



Press Ideology as an Epistemological Connector between Framing Theory and Social Representations Theory: An Analysis of Violence and Drug Trafficking in the Mexican Press

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Abstract

The present paper explores the advantages of using framing theory, social representations theory and differences in ideology to analyze polarized issues in the press. Framing uncovers the structure/format of news articles and social representations explores their meanings. These two theoretical positions are connected through the concept of ideology – a set of beliefs that shape position taking regarding social issues. Using this integrated framework, we will analyze the highly polarized topic of violence and drug trafficking in two ideologically different newspapers in Sinaloa, Mexico - *Noroeste* (journalistic ideology) and *El Debate* (elite ideology) (total $N = 547$ articles). This will be accomplished using three steps – a descriptive analysis, application of the framing scale and submitting the articles to ALCESTE software. The results show differences in framing and social representations of violence and drug trafficking according to ideology. Each newspaper presented different news frames (journalistic - attribution of responsibility and conflict frames; elite - human-interest and morality frames). However, at the level of representations (content) there were ideological differences in the representation of violence but not of drug trafficking, suggesting a common element in these representations, beyond ideological differences. These findings contribute to (1) the clarification of the concept used and (2) towards an analytical framework of press analysis - analyzing format and content and considering differences in press ideology.

Keywords Framing · Social representations · Ideology · Violence · Drug trafficking

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Introduction

The climate of social instability and insecurity in Mexico today is due to the increase of violence and drug trafficking (Astorga 2003; Carreon and De La Cruz 2012; Morales 2011). During the presidency of Vicente Fox Quezada (2000–2006) violence and drug trafficking were presented as national security issues and the government focused on combating its increase in a large part of the country (Bravo 2009; Campbell and Hansen 2014). However, it is in the year 2008, in the course of the presidency of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (2006–2012) that the violence associated with drug trafficking reached its peak in Mexico (Bailey and Taylor 2009; Brambila 2014; Montoya 2013). The government started a ‘war’ against drug trafficking and began using the army as its primary means of combat (Correa-Cabrera 2006; Morales 2011).

The press took on special relevance in this process by showing conflicting views on the topic (Brambila 2014). By the year 2000 – after 70 years of conservative government that forced a hegemonic public sphere – the press had opened up to include plural (ideologically driven) perspectives. It was also the time when violence and drug trafficking became more problematic, as the ‘implicit agreements’ between the criminal groups and the previous government were destabilized. The discourse on the topic was, thus, heavily polarized. On the one hand, the press aligned with the government in power, wanted to disseminate the political agenda of the establishment and tried to maintain the prominence of elite voices (Lawson 2000; Lawson and McCANN 2004; Phail 2010). On the other hand, the press aligned with the political opposition presented a more critical perspective on relevant issues – denouncing and questioning the strategies deployed by the government. The government was accused of using strategies which worsened both violence and drug trafficking (Campbell and Hansen 2014). The state of Sinaloa suffered the most from this warfare strategy. In this state, there was a disproportionate increase in the levels of violence due to drug trafficking (Cordova 2011). In 2008, 22% (1,167/5,400) of deaths in Mexico occurred in the state of Sinaloa alone (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía 2013).

The main goal for this paper is to analyze the Sinaloa press in respect of the two contentious topics of violence and drug trafficking. The analytical framework chosen will integrate framing theory and social representations theory and will use ideology as an epistemological connector between the two. Communication plays an important role in the production and dissemination of social representations (Cerrato and Palmonari 2007), and the way objects and events are discussed in the public sphere affect the social and individual mind (Moscovici and Duveen 2000). Framing theory can thus be used to explore the schemes of interpretation the media generates – the format – allowing groups and societies to organize events or facts of social life (Goffman 1974). Social representations theory access to the meaning-making processes associated with the way the press (re)presents certain topics (Moscovici 2001). The focus of this paper is on the format and content of news on violence and drug trafficking and aims to account for the ideological differences which exist between the way different newspapers may portray these two phenomena.

