for the problem. The conflict, as with the previous mentioned media outlets, portrayed the disagreement between two sides, a side questioning the other, and referred to one of the sides as winner or loser. Another thing to have into consideration is that while the other media outlets made news regarding the three cases, La Silla Vacía only made it for Cajamarca's.

In all of those media outlet, the least used frames were Moral and Economic consequences: they appeared, respectively, in El Tiempo, 6.5% and 6.5%; Semana, 0% and 4%; El Espectador, 8% and 13%; and La Silla Vacía, 8% and 12%. In other words, none of the stories from El Espectador had a Moral frame, while the other media outlets shared at least a story framing why making a decision like voting *No* for a project was the right thing to do for a community or was not for the country.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

Back to the research questions, the context of the ongoing popular environmental consultations is the post-conflict Colombia and the ongoing peace building processes. The end of an internal war and building a society with other focus is a complex work, especially in places like Colombia where the conflict with FARC lasted half century (Osorio Matorel, 2017; 2018) and where some other armed and illegal groups remain[7]. Regarding journalism, the context features concerns on how to make journalism that contributes to building a post-conflict society.

The territories are located outside the center of the country and that matters because of the center-periphery relations between Bogota, capital of Colombia, and all of the rest of cities and towns. Historically, people in the regions relied on decisions made by authorities in Bogotá. However, since the establishment of the latest political constitution in 1991, people could access to new constitutional and democratic mechanisms to defend, and protect, theirs and their communities' rights. The controversy nowadays relies on the legal gaps that, on the one hand, give authority to the State and its institutions, and on other hand, give a similar authority to the communities.

Regarding the coverage in native and migrated media, some differences were observed such as the first one, La Silla Vacía, did not privileged interpretative journalism as it normally does due to the characteristics of the media itself (Osorio Matorel, 2017). The reason may reside in the time of study, namely, the day of the consultation until two weeks later; results may have varied if the study covered a full-month or year. Informative journalism remains the favored genre of migrated media, according to the finding of this research, and opinionative journalism remains to be important as on the pages of their

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[7] Not to mention the present of right-wing illegal actors and organized criminal groups.

original platforms, printed media. Interpretative journalism was not relevant, but all of the studied media used at least once, to explain the complexity of popular consultations.

As a matter of fact, journalists nowadays are ruled by a new equation: do more with less, so be multi-skilled. Reporters are required to submit stories for traditional media outlets they work that can fit multiple platforms -that is to say, television, radio, print, and digital (Alejandro, 2010). Journalism, as an industry, is under a period of transformation where an old system is changing and a new system is emerging; in other words, is the era of an intersection between society's social cultural and technological ways of life (Alejandro, 2010). In consequence, journalists must seize the advantages of web 3.0 to allow the creation of "communities within communities, breach geographical and cultural barriers and level the playing field where anyone is given the opportunity to express himself" (p.41).

The main generic frames used, as explained above in the research findings and analysis, were Human Interest, Conflict, and Attribution of Responsibility. Despite the economical component of the phenomenon of study, the human side of the story remained. That can be translated as media portraying the human side of the story, whether it was people that voted against mining projects, government official or representatives of enterprises themselves; the confrontation of nature vs. development as well as people from regions vs. enterprises and government from the center; and the person or group that was responsible for the problem and/or could give a solution to it.

On the one hand, the responsibility was put either on the enterprises for exploring in territories such as natural reserves, on the government for giving permission to do so and not asking people that live in or near those lands, and on the people for denying the possibility to get more financial resources for the whole country. On the other, the solution was put mainly in the National Courts and in Congress to determine how to proceed after the voting and in the midst of a legal gap.

Moral and Economic Consequences were the least used. When the first one appeared, it pointed why making a decision (either voting yes or no in a consultation) was the right thing to do for one of the actors and groups involved. The second frame referenced the consequences of the *No* winning a consultation, whether it was for the time and resources used during the exploratory phase of projects, or for denying rights to get fund for the country.

Now, in exploring the conflict frame and the corpus of this research, the author observed that in most press notes, media outlets took side –or at least showed concern- in regards to the economic future of the regions that voted against the mining projects. This can be problematic as media can help to

comprehend social phenomena; therefore, they can be perceived in those contexts as powerful agents in processes of framing social discourse to the point where they can be considered the main frame-makers of social frameworks (Sábada Garraza, 2001).

For that reason, it could be assumed that some of the political and economic groups are capitalizing the debate and, ergo, influencing this media coverage, especially those who have direct nexus with a media outlet. One of the most interesting cases was from Semana: while Semana.com the website of Semana produce articles that focused on the negative effects of these consultations, Semana Sostenible -a project of Semana focused only in issues related to the sustainable development of the country- weighted on most sides of the story and explained the issue thoroughly.

Also, there is no hesitation that environmental conflicts constitute a new form of crisis in the post-conflict Colombia. In addition to the environmental factors, there is a debate on regions making their own decisions and a dislocation on what constitutes social justice for them. As Osorio Matorel (2017) stated, the country is moving from a society focused on issues exclusively related to the armed conflict to another where the priority is social justice in all its forms, decision making regarding nature and economic development, thus, constitutes one of them.

To conclude, the typology of Generic frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) as theoretical framework is valid to address the process of framing in digital media, regardless if it is migrated or native; particularly in analyzing the frame-building process as this research did. The application of the theory along mixed content analysis as method, allowed the author to analyze the news processes in Colombia related to social justice and to detect main discourses through which the information was being framed.

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