

CMST 4D03: International Communication

International News Review: The Rescue of the Chilean Miners

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Introduction

“We are OK in the refuge, the 33” (Carroll, 2010a). This message was found taped to a drill bit that penetrated the area in which 33 Chilean miners found refuge during a cave-in at the San José copper-gold mine in Chile. Upon discovering this note, a rescue mission to bring these men back to the surface began. Information and rescue updates about the accident were relayed to the public through multiple news sources, and told from many journalistic perspectives. However, news stories, like other text forms, are socially constructed to serve goals and meet agendas of a news organization (Johnson-Cartee, 2005, p. 27). As a result, events can be framed differently from one country to another.

To provide direction in this study, it was beneficial to create a research question. The researcher asked the following question:

RQ: How is the San José mining accident framed in three different countries across three different newspapers?

To investigate how journalists framed the rescue of the 33 miners in the San José mine, newspapers from three different countries were analyzed. The newspapers chosen for this study were: *The Santiago Times* from Chile, *The New York Times* from the United States, and *The Guardian* from the United Kingdom. In order to investigate how multiple frames emerged during coverage of the rescue to the days after, a timeframe of 15 days was put in place. Within this timeframe, all news articles relevant to the event were analyzed. The methodological approach used was a content analysis but theoretically, the method is based on framing theory.

The San José mining accident

On August 5 2010, a copper-gold mine in northern Chile caved in, trapping 33 miners in a chamber 700 metres below (The New York Times, 2011). For 17 days, there was no word

about the miners' welfare. However, when a borehole reached the miners' refuge, the miners attached written messages to the drill, telling rescuers on the surface they were alive and well (The New York Times, 2011). For two and a half months, the miners were given food tubes sent down the borehole containing water, and liquid nutrients to maintain their health (The New York Times, 2011). The borehole acted as a messenger channel through which the miners received written messages from their family members, entertainment in the form of books and movies, as well as information about the rescue efforts. On the surface, families and journalists set up temporary homes outside of the mine, and their campsite would soon be called "Camp Hope" (The New York Times, 2011).

On October 9, 2010, a larger drill broke through to the miners' refuge and created space for the upcoming rescue (The New York Times, 2011). In this space, miners would be raised one by one in a capsule designed to fit humans. The operation of raising one miner to the surface, and sending the capsule down the shaft would result in an hour-long process per round trip (Salinas, 2010a). On October 12, 2010, the first miner was brought to the surface (The New York Times, 2011). By October 13, 2010, all 33 miners had returned to the surface after a successful rescue (The New York Times, 2011). Once all the miners' arrived on the surface, they were transported to a nearby hospital for medical examinations. Shortly after dispatch from the hospital, the miners embarked on very public settings full of interviews and media interaction.

Framing

In order to fit the agendas and goals of a news organization, frames are used to structure news articles. The types of frames used in articles are dependent on a given society and its political and media cultures (Strömbäck, Shehata, & Dimitrova, 2008, p. 118). Frames are a way

of presenting social reality in a matter that highlights the belief systems and ideologies of a given culture (Johnson-Cartee, 2005, p. 250).

In analyzing *The Santiago Times*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian*, many frames (including overlapping frames across newspapers) were identified. To provide a focus, minor frames were grouped into main frames, thus creating a hierarchy (see Figure 1). The main frames to present include health, happiness, publicity, and economic frames. What constituted as falling under each main frame will next be defined in regards to its grouping. For the purpose of this paper, only the main frames will be discussed.