The expected outcomes are both theoretical and methodological. Theoretically, we will explore the potential of using framing theory with social representations theory. Even though both perspectives emerge from different theoretical approaches, the concept of ideology could act as an epistemological connector between them

(Cobertta et al. 2009; Höijer 2011; Howarth 2014). Ideology is a belief system which allows people to organize a multitude of social beliefs, which in turn forms the basis of the arguments and specific explanations of the world in general. These are institutionalized bulks of beliefs that propose certain perspectives of the world (Hall 1996; van Dijk 2004). In the case of framing theory, ideology would be the meta-system that certain institutionalized groups seek to convey to society. For social representations, ideology is a meta-system composed of opinions and ideas in which social representations are built (Abric 2001; Paez 1991). When confronting two groups with an object of representation, there may be differences as to whether they represent it consensually or not (Doise 2013; Levin-Rozalis et al. 2003).

The methodological contribution comes from an integrated analysis of framing theory and social representations. Framing forms the basis of more complex processes of opinion-making and positioning in the social structure – directing it towards socio-political matters (Pan et al. 2010). Through framing, it is possible to access the overall characteristics by which news is presented (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). Social representations theory, on the other hand, is the main method for studying common sense, i.e., everyday systems of knowledge (Sammur et al. 2015). Social representations focus on content rather than form (Banchs 2000) whereas framing theory – particularly the deductive approach - highlights the format in which ideas are conveyed in the press (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). Their analytical connection is the methodological proposal presented here, in order to allow a more thorough analysis of the processes involved in the (re)presentation of polarized topics in the press.

General Frames and Ideological Positioning

Framing theory has its basis in the field of sociology, specifically in the area of interpretive sociology (Bateson 1955). Framing is defined as the set of interpretative schemes that allows groups to organize events or facts of social life (Entman 1993; Goffman 1974). A frame presents information to society and shapes the debate about controversial facts or objects by simplifying them (Touri and Koteyko 2015). All the information from the press is placed within particular frames - assigning meaning and guiding our understanding (Lecheler and De Vreese 2011). The presentation of information, however, is not done in a social vacuum. *What* and *how* information is shared in the press informs levels of importance. Choosing to present certain topics more prominently than others, and to direct the public attention to certain themes affects social discourse (e.g. second level of agenda-setting Ceron et al. 2016; McCombs and Ghanem 2001; Sei-Hill et al. 2002).

There are two methodological approaches for analyzing frames in the news: inductive and deductive (Sádaba et al. 2008). Research based on the latter involves the use of a finite set of frames that appear frequently in the news (De Vreese et al. 2001) – and will be used in our analysis. These frames are the following (Neuman et al. 1992): 1) the conflict frame; 2) the economic consequences frame; 3) the human-interest frame; 4) the attribution of responsibility frame and 5) the morality frame. The conflict and economic frames highlight the political conflicts and economic crisis of the described event (An and Gower 2009; Neuman et al. 1992; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). The human-interest frame is associated with the public emotional response to an event, issue

or problem (Cho and Gower 2006). The attribution of responsibility frame attributes the occurrence of a problem to either the government or an individual group (Iyengar 1990). The morality frame situates the issue in the realm of religious principles or moral criteria (Idoyaga et al. 2012; Neuman et al. 1992).

The frames adopted by the deductive approach are the prototypical frames in which most news reports are presented (Sádaba et al. 2008). For instance, in a crisis, the human-interest and the attribution of responsibility frames are the most used (An and Gower 2009; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). However, there is little evidence of the influence of ideology on frames. Research suggest that the ideology underlying a media outlet guides their content and the meaning of the news – but not the frames used (Pan et al. 2010). Other researchers claim that despite the fact that newspapers have different ideological visions, the way in which they frame their news is the same (Ardevol-Abreu 2015; Gelado-Marcos 2009). Our study will clarify this relation by analyzing the frames and content of violence and drug trafficking articles in Mexico in two newspapers with different ideologies.

