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# Framing ‘Green Pope’ Francis: newspaper coverage of Encyclical *Laudato Si’* in the United States and the United Kingdom

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## ABSTRACT

One of the voices that has recently joined the discussion on environmental protection is that of Pope Francis with the publication of the encyclical *Laudato Si’* (2015). This work studies the keys to interpretation used by the British and U.S. newspapers to present the encyclical between 14 and 24 June 2015. By analysing newspaper coverage by *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times* from a framing perspective, a political focal point emerges, one that lends importance to the impact of the encyclical on a local level, due to the presence of sceptical voices in the North American context, and on a global level, due to the imminence of the Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21).

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## 1. Introduction

Since Al Gore’s documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* was aired in 2006, it is not unusual to see popular figures shaping public opinion in the climate change debate. On the contrary, intellectuals, writers, singers and actors have all voiced their opinion on the subject to a far greater extent than the politicians, social voices or scientists involved in the debate (Boykoff and Goodman 2009).

At times, the popularity of such figures not only helps convey a complex reality, but also leads to the debate being taken lightly, or to spontaneous and temporary reactions from the public. We have here a double-edged sword, which not only benefits the debate but is also a hindrance to raising awareness (Anderson 2011, 543).

One of the voices that has recently joined the discussion on environmental protection is that of Pope Francis with the publication of the encyclical *Laudato Si’* (2015). His insistence that the text was not only intended for a religious audience, but rather for a universal one, meant that what he said entered the complex public debate on

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climate change. However, his voice differs from that of scientists, politicians and activists, despite the fact that mass media tend to place it at these levels. Examples include some of the most influential Spanish newspapers, which commended the Pope's stance from a fundamentally political viewpoint and focused their interest on the Pope's criticism of climate change sceptics, particularly in the conservative Spanish context (Pou and Sahuquillo 2016).

This piece of work stems from the finding, in that earlier study, that some media presented the encyclical as innovative on a doctrinal level, or as a media bid on the part of Pope Francis who, with the help of his communication skills, managed to transmit something his forerunners did not, taking on a new political role in the public arena.

The aim of this work is to discover the keys to interpreting *Laudato Si'* in the US and UK newspapers showing most interest in climate change so as to find out where they place it: on a political level, echoing the criticisms aimed at climate change sceptics who are particularly present in North American public opinion, or linking it to the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) which was to be held only a few months later, or alternatively, on a religious plane, as a breaking point or a sign of continuity in the Social Doctrine of the Church about the Environment.

Discovering the key elements in the presentation of the encyclical requires describing the system of reference in journalistic accounts, that is, it involves indicating which elements of the papal document are highlighted by a given medium in order to offer it to the reader as something that is relevant to him. This mission invites us to approach the media from a news frames perspective.

## 2. Theoretical framework

An analysis of the journalistic account from a framing perspective is based on regarding the mass media as interpreters of reality. This capacity for hermeneutics, rhetoric and pragmatism renders them constructors of a mediated reality and, consequently, their mediation role between social actors and the people means that not only do they transmit reality, but also prepare it, elaborate it and present it in such a way that 'they have no choice but to modify it or even shape it' (Gomis 1991, 16). It is a task that goes beyond pointing out interesting issues or even beyond giving them meaning; it is 'the ability the mass media has for legitimising people, institutions, attitudes and behaviours. Or the ability for ghettoising them' (Contreras 2004, 35).

Frames are reference systems used by journalists to analyse facts and present them to the reader. It is the task of inclusion–exclusion and ranking that they apply to each piece of information: 'Most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience' (Entman 1993, 54). In their task of observing and explaining, they use keys that leave an impression; they appear as 'marks' in the story and can help guide anyone trying to find out how the reality presented to him has been constructed.