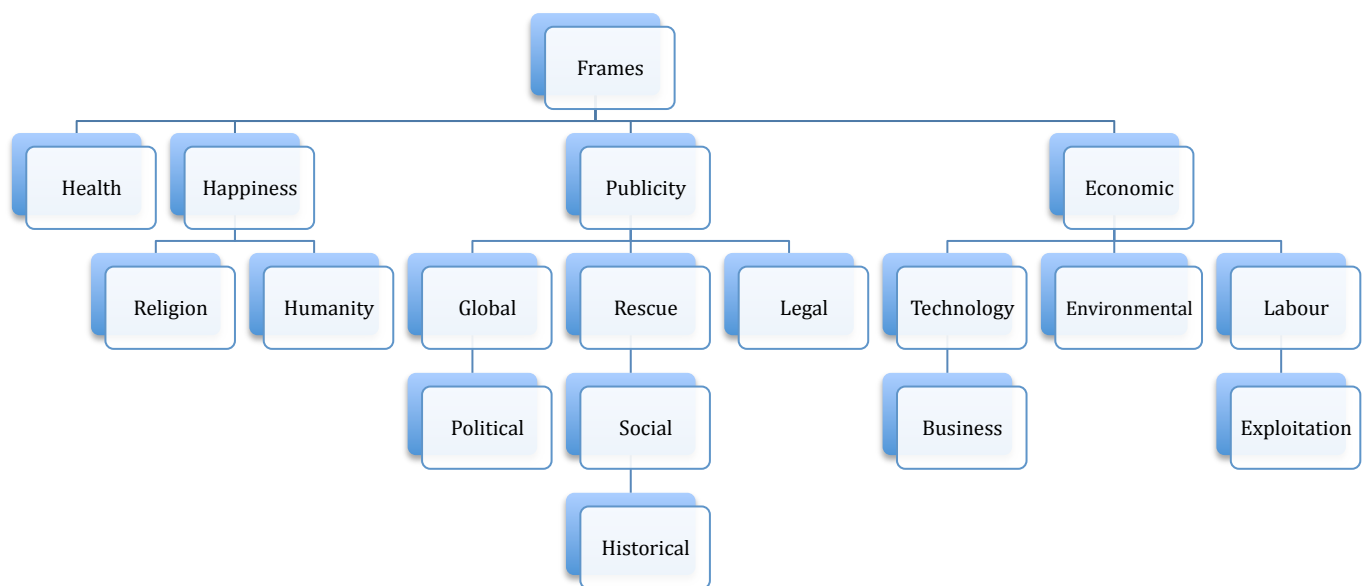


Figure 1: Framing hierarchy of main frames with minor frames

In regards to the news articles, the following criterion was required to constitute as a health frame: health conditions, diseases, treatment, psychology, doctors, and other medical-related terminology. Since the focus of this study was on framing the rescue, journalists across newspapers focused on the miners' health conditions, their time undergoing treatment at the hospital, and lastly, their conditions upon release.

To classify under the happiness frame, criteria had to consist of the emotions of the miners, emotions upon each miners' surfacing, personal feelings, and pleased statements by miners and family members. Additionally, religion was placed under this frame due to miners stating that focusing on their religion helped them keep their state of mind and remain happy during the ordeal. Humanity was also placed under this frame as the humane actions of the rescue team resulted in an everlasting happiness for each miner.

To fit under the publicity frame, articles focusing on "Hollywood deals" (potential movies, books, appearances, and job offers) were categorized, as well as articles highlighting sponsors, and articles providing a heavy focus on the statements of Sebastián Piñera, the president of Chile. Global, political, social, legal, rescue, and historical frames were all subcategorized because they provided direct focus on the miners' potential deals with Hollywood, as well as money-related matters. The political frame focused on President Piñera and his political work after the rescue.

Lastly, to constitute as an economic frame, content of articles had to consist of content not directly related to the miners and their business deals, but instead content related to economic costs and cost of having journalists on site. In addition, this frame included economic matters in regards to cost of damage in the environment, technology costs and praise for equipment, as well as labour issues and disputes.

Literature Review

Framing disasters

When a disaster occurs, mass communication organizations send specialized divisions of journalists into the field for coverage (Quarantelli, 2002, p. 11; Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004, p. 1). In a disaster field, a reporter is given more autonomy than usual. This can be due to a setting

in which it might be difficult for journalists to communicate with their officers to check their work (Quarantelli, 2002, p. 11). However, in regards to mining accidents, in order for a reporter to have their piece published, they often have to frame their report with a focus on government officials and a plethora of subordinates “rushing” to the disaster scene to organize rescue work (Jirik, 2008, p. 368). When a mining story is framed in this way, the government is still culpable for not having regulated the industry or protecting workers, but is portrayed in a more humane light (Jirik, 2008, p. 368).