Despite the potential of the deductive approach to study framing (Pan et al. 2010; De Vreese 2003; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000) this perspective is nevertheless criticized for its reductionism. It leaves aside the analysis of other types of potentially useful frames. A bias may occur as the analysis of the pre-established frames gives little importance to content and meaning (Matthes and Kohring 2008; Touri and Kotevko 2015). We argue that this conceptual limitation of the deductive approach can be reduced by adding social representation theory to the content analysis. The rationale is that social representations adopts a phenomenological position which explores the meanings and contents that compose the objects (Moscovici 2001) – within the frames surrounding them.

Social Representations: Contents and Meanings through Social Positioning

Social representations are multifaceted concepts based on a system of values, beliefs, images and practices (Abric 2001). They are conceived as a cognitive notion that at the same time depends on the social (Farah 2011). Representations are (re)constructed within daily life, through social communication, whether informally or through the media (Moscovici 2001) and are always related to a social situation, culture or symbolic objects (Lo Monaco and Guimelli 2011; Sammut et al. 2015). They express and show the universe of the consensual (Moscovici and Duveen 2000). Consensus, however, is more than a social agreement, it is a dimension that allows the comprehension of the collective elaborations as shared in society (Höijer 2011). There are different ways of conceptualizing social representations (Cerrato and Palmonari 2007), but here we consider social representations as a form of knowledge that forms part of common sense (Farah 2011).

Social representations are the organizing principles of position taking in a specific set of social relations (Doise 2013). These positions are performed through communicative relationships and social objects may have different meanings for different groups (Cerrato and Palmonari 2007). Nevertheless, the way people and groups interact presuppose common principles of understanding between them (Doise 2013). Social

representations thus explain the logics of normalized thinking and of everyday thinking regulated by a system and a meta-system, respectively (Doise and Staerkle 2002). The former operates in terms of associations, inclusions and exclusions as automatic processes of thought. The latter controls, verifies and selects the most logical outcome in more complex cognitive processes. A hegemonic social representation of violence and drug trafficking would then be considered as a normalized object (Ben-Asher 2003). Contrarily, if there are differentiations between representations we can talk of polarized objects at the level of everyday thinking – that require more processing as to justify different social positions (Reyes-Sosa 2016).

There are objects that can maintain some type of relationship, either antagonistic or of coupling/plugging (*relation d'emboîtement*) (Guimelli and Rouquette 2004). This relationship is based on the nature of the objects; controversial and ambiguous objects, such as violence and drug trafficking, can generate biases in the representation that groups construct of them. Both violence and drug trafficking are characterized by their negative dimension which could cause groups to evoke common elements in their representation. Social representations of security and insecurity are represented with analogous elements; although the first presented a positive connotation and the second a negative one (Guimelli and Rouquette 2004). The representation of both violence and drug trafficking have similar elements; drug trafficking evokes typical actions of violence (social violence) whereas violence points to violent acts - deaths, shootings and murders – which are typical of drug trafficking (Reyes-Sosa et al. 2015). Considering this conceptual relationship between these, we found it useful to include both themes in this press analysis for the study of these heavily polarized topic in Mexican society.

Ideology: A Multifaceted Concept?

The construct of ideology has been widely discussed in the field of the social sciences (Bell 1965; Coberatta et al. 2009; Thompson 1993). However, few agreements have been reached over its definition. We explore ideology as a theoretical construct from a neutral semiotic perspective (see Ariño 1997; Chiapello 2003) - conceptualized as a belief system typical of a group that allows its members to organize specific arguments and explanations of the world in general (van Dijk 2004). It also influences social practices, explaining and making intelligible the ways in which society operates and constructs forms of collective thought (Hall 1996; van Dijk 2004).