In recent decades, studies of framing in the mass media have consolidated after several stages of theoretical doubts and difficulties encumbering their development and growth (López-Rabadán 2010). At the present time, their practical application in addressing keys to interpretation of the journalistic account has demonstrated their

ability to help us understand how the press plays a part in agenda building (Sádaba and Rodríguez Virgili 2007), and how readers are provided with reference points for understanding it: 'Due to its success and international circulation the journalistic frame has become a key concept, essential for understanding cognitive effects of the mass media' (López-Rabadán 2010, 237). It is true that regarding the prospect of relating framing and agenda setting, theorists disagree; they either perceive the former as an insight into the second, or believe that they should both be incorporated as complementary, but independent (Ardévol-Abreu 2015). This intuition about a professional's interpretation process, or that of the media, is, however, one that is confirmed over and over again, even when the extent of its influence on the public is more difficult to establish. So it is that after an initial start-up stage beginning in the seventies, and a second stage of growth and theoretical debate in the nineties, we are currently experiencing, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a third stage of consolidation and of ever-increasing empirical studies that apply framing to the journalistic message (López-Rabadán 2010).

Thereby, in recent years, the number of specific studies analysing news frames on particular current affairs issues have increased considerably, such as Igartúa and Humanes (2004), Igartúa, Muñiz, and Otero (2006) or Sádaba and Rodríguez Virgili (2007). One such issue is the journalistic discourse on care for the Environment. Consideration of this issue from a framing perspective can be found both in studies on public opinion in the USA and UK by Boykoff (2007, 2008) and in media reviews by Trumbo (1996), Antilla (2005) and Carvalho and Burgess (2005); in other European countries (Brossard, Shanahan, and McComas 2004; Dirikx and Gelders 2010); in Latin American countries (Takahashi 2011; Mercado 2012); and in Asian countries (Sampei and Aoyagi-Usui 2009; Billett 2010).

Sceptical positions that question human responsibility with regard to climate change and whether the phenomenon even exists are very much a feature of the North American press. In this context, Boykoff (2007) warns of a seemingly innocuous, or even beneficial, journalistic practice that could, in his view, actually have harmful effects. He is referring to the equally balanced voices in reports, which put deniers and scientists on a par and place consensus and minority discrepancy at the same level. In his opinion, this practice facilitates consolidation of large groups of sceptics. Furthermore, he presents (Boykoff 2015) the risks of undue customisation in the defence of climate change, which may dissuade people from taking on their responsibilities.

The debate on climate change has moved from the scientific to the political sphere having featured very little in social sphere. In this context, the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* has meant the entrance into this debate of a leader who is not affiliated to any political positions, one who speaks from his own stand, often presented as opposed to science and to reason: the faith.

### **3. *Laudato Si'* and the church's view on the environment**

This encyclical was not as exceptional in nature or as original as some voices were proclaiming. It is true that it was the first encyclical to be entirely dedicated to care for the Earth, but it was not the first time that the Church had spoken on the issue. On the contrary, references to the necessary respect for Creation and criticisms

against overuse of natural resources are consistent with what the Church has said repeatedly, in particular, in the Second Vatican Council and through the popes of that period and subsequent to it, from Paul VI to Benedict XVI.

The teachings of Vatican II express the Church's concern for the development experienced by a large part of the world at that moment and already referred to by Pope St. John XXIII in his *Mater et Magistra* (1961, no. 197): 'Nothing is said in the second of these commandments (increase and multiply) about destroying nature ...'

In the Conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), the emphasis was above all on the redistribution of wealth, the arms race and birth control methods. There is no specific mention of protection of the Environment, but there is a consideration that will become the basis of subsequent doctrine (García Navarro 2012). Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) will be the one to link technological advances with human solidarity: 'Development of the individual necessarily entails a joint effort for the development of the human race as a whole' (no. 43). This criticism of the exploitation of our natural environment that results in ecological crisis will become the key to his thought on the Environment and will be found later on in his Apostolic Letter Octogesima Adveniens (1971): 'by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation' (no. 21).

It is the view that can be found in both St. John Paul II, who introduces the concept of 'human ecology' along the lines of *Populorum Progressio*, and in Benedict XVI, described as 'Green Pope' by Daniel Stone (Newsweek 2008) shortly before his visit to the USA. Both popes insist on the roots causes of deterioration, that is, on moral reasons, contemporary lifestyle (John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* 1991, no. 52), and on the need to assume one's responsibility: 'a greater realization of the limits of available resources, and of the need to respect the integrity and the cycles of nature and to take them into account when planning for development' (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 1987, no. 26). Similarly, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004) was released during the Pontificate of Pope St. John Paul II. It includes a specific chapter on the subject at hand titled: 'Safeguarding the Environment'.