For citizens reading the news, they may understand a political event, policy issue, accident, or disaster depending on how it was framed by journalists (Gross & D’Ambrosio, 2004, p. 1; Stromback et al., 2008, p. 118). Citizens interpret news reports based on frames presented by journalists. Fiske & Taylor (1991) suggest that people are limited-capacity processors, unable to formulate opinions for themselves (49). Having stated this, Fiske & Taylor show the importance of frames helping citizens gain accessibility to opinions they may not readily possess. The way in which news stories are framed helps guide “lost” citizens in finding what appeals to their ideologies and personal beliefs. In this aspect, citizens are able to understand events and incidents occurring in the world.

Methodology

Sample Selection

To address the research question, only news articles were analyzed. Newspapers were chosen over other media choices because; it is within news articles that journalists address accidents from the social perspective in which they include their own beliefs and values (Arganbright, Gehrke, & Chunbo, 2008, p. 8). To yield results across all newspapers, the

keywords “Chilean miner rescue” were used. Additionally, a timeframe of October 10 to October 25 was utilized.

For *The Santiago Times*, approximately 59 results were displayed, and of these results, 36 were used. The omitted results included commentary, letters to the editor, photo streams, video streams, op-eds, and blogs. In regards to *The New York Times*, the keywords yielded 38 results, from which 31 were used. Results omitted were video streams, photo streams, op-eds, live blogs, and teaching tools. Lastly, *The Guardian* did not allow the researcher to set a timeframe. Instead, the researcher organized the 160 article results by date. Of the results, 35 articles were used. Among omitted results were opinion editorials, letters to the editor, comment posts, blogs, op-eds, photo streams, and video streams.

Data Analysis

To organize the data, a coding sheet was created (see Appendix A). In the coding sheet, headers were listed to organize the data as follows: article count, article title, date of publishing, who framed the data, primary focus, secondary focus, and comments/rationale. The researcher created frames and listed them under the primary or secondary frame columns. In reviewing frames, the researcher was able to categorize smaller frames into primary frames.

Analysis

In regards to the research question, it was found that particular newspapers favoured certain frames over others. However, it was also noted that a lot of overlap existed across the newspapers. In regards to the criteria constituted for each frame, content in each newspaper was almost identical and repetitive. This was a beneficial find as the researcher was able to easily identify frames from one newspaper to the next.

The Santiago Times

The first newspaper analyzed was *The Santiago Times*; an English domestic newspaper in Chile. In reviewing this paper, the prominent frames (in order) were: publicity, health, economic and happiness.

In regards to the publicity frame, it was presented 11 times as primary, and 5 times as secondary (see Appendix A, Table 1). In this newspaper, the publicity frame remained the same and did not change overtime. This frame had equal coverage throughout the 15-day timeframe, with a focus on Chilean President Sebastián Piñera. President Piñera was framed very positively; displaying to the public that he was the right candidate-elect in the presidency elections earlier in the year (Silveria, 2010a). President Piñera was quoted multiple times in well-articulated phrases such as, “I am proud and happy to be president of Chile” (Salinas, 2010a). In addition, it was noted that President Piñera effectively utilized the coverage of the rescue to the benefit of Chile as a country, bringing potential tourism and investment due to a successful rescue (Rubleq, 2010a). It was estimated that the press coverage of the rescue was equivalent to a \$2 billion advertisement campaign in the United States (Frantzich, 2010a). With regards to a global audience, using the publicity frame was very beneficial towards enhancing the image of President Piñera as a lovable president. Chile is a country that has faced many hardships under dictatorial presidents in the past, and this has resulted in countries across the world labelling Chile as a cruel country. However, in framing President Piñera in a positive light, it can be noted that in the future, richer countries may consider Chile as a compassionate country, a place of investment or trade, and run by a leader who is the saviour of the miners and protector of his people.

Moreover, the health frame was presented 8 times as primary, and 2 times as secondary (see Appendix A, Table 1). In this newspaper, the health frame remained dominant at the beginning, and later became a secondary frame. This frame change occurred because it was quickly established that the miners' health was stable, and better than average (Salinas, 2010b). By October 15, 3/33 miners were discharged, and only one miner, the oldest (Gomez, 63), was suffering from pneumonia and gum disease (Frantzich & Silveria, 2010). On October 20, the last health frame was presented in this timeframe, through miners stating that media attention was taking a toll on their health (Frantzich, 2010b). With regards to global health, using the health frame was beneficial in showing the world that Chilean doctors are extremely professional, as they helped ensure the health of the miners while they were in and out of the mine. On a broad scale, this frame displayed how it would be beneficial to invest in the Chilean medical field.