At the basis of this construct, there are elements of a cognitive and social nature, similarly to social representations. Ideology takes particular beliefs, images or representations outside the minds of the subjects and thus affects interpersonal and inter-group relations (van Dijk 2004; Pardo 2007). But ideology is more firmly attached to an institutionalized conception of beliefs, whereas social representations are a type of everyday knowledge characterized by plurality and heterogeneity. Social representations are the result of dissemination and reinterpretation of ideological and concrete knowledge; they form the general basis of social thought (Paez 1991): it is thus a meta-system for social representations (Knapp et al. 2003). Ideology translates into framing theory because it shares the same function of news framing - it conveys concrete and formatted messages to society. Within groups there are collective-ideological ideas that

differentiate them from others and create group membership (Abric 2001). However, the content and meanings that can be granted to certain representations can be shared with other groups without affecting their ideological base (Rateau et al. 2013).

The media outlets chosen for this study explores two press ideologies: a journalistic ideology and an elite ideology (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad 1998). These ideologies are the outcome of a meta-system newspapers adopt when presenting certain topics. A journalistic ideology ‘serves an ideological purpose’ (Nixon 2011), i.e., it contributes to the debate according to newspaper’s own ideological – political and economic – beliefs. Elite ideology is related to support of the dominant political framework and aims at maintaining the *status quo* - it justifies and maintains the political structure by framing news with no criticism of the government (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad 1998). These press ideologies may be bounded to specific contextual cues and hence they are enacted as responses to particular political and economic configurations. Elite ideology and journalistic ideology may well complement each other (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad 1998). In our case, however, the newspapers show conflicting stances towards the government in power. One is more critical, putting forward their own political beliefs (journalistic ideology) and the other tends to maintain the political order (elite ideology).

Goals and Research Questions

This study sets to explore the frames and social representations associated with violence and drug trafficking in two ideologically different news outlets in Sinaloa State, Mexico. The analysis is performed in three steps to explore whether ideology affects news framing and social representations of highly polarized social issues such as violence and drug trafficking. Specifically:

- 1) Was there an increase in news coverage of violence and drug trafficking, between the year 2000 and the year 2008, when crime rates increased drastically?
- 2) What frames were used by the newspapers *Noroeste* (journalistic) and *El Debate* (elite) when covering violence and drug trafficking? Were there differences between the newspapers, i.e., between their two ideological positions?
- 3) What are the social representations of violence and drug trafficking as presented by each newspaper? What were the representational differences resulting from the ideological positions of these two newspapers?

Method

Sample

The articles analyzed were collected from *El Debate* and *Noroeste*, two regional newspapers from Sinaloa. We chose these newspapers because of their wide media coverage and their different perspectives (*Noroeste* = journalistic vs *El Debate* = elite). The newspaper *Noroeste* generated a total of 291 articles and *El Debate* a total of 256 articles. A total of 547 articles mentioning violence and drug trafficking were collected from the Historical Archive of the State of Sinaloa. In both newspapers, the articles

were part of a specialized section covering crime: *Policiaca* (Crime) in *El Debate* and *Seguridad y Justicia* (Security and Justice) in *Noroeste*. The articles are from the period 2000–2008 – when drug trafficking related violence increased. However, it was only possible to recover articles for the months of January, May, September and December. Articles from other months were taken by the State government and never returned to the archive.

Procedure

Step 1 – Descriptive Analysis

In order to analyze if there is a significant increase in the distribution of articles mentioning violence and drug trafficking between 2000 and 2008 a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The analysis was conducted using the SPSS 21 software.

Step 2 – Framing Analysis

Framing analysis was performed by two expert judges in social psychology and communication. They analyzed news articles according to the items of framing scale devised by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). The two researchers determined whether the articles had the characteristics of the frames conceptualized by the deductive approach. Disagreements were resolved by consensus.