For his part, Benedict XVI is presented by the media as 'Green Pope' not merely because of what he says, but by reason of his decisions in support of using renewable energies in the Vatican during his Pontificate; an example was the installation of solar panels in the Paul VI Audience Hall.

It therefore cannot be said that *Laudato Si'* introduces ex novo the doctrine on care for Creation, or that it expresses for the first time the Church's concern for the Environment. But perhaps it can be said that the encyclical's contribution of specific solutions projected the Church into the sphere of public debate on the policies to be adopted.

From the beginning of his Pontificate, Pope Francis' words have aroused the interest of the mass media (Spadaro 2013; Fumagalli 2015; Tridente 2016). Important documents and extensive reflections are not the only reason for this, but also, and especially, his spontaneous statements in informal settings that made for a good headline or for a highly expressive metaphor. But the dissemination of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* was surrounded by some circumstances that increased public interest. The encyclical was to be issued on 18 June 2015; however, the Italian weekly *L'Espresso* released its content a few days earlier, taking it from a leaked draft of the document.

The journalist who signed his name to the information, Sandro Magister, was sanctioned by Vatican officials for breaching the news embargo. That was how newspapers got hold of the text outside the frame of reference provided by institutional information, thereby providing the opportunity to determine whether different media overviews varied in their interpretation.

Thus, the public presentation of the encyclical was surrounded by additional circumstances that enhanced its value as news and heightened the interest of the press: that was the unusual thing about this encyclical, a document characteristic of the Pontificate, but not a regular one. What was new and different about it was that it was the first encyclical written exclusively by Pope Francis, since the previous one had been mainly the work of his predecessor, Benedict XVI, expectations regarding the content, since it was common knowledge that it was about the Environment, a politically controversial issue and, finally, curiosity in light of leakage of the text. To this we should add the timing of its release, just months before the Paris Climate Conference (COP21), where the protocol set to replace Kyoto (1998) was expected to be approved, and the Pope's visit to the USA.

In fact, the Pope himself linked the encyclical and the Conference in response to a journalist during the press conference that was held in the airplane that was taking him from Sri Lanka to the Philippines on 15 January 2015:

The important thing is that there be a bit of time between the issuing of the encyclical and the meeting in Paris, so that it can make a contribution. The meeting in Peru was nothing great. I was disappointed by the lack of courage; things came to a stop at a certain point. Let's hope that in Paris the delegates will be more courageous and will move forward with this.

In this context, the encyclical was not anything new in terms of doctrine, but it was novel insofar as its firm criticism of responsibility for climate change and in its explicit support for UN and Conference positions on Climate Change. According to Federica Genovese (2015), the case is significant. After analysing the encyclicals from 1958 to the present time, she concludes that the Church incorporates proposals of a political nature at times of international crisis, thus filling the gap left by the states. In her view (2015, 8) *Laudato Si'* means that: 'the Vatican responds to the inaction of political institutions, because the encyclical recurrently points to the issues that have stalled international debates such as the United Nations negotiations on climate change'. For all of these reasons, it is appropriate to analyse the role played by the international press' account of the encyclical in shaping public opinion.

In the United Kingdom, the release of *Laudato Si'* coincided with the Lambeth Declaration on Climate Change, signed by representatives of the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Methodist communities. Around the same time, there was also an important demonstration against the Cameron government's austerity measures that involved environmental groups and social activists.

For its part, how the encyclical was received in the North American context was particularly interesting because due to its anthropogenic thesis on climate change, it won the support of democrats and of environmental groups, was rejected by conservatives and caused uneasiness among some Catholics who found themselves caught

between fidelity to their religion and their political convictions (Li et al. 2016). This is what happened to Rick Santorum, who asked the Pope to leave science to the scientists, and to Jeb Bush, who made a distinction between his religious beliefs and his political activity, and insisted that the Pope should not interfere in the latter. Some coal lobby representatives joined him in criticising the Pope for not supporting the use of fossil fuels if he was really concerned about energy poverty. Against that stance was that of Vice-president Joe Biden, who welcomed the Pope's message because it backed the position of the Obama Administration, which, that very week, was announcing measures to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