Furthermore, the economic frame was presented 2 times as primary (see Appendix A, Table 1) and remained a prominent frame when discussion on investment was required. The economic frame was mentioned in regards to the cost of rescue operations. For example, it was established that the rescue cost approximately \$20 million due to the rate of drilling, which was \$18,000 per day (Farrell, 2010a). In addition, private companies donated approximately \$5 million to the rescue effort (Farrell, 2010a). Lastly, it was noted that the cost of rescue exceeded the value of the mining company, San Esteban, which owned the San José mine (Silveria, 2010b). As a result, the company had to undergo an internal audit and file for bankruptcy (Silveria, 2010b). An economic frame was utilized by *The Santiago Times* to display San Esteban as the villain of the accident. In showing San Esteban as the villain, the miners and the president were able to receive all of the positive publicity. In addition, using an economic frame

showed the global audience that the Chilean government was dedicated, as they were prepared to spend as much money necessary to rescue the 33 miners.

Lastly, the happiness frame was presented 2 times as primary, and 6 times as secondary (see Appendix A, Table 1). This frame emerged as the miners were rescued and given affection from loved ones (Salinas, 2010c). Once all of the miners reached the surface, presents and lavishing gifts were sent their way, resulting in a sense of euphoria for all (Frantzich, 2010c). Among the presents were iPods, trips to Greece, and more (Frantzich, 2010c). A happiness frame was utilized by *The Santiago Times* to show that the rescue mission was a success. For a global audience, the happiness frame displayed how a country could come together to rescue men trapped in a mine, which resulted in happiness for all people directly and indirectly involved.

The New York Times

The second newspaper analyzed was *The New York Times*; a newspaper from the United States. In reviewing this paper, the prominent frames (in order) were: happiness, publicity, health, and economic.

Firstly, the happiness frame was presented 11 times as primary, and 2 times as secondary (see Appendix B, Table 2). This frame shows a huge difference in how the United States considers happiness a more important factor over the other frames. As stated previously and for comparison, in *The Santiago Times*, publicity was the primary frame, with happiness as the last prominent frame. In regards to *The New York Times*, the first rescue-related article discussed how Camp Hope became a carnival sight with clowns, dress-up for kids, and wives and girlfriends receiving lingerie for when they receive their husbands or boyfriends (Barrionevo, 2010a). Globally, once the miners were rescued, *The New York Times* reported on miners in China celebrated as they felt solidarity with the story of the Chilean miners (Barboza, 2010a).

The happiness frame was prominent throughout the analysis, and many articles were presented in regards to global citizens celebrating throughout the world. A happiness frame was utilized by *The New York Times* to show an American ideology of happiness being important. Many of the miners were the happiest when they received material wealth, and this resonates in American culture, as many people believe that material wealth can buy happiness.

Moreover, a publicity frame was presented 7 times as primary, and 5 times as secondary (see Appendix B, Table 2). This frame remained constant throughout the 15-days of reporting, much like the publicity frame in *The Santiago Times*. *The New York Times* was very critical in their framing of publicity. It was often stated that President Piñera presidency staked on rescuing the miners to “win” the affection of the country (Barrionevo and Romero, 2010). Additionally, it was stated that the incident was framed like a large reality show (Barrionevo, 2010b). It is apparent that a publicity frame was used to show audiences that they must be critical of how President Piñera is using a situation and manipulated it to his will. In a larger context, it appears as though *The New York Times* was providing a window for readers to be critical and work on their media literacy skills.