The framing scale measures five kinds of frames: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic and morality frames. The scale is composed of 20 binary or dichotomous items of the form *no* (0), *yes* (1). Examples of questions for each frame: “Does the story suggest that some level of government is responsible for the issue/problem?” (attribution of responsibility frame); “Does the story reflect disagreement between the participants/individuals/groups/countries?” (conflict frame); “Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problems?” (human interest frame); “Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?” (economic consequences frame); “Does the story contain any moral message?” (morality frame). The Cronbach alphas (Kuder-Richardson method 20 for dichotomous data, Cronbach 1990) were calculated to measure the consistency of the five dimensions that constructed the scale. The alphas for each dimension are the following: Attribution of responsibility frame (.52); conflict frame (.69); human interest frame (.51); economic consequences frame (.80); morality frame (.73). Multi-item scales were constructed for the unweighted scores in the individual element of each factor, in order to proceed with MANOVA analysis.

Step 3 - Content Analysis

Content analysis was performed to determine the main topics associated with the articles mentioning violence and drug trafficking. To avoid problems of reliability or interpretation bias, we chose ALCESTE software to perform this analysis to 100 articles randomly picked from our initial corpus (De Alba 2004; Illia et al. 2014; Klein and Licata 2003). This program structures and quantifies the main themes in a

large corpus according to Reiner's method (Reinert 1996). It analyzes the co-occurrence of words according to the most relevant class of words (lexical items, e.g. nouns, verbs) (Bauer 2000; Reinert 1996). Using descendant hierarchical classification, the software then uses a computed approach to content analysis and extracts and identifies themes that are considered social representations (Klein and Licata 2003). After obtaining the computed thematic classes from ALCESTE, the researchers compared the theoretical definitions of the five frames and the classes from the descendant hierarchical classification performed by ALCESTE (Illia et al. 2014; Klein and Licata 2003). These thematic classes were compared against MANOVA mean differences to identify if the classes corresponded with the frames more commonly used by each newspaper.

Results

Increase in Violence and Drug Trafficking Coverage in the Mexican Press

The analysis showed a significant increase [$F(1.546) = 15.40$, $p = .000$ ($\eta^2 = .05$)] in the number of articles on violence and drug trafficking (see Table 1). This increase in articles referencing both issues was expected, since it was in 2008 when violence related to drug trafficking began to have a greater impact on society, presenting the highest rates of violence in Mexico's recent History (Carreon and De La Cruz 2012).

There was a mediatic response by the government to discuss and confront issues of violence and drug trafficking and there was also an objective increase in the number of homicides (Escalante 2011; Martinez 2012). Based on data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), the number of homicides between the years of 1990 and 2007 never showed a significant decrease, since it always fluctuated between 9,329 and 13,656 homicides. However, in 2008 homicide rates soared to 14,006 (INEGI 2013), it has been argued that this increase in violence resulted from warlike strategy adopted by the government in the fight against drug trafficking (Morales 2011).

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation: Presence of violence and drug trafficking in news between 2000 and 2008

Variables	Years	
	2000 <i>N</i> = 197	2008 <i>N</i> = 350
Violence	2.66(1.08) (<i>N</i> = 74)	2.89(1.13) (<i>N</i> = 101)
Drug trafficking	2.55(1.15) (<i>N</i> = 70)	2.52(1.01) (<i>N</i> = 200)
Violence and Drug trafficking	2.54(.97) (<i>N</i> = 53)	1.38(.53) (<i>N</i> = 49)

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of the five frames in two newspapers

Frames	Noroeste N = 291	El Debate N = 256	$F(gl = 1)$	P	η^2
Attribution of responsibility	1.50(.21)	1.45(.26)	4.67	.031	.01
Conflict	1.67(.34)	1.60(.33)	6.04	.019	.01
Human-interest	1.49(.22)	1.53(.22)	5.56	.014	.01
Morality	1.89(.25)	1.94(.17)	8.66	.003	.02
Economic consequences	1.89(.29)	1.86(.29)	1.12	.289	.00

Framing in the Newspapers Noroeste and El Debate

To analyze if there are differences in the type of frames that characterize each newspaper based on their ideological positioning, MANOVA analyses were conducted. The results showed significant differences between the framing that characterizes each newspaper [$F(1,546) = 3.98, p = .001 (\eta^2 = .03)$]. The newspaper *Noroeste* (journalistic ideology) used the attribution of responsibility frame and the conflict frame. *El Debate* (elite ideology) used the human-interest and morality frames (see Table 2). Ideological differences reflected different news framing.