But the encyclical was not only relevant among political leaders but it was also important among the people. Two studies have addressed the consequences of Catholics' and non-Catholics' exposure to the Pope's message, and their perception of climate change: on the one hand, the study carried out by the George Benson University and Yale University, and on the other, the Annenberg Public Policy Center's study. The first takes for granted that the Pope's opinions changed opinions in America to the extent that people were talking about the 'Francis effect', although it does so cautiously in light of the possibility that the effect could fade:

In this report we conclude that, over the past six months, Americans –especially Catholic Americans –became more engaged in and concerned about global warming. Furthermore, our findings suggest that the Pope's teachings about global warming contributed to an increase in public engagement on the issue, and influenced the conversation about global warming in America; we refer to this as The Francis Effect. (Maibach et al. 2015, 4)

By contrast, the second states that the impact of media accounts was not significant among the sceptics, despite the fact that they were Catholics. In the authors' opinion, these diminished the Pope's credibility on such issues. According to the study, liberals became more concerned about the consequences of global warming and conservatives quite the opposite. Although the authors claim that the encyclical did nothing to change opinions, they admit that it did result in people occupying more polarized positions: 'Although the encyclical did not have broad effects on overall acknowledgement of and concerns about climate change, people who had heard about the encyclical appeared to be more polarized than those unaware of the document. Among liberals, those who had heard about it were more concerned about climate change and perceived more risks than those indicating no awareness; the opposite was true for conservatives' (Li et al. 2016, 10).

Finally, the Pope's voice heightened interest among normally sceptical audiences. This is an example of the power religious voices in public debate when they introduce considerations of an ethical character and regarding social justice (Wardekker, Petersen, and van Der Sluijs 2009).

#### **4. Objectives, hypotheses, research questions and method**

The research objectives are:

1. To quantify journalistic accounts of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* in the U.S. and British newspapers paying most attention to climate change.

2. To identify how accounts of the encyclical are framed, and the keys presented by newspapers for interpreting these frames.
3. To establish whether there is a link between the encyclical and specific political actions, in particular, the presence of the Paris Climate Change Conference in news media accounts.
4. To become familiar with the doctrinal contextualisation of the encyclical and how this was a feature in the press before now.

This piece of research is based on the following hypotheses:

H1. U.S. media devote more space to the encyclical than British media due to the imminence of Pope Francis' visit to the USA.

H2. As the context is non-Catholic, the political dimension overshadows the religious one. The prevailing frame is the conflict between climate change believers and sceptics, positioning the encyclical against the latter.

H3. In the USA, the event is interpreted on a local level as it comes during the run up to the elections. As it coincides with the Paris Climate Change Conference, Britain construes it on a global level; this is also the case in the USA but to a lesser extent.

H4. The media neither mentions preceding examples nor includes references made to the Doctrine of the Church with regard to the environment previous to those of Francis.

So as to confirm these hypotheses, let us raise the following questions:

- Does *Laudato Si'* feature in the Anglo-Saxon media showing most concern for climate change?
- Is the encyclical presented as religious content intended for Catholics or as a political message? Is the encyclical summed up as an element of conflict for groups of climate change sceptics?
- Is the encyclical read against a local or a global political backdrop? Is it linked to the North American elections? Is its significance in the Paris Climate Conference noted?
- Do the media situate the content of the encyclical as part of the continuity of papal doctrine, or is it presented as a major turning point?

An analysis of the framings of the encyclical requires an adequate contextualization of the document in question. An encyclical is a religious text, a letter from the Pontiff to the Catholic faithful and to 'those in goodwill'. Thus, the religious dimension is preeminent among the information about a document such as this. That said, in the case of *Laudato Si'*, the text introduces itself as a message that goes beyond the Catholic context and is addressed to all people: 'In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home' (n. 3). This means that in addition to the religious dimension, proper to a papal document, politico-economic, scientific and sociocultural dimensions are also present. Admittedly, all encyclicals address these dimensions at one point or another, providing Catholics with material for reflection; in this case, however, they are intended for all people and



consequently, the frames of reference are broadened. We are no longer dealing with subject matter that is restricted to religious media as the message from a religious leader to his community, but rather with content that can be approached and presented from multiple perspectives. This is where it is highly appropriate to determine the cognitive frame of reference, or the frame, understood as: ‘the structured framework capable of changing the course of social perception’ (Sádaba and Rodríguez Virgili 2007, 210).