Furthermore, the health frame was presented 2 times for both primary and secondary frames (see Appendix B, Table 2). This frame only appeared during the time of the miners surfacing. *The New York Times* was more critical of medical conditions than *The Santiago Times*. It was stated that the miners were given green suits to maintain skin moisture when they reached the surface, as well as Oakley brand sunglasses to shield their eyes from the sun (McNeil, 2010). It was also noted that personal letters were censored before they were sent down the borehole of the refuge to ensure that content would not cause aggression, shock, or grief to the miners (McNeil, 2010). A health frame did not play such a prominent role in *The New York Times* as it

did in the *Santiago Times*. *The New York Times* was less focused on the health of the miners and more focused on framing happiness.

Lastly, an economic frame was presented once as a primary frame (see Appendix B, Table 2). Like *The Santiago Times*, *The New York Times* also utilized an economic frame for reporting numbers. *The New York Times* did not focus on the spending of the Chilean government for rescue efforts, but rather on Nielsen television data reports. It was stated that more than 10 million people watched live coverage of the rescue, with many viewing it on FOX and CNN (Stelter, 2010). An economic frame was not presented as important because it could open discussion about American government spending. The Chilean government was displayed as generous in *The Santiago Times*, showing that spending would not stop until the miners were safe (with up to \$20 million spent on the rescue). For Chilean citizens, this revealed that the government is prepared to spend money when necessary. Should this idea catch in the minds of American citizens, it could spark many movements for monetary needs, such as a push for lowering costs in education if the government has a lot of money secretly tucked away, like the Chilean government had.

The Guardian

The third newspaper analyzed was *The Guardian*; a newspaper in the United Kingdom. In reviewing this paper, the prominent frames (in order) were: publicity, happiness, health, and economic.

In regards to the publicity frame, it was presented 7 times as primary, and 9 times as secondary (see Appendix C, Table 3), and presented throughout the 15-day rescue coverage. In framing publicity, *The Guardian* provided a focus on publicity of brands, as well as a focus on positively portraying President Piñera, similar to *The Santiago Times*. In *The Guardian*, the

president was quoted as saying, “What matters is to rescue them [miners] alive and to rescue them safely, and for that we’ll spare no effort” (Franklin, 2010a). This quote was included to show how the president would stop at nothing until the miners were saved – even if it resulted in spending over the estimated budget of the rescue. In addition, it was stated that with the rescue, the president’s approval rating rose by 31% (Franklin, 2010a). In regards to brands, NASA and Oakley were mentioned in multiple articles for their generous donations, and NASA’s expertise in helping rescue the miners. It was estimated that product placement in the rescue could be worth \$40 million (Franklin & Gabbatt, 2010). More importantly, a publicity frame was utilized by *The Guardian* to enforce ties with Chile and the United Kingdom as trading partners. By displaying President Piñera in a positive light, British media placed the trading partners in a positive position to the eyes of the world, showing how both countries are worth investing in.

Furthermore, the happiness frame was presented 7 times as primary and secondary (see Appendix C, Table 3). This frame was present throughout the 15-day rescue coverage, much like it was in *The Santiago Times* and *The New York Times*. This frame provided an initial focus on the families gathered in Camp Hope. As the rescue was underway, the focus shifted to emotions felt by the miners, their families, and the president upon physical contact with one another (Franklin, 2010b). The happiness frame was painted with colour in *The Guardian*, as descriptions of celebration with confetti and the releasing of balloons was present in many articles (Franklin 2010a; Franklin 2010b). A happiness frame was used to delight the British public. Britain is not located within a close proximity to Chile, and therefore those in the United Kingdom may not readily understand South American norms, economics, and so on. Therefore, a happiness frame was utilized, as happiness is universal.

In addition, a health frame was presented 7 times as primary, and 2 times as secondary (see Appendix C, Table 3). This frame was present around the time of rescue, similar to *The New York Times*. In this frame, before the rescue began, the health agenda was stated. Unlike the two other newspapers, *The Guardian* discussed in full detail the specifications of each item the miners would wear, from socks to sunglasses (Carroll & Franklin, 2010). In addition to the health frame, a strong focus on brands was also present (Sample, 2010). Once the miners were rescued, *The Guardian* was critical in stating each medical procedure a miner would receive. A health frame was used to show how healthcare is important in the United Kingdom. Since the healthcare system in the United Kingdom is publicly funded, discussing health conditions in Chile could help show citizens the importance of taking care of their health.