The political context of the years between 2000 and 2008 justifies this outcome. The political instability and the loss of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Sinaloa, motivated political opposition. The National Action Party (PAN), with a conservative stance, presented the greatest opposition to the interests of the PRI. The critical position of *Noroeste* comes from its support of PAN, leading it to denounce the alleged institutional corruption of the PRI government. *Noroeste* used these frames to denounce the tension between the groups involved in the problem of violence and drug trafficking.

El Debate presented a more sensationalist and government aligned discourse, characterized by the use of the human interest and morality frames. It gave in to governmental pressure to eliminate all criticism from its agenda – and also sold advertising to the state government (Rodelo 2008). Hence *El Debate* highlighted the importance of moral values and religious beliefs in fighting against violence and drug trafficking. It also made use of populist discourses and images as a commercial strategy¹ (Phail 2010).

Social Representations and Ideological Positioning on Violence and Drug Trafficking

The collected newspapers articles were used to build a corpus of 36,673 words, of which 6,864 were one-hit words. The ALCESTE analysis divided the corpus into sub-groups, utilizing words with a frequency greater than five (see Klein and Licata 2003).

¹ This newspaper has made two extensions of its own edition: La I and La Sirenita. These two newspapers are characterized by the publication of violent acts typical of drug trafficking. The harshness with which both newspapers present their images, accompanied by a discourse typical of popular jargon (see: <http://www.pnmi.segob.gob.mx/>).

In this way, the analysis of descending hierarchic rating divided the corpus in 696 Elemental Context Units (ECUs).

The analysis yielded four thematic classes (see Fig. 1): one class features 282 ECUs and groups 40.52% of the total amount of content, a second class is constituted by 87 ECUs and groups 12.50% of the total amount, a third class consists of 61 ECUs and groups 8.76%, and a fourth class features 266 ECUs and constitutes 36.22%. These four classes are constituted by 83.86% of the total corpus.

ALCESTE uses chi-square independence tests to explore the relationship between thematic classes and independent variables (passive variable): (1) by the type of newspaper (*El Debate* or *Noroeste*) and (2) by the focus on violence and/or drug trafficking. The results showed four classes – considered here as representations – that differed according to ideology and objects of study. While each newspaper produced a specific representation of violence, both newspapers constructed the same representation around drug trafficking.

El Debate ($\chi^2(1) = 3.34$, $p = .001$) and the focus on violence ($\chi^2(1) = 25.26$, $p = .001$) were associated with the second class. In its representation, this newspaper emphasized the actions and operations that the government implemented to reduce the rates of violence. This type of news is presented under the human-interest frame, which highlights an emotional dimension to violence. The news article “*Dejan mensajes firmados por Arturo Beltrán Leyva*”² (05/05/2008), describes the consequences that the arrest of an alleged drug trafficker (Beltrán Leyva “Mochomo”) could have over the judiciary corps and therefore in everyday life, since the alleged unspoken arrangement between the government and organized crime to conduct their activities was betrayed (Morales 2011). This shows that this newspaper constructed a particular representation of violence (Doise and Staerkle 2002), focusing on the police efforts to reduce violence and aligning itself with the government’s agenda.

Noroeste was associated with the third ($\chi^2(1) = 33.71$, $p = .001$) and fourth classes ($\chi^2(1) = 2.29$, $p = .001$). The object of violence was also associated with the third ($\chi^2(1) = 2.17$, $p = .001$) and fourth classes ($\chi^2(1) = 2.29$, $p = .001$). This newspaper produced two representations about violence: one related to the consequences that high rates of violence have on the social fabric and another focusing on the types of everyday criminality. This type of news is presented under the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames. The first is exemplified by the news article “*Crimen organizado dueño de la ciudad: Aguirre Meza*”³ (10/12/ 2008), which suggests a lack of coordination from the authorities to combat violence and insecurity. The second example in the news is: “*Combate al narco dispara delitos*”⁴ (25/12/ 2008), which shows that the war on crime and the persecution of criminals increased the rates of high impact violence. These results show that this newspaper focused on the effects that violence has on society, criticizing the strategies that the government implemented to reduce it.