These different perspectives correspond to the content of the encyclical and to the related aspects:

- the religious aspect, given that it is a call to the faithful to care for the environment,
- the politico-economic aspect, because of its criticism of those in positions of political and economic power as well as suggested solutions,
- the scientific aspect, on account of its support for the positions of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) on climate change and its censorship of sceptics,
- the sociocultural aspect, due to its criticism of the system of consumption and the use of nature on which the life of developed countries is based, and to which developing countries are trying to gain access.

These dimensions are not mutually exclusive, that is, the presence of one does not necessarily mean the absence of the others, but the key to interpretation can be deduced by discovering which of them is predominant.

For each dimension, a series of questions was formulated, in order to determine the prevalence of one or another:

- a. In reference to the religious dimension: Are the faithful and their actions mentioned? Are the implications for doctrinal material or the internal life of religious communities addressed? Are other religious leaders or other churches mentioned?
- b. In reference to the political dimension: Are the reactions of political parties or leaders stated? Are governments, developed policies or party positions mentioned?
- c. In reference to the scientific dimension: Is there recourse to scientific consensus or to discrepancy in the scientific sphere? Are scientific arguments mentioned? Is reference made to the scientific arguments present in the text?
- d. In reference to the social dimension: Are the disadvantaged or citizens of developing countries invoked? Are the attitudes and positions of the people considered? Is the consumption model referred to?

In each of these dimensions, one of the five frames noted by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) can be found:

1. Responsibility: The text highlights the Pope’s references to responsibilities (causes or solutions) in the current climate of injustice and environmental impact. The protagonists are governments and political authorities, the industrial and economic sectors, and the people at large.

2. Conflict: The text puts the spotlight on criticism of those responsible for damage to the planet and declares confrontation with the sceptics or authorities who oppose taking action against climate change.
3. Economic consequences: The text highlights the economic consequences of taking the decisions specified by the Pope in the encyclical.
4. Human interest: The text attaches more weight to the Pope's references to the suffering of those adversely affected by climate change.
5. Morality: The text views the encyclical as a call to action on the part of the Pope in order to mitigate the effects of climate change by adopting political measures and/or individual practices.

Both elements – the dimensions and the frames – can be linked so as to obtain a more complex vision of journalistic interpretation. Thus, for example, the conflict could appear not only in the political dimension if the Pope's voice is presented as an element of political dispute, but also in the religious dimension if it suggests that the encyclical could create confrontation between the Pope and a large number of U.S. Catholics.

Therefore, the first step of the study will be to analyse the dimension in which a journalist places a fact, and second, how he frames it.

To that end, content analysis has been employed, as it is a set of techniques that help make inferences in a systematic manner (Holsti 1969; Krippendorf 2012). Content analysis attempts to unravel what lies under the surface. It goes beyond the obvious in a journalistic message and in doing so manages to reveal the hidden message, which, contrary to common belief, is not contained within the text, but outside it: 'in the minds of the people producing the messages and of those receiving them' (Piñuel 2002, 3). Thus, we assume that the expression demonstrates the facts: 'the structures and the meanings poured into them reflect above all the structure and contents of the specific intellectual model of the individual reporter towards a particular event' (Van Dijk 1993, 147). It will act, therefore, as a lever for opening the box of interpretations contained in every journalistic account.

In selecting media, we have consulted data published by the Center for Science and Technology Policy Research (CIRES) in relation to the number of newspaper pieces regarding climate change published in each country between the years 2000 and 2017. The newspapers with the greatest number of texts on the subject in June 2015 in the United Kingdom are, in order, *The Guardian* (389), *The Times* (112) and *The Daily Telegraph* (76). In the USA, they are *The New York Times* (116), *The Washington Post* (86) and *Los Angeles Times* (48).

As a result, these six internationally recognised newspapers from both the USA (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*) and the United Kingdom (*The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*) have been analysed. The content selection was carried out using the Factiva and My News databases. The key words 'Pope Francis', 'Encyclical' and 'Laudato Si' were used as a tracking mechanism within the databases. The selected period ran from 14 to 24 June 2015, for although the encyclical was published on 18 June 2015, the fact that its content was leaked a few days before aroused media interest in the document itself and in the

circumstances and interests that had given rise to the leak. The units of analysis were selected where the three searches coincided and these units comprised the sample.