Lastly, the economic frame was presented 2 times as primary, and 3 times as secondary (see Appendix C, Table 3). Of the three newspapers, *The Guardian* provided the most focus on spending and other economic concerns. As Camp Hope became a small city of approximately 2000 journalists and families of the miners, it was important for the journalists to set up satellites and antennas for transmission. Most notably, the BBC sent a team of 26 journalists to the site, and *The Guardian* framed the BBC in terms of its economic waste. The BBC's actions were classified as 'an overkill', which exceeded their budget by £100,000, resulting in cuts for future events (Robinson & Carrington, 2010). An economic frame was present to show how other media outlets spent money during the rescue. As a competitor to the BBC, it was important for *The Guardian* to distinguish an economic frame. In doing so, *The Guardian* was able to demonstrate how the BBC was wasteful.

Notable comparisons and contrasts across newspapers

Overall, in reviewing these newspapers, it appeared as though each respective newspaper

provided a good focus on the rescue event. In this section, the most notable comparisons and contrasts will be highlighted.

In regards to *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*, a large portion of all frames was dedicated to brand awareness and sponsorship. On the other hand, *The Santiago Times* provided a deeper focus on the health of the miners, and the publicity of the president. Furthermore, *The New York Times* focused heavily on reporting about the rescue event, but did very little to provide content on the events that followed (see Figure 2). In contrast, *The Santiago Times* provided greater details of preparation for the rescue, the actual rescue, and some events after hospital dispatches.

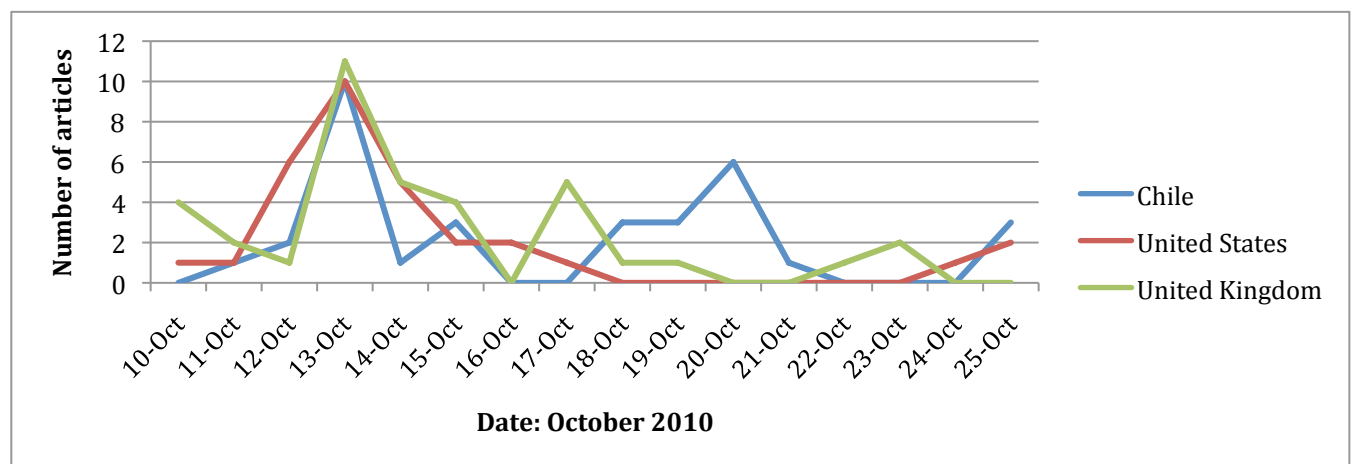


Figure 2: Number of articles about the Chilean miners rescue during October 10, 2010-October 25, 2010

Conclusion

To be apart of an informed global community, one must be media literate. This framing analysis reviewed news articles about the Chilean miner rescue from three different newspapers, each from a different country. In reviewing the articles, it became apparent that journalistic values and ideologies vary from one region to another. In addition, people from different regions hold different values from one person to another. As a result, citizens should remind themselves what their values are, before they read an article and attach themselves to someone else's

standards. In order to deconstruct the news in a critical manner, it is important that citizens perform framing analysis on the news articles they read. In being an active reader, citizens will be able to formulate their own opinions, as well as fully engage with issues in political, social, labour, and economic realms.

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63

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