Concerning the representation of drug trafficking, *El Debate* ($\chi^2(1) = 8.39$, $p = .001$), *Noroeste* ($\chi^2(1) = 10.31$, $p = .001$) and drug trafficking ($\chi^2(1) = 50.68$, $p = .001$), were associated with the first class. This suggests that the representation of

² Dejan mensaje firmados por Arturo Beltrán Leyva.

³ “Organized crime owns the city: Aguirre Meza”.

⁴ “Fight against drug trafficking skyrockets crime”.

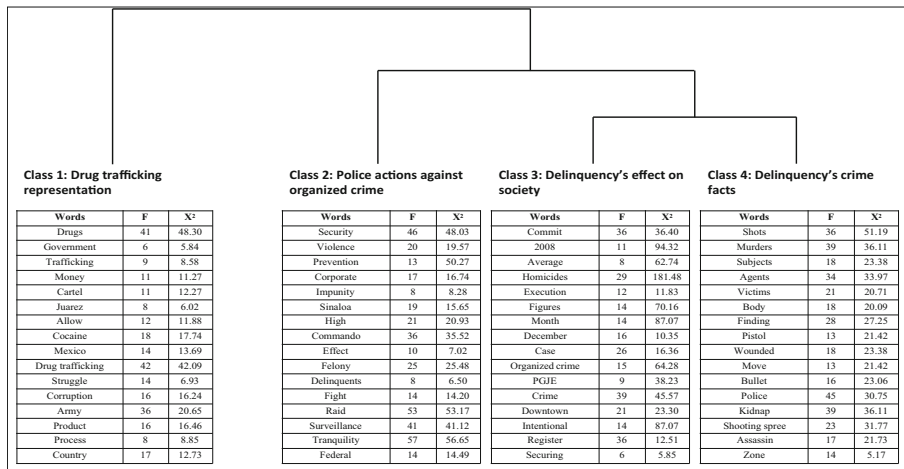


Fig. 1 The hierarchical clustering dendrogram of the free association with the most frequent words and the words with the greatest association $\chi^2(1)$, $p < .001$

drug trafficking was the same in both newspapers. They highlight the typical criminal activities of drug production and its trafficking, as well as the complicity between drug traffickers and the government system. In *Noroeste* for example, we found the article: “*Ejército vs narcotráfico: causa perdida*” (09/12/ 2000) where the corruption and protection that the military provides to drug traffickers in exchange for economic payments is highlighted. In *El Debate*, for example, an article entitled “*Matan 2 narcos a 3 madrinas de la PFJ en la colonia Guadalupe Victoria*” (01/12/2000) referred to corruption, as police agents were accused of asking money from drug traffickers to protect rather than denounce them.

These results show the differences in representations in two different ideologically positioned news outlets. Representation of violence showed more ideological differences than the representation of drug trafficking. This result suggests that a polemic representation has been constructed around violence. This type of representation is constructed over antagonistic and conflictive views and also reflects a relationship of conflict between the groups involved (Rouquette 2009) - as each newspaper highlights different consequences of violence on the social fabric (Doise 2013). Drug trafficking, contrarily, seems to be a hegemonic social representation (Ben-Asher 2003). This type of representation is stable and persists across time (Abric 2001). Second, because of their coercive nature hegemonic representations are established and shared by all the members of the group (Reyes-Sosa et al. 2015). The two newspapers represent drug trafficking using common elements because drug trafficking has been long established in the State of Sinaloa.

Overall, the results suggest that *Noroeste* and *El Debate* represented the two objects with common elements - where violence and drug trafficking are two strongly related problems (coupling/plugging relationship between representations; Guimelli and Rouquette 2004). The two newspapers explain violence through violent and aggressive

⁵ “Army vs Drug trafficking: A lost cause”.

⁶ Matan 2 narcos a 3 madrinas de la PFJ de la colonia Guadalupe Victoria.

acts - characteristic of drug trafficking -, evoking common elements in their representations (Reyes-Sosa et al. 2015).

Discussion

Interrelating framing theory, social representation theory and ideology was one of the main goals of this paper. The results provide evidence related to both methodology and theory. Methodologically, the limitation of the deductive approach to framing became salient. An innovative way of integrating framing analysis with social representations theory was proposed, by emphasizing the advantages of exploring frames as formats and social representations as meanings/content (Banchs 2000; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). We also explore how press ideology may influence our analytical framework. Theoretically, we advanced how frames, social representations and ideology can be articulated through the empirical example of a press analysis about violence and drug trafficking in Sinaloa.

The analysis showed that ideology can contribute to the construction of different frames (Muñiz and Ramirez 2015) – but not when social representations are hegemonic. The meanings associated with drug trafficking did not reflect ideological differences (Ardevol-Abreu 2015; Gelado-Marcos 2009). Violence, however, although presented ideologically differently, still shared the same elements in different representations. This outcome indicates that beliefs and ideas (collective thinking) that the groups construct over certain objects do not totally change as a result of different ideological systems. Social representations are thus more general and constitute the common sense in which ideologies are articulated (Moscovici 2001; Rateau et al. 2013; Rouquette 2009) – social representations make communication possible even between diverging ideologies. The results also highlight the coupling/plugging relationship between violence and drug trafficking (Reyes-Sosa et al. 2015; Rouquette 2009). Each newspaper constructed a specific type of representation of violence, but both newspapers constructed a similar representation of drug trafficking. The different ideas on violence can be attributed to controversies over the various ways in which violence can affect or be prevented in society (Doise 2013; Doise and Staerkle 2002; Touri and Koteyko 2015). However, the shared idea of drug trafficking can be attributed in normative and meta-systemic terms; drug trafficking is a phenomenon which persists across time in Sinaloa and has invariably affected society (Cerrato and Palmonari 2007). To understand the dynamic between these two interrelated social objects, it is necessary to incorporate the context of Sinaloa state and its history. History provides relevance and meaning to social objects and in turn builds the values and practices shared in the social context (Abric 2001; Reyes-Sosa et al. 2015).

Additionally, the analysis of ideology as a theoretical construct, allows for the interrelation of framing theory and social representations theory. Framing, as anchored in sociopolitical dimensions, allows the construction of opinions and political positions (Goffman 1974; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). Framing helps to determine the level of political criticism of a certain topic. Social representations provide content and

meaning to the frames used by the press (Moscovici and Duveen 2000) and is less embedded in political opinion making. Moreover, social representations allow us to contextualize and explain ideological thinking and through the analysis of social positioning we can explore how different groups build ideas towards the same object (Doise and Staerkle 2002). We also propose a distinction between social representations, as common-sense, and ideology as an institutionalized view of knowledge.

The results and conclusions presented here, however, show empirical limitations. Particularly, it suffered from the impossibility of collecting articles beyond January, May, September and December - the newspapers were previously taken from the archive and were not returned. It is not clear whether there is any intentionality behind this disappearance of newspapers articles. Mexico has also been acknowledged as one of the most dangerous countries to work in as a journalist (Phail 2010). A climate of journalistic instability intensifies the importance of continuous study of the press in Mexico – and how it plays in the complex production of knowledge between groups.

Nevertheless, with this study, we hope to have highlighted the importance of connecting context and theory and to have tackled the limitations of the deductive approach to framing with social representations, and hence to have contributed to an interdisciplinary proposal for press analysis.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest No conflict of interest.

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