In order to analyse the presence of particular frames within journalistic accounts, opinion texts were excluded since the keys to interpreting such texts are explicit. Reading them, however, completed the picture of the occurrence as proffered by one medium or another.

A fact sheet was used for the analysis. Results linked to the stated objectives were collected on it: The presence of the dimensions and frames was tracked in the news headlines and in the first reference to the content of the encyclical (the summary that was used to introduce it), if the text made specific reference to the Paris Conference and if it included precursors to the encyclical in the form of other doctrinal texts on the Environment.

The factsheet was as follows:

- I. Identification data: Newspaper; date, page, title, author, category (I/O).
- II. Dimension in which it is situated: religious, political, scientific, social.
- III. Frame in which it has been placed: Responsibility, conflict, economic consequences, human interest, morality.
- IV. Reference to the Paris Conference.
- V. Reference to Church doctrine.

Section number I was merely descriptive with the aim of locating and quantifying the texts on the subject. In the 'category' subsection, a distinction between informative and opinion texts was only made so as to be able to carry out a complete analysis in the case of the former; it was not necessary to differentiate the journalistic genre to which each belonged.

The data in sections II and II were rated on a scale of 0–2 in order to allow for the possibility that a text could be situated in two dimensions and simultaneously have two perspectives. Given that we were dealing with references present in the headline and the first paragraphs resuming the encyclical, it was unlikely that more than two issues would share prominence. In cases where a given dimension or frame was not present, 0 was marked; 1 was marked when a dimension or frame appeared but was contingent on another (i.e. it appeared further down or within the main text) and 2 was the rating when it appeared as the central idea or as the first of a list of elements. In some texts, various dimensions and frames may have featured. In such cases, the most relevant was awarded 2 and the rest 1.

Once the data had been collected, the results were combined in order to determine the dominant dimensions and frames.

References to the Paris Conference and doctrinal references were quantified as percentages of texts in which they were mentioned in relation to the total number of texts in each newspaper.

## 5. Findings

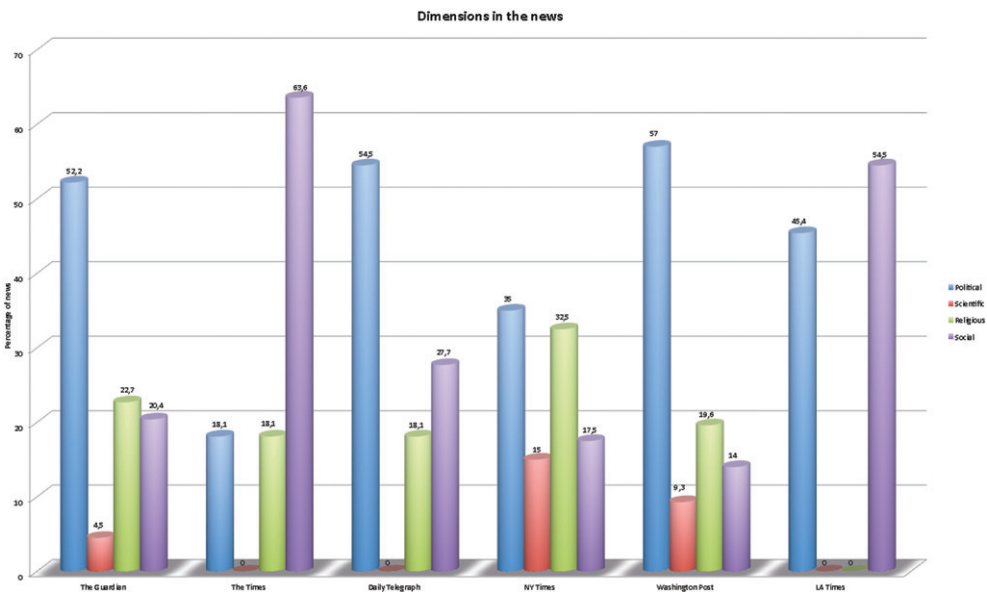
The total number of texts that mentioned *Laudato Si'* during the period of time analysed was 134, even though some of them were opinion articles. As we said, these

texts were excluded for the frames analysis. Thereby the sample was reduced to 100 informative texts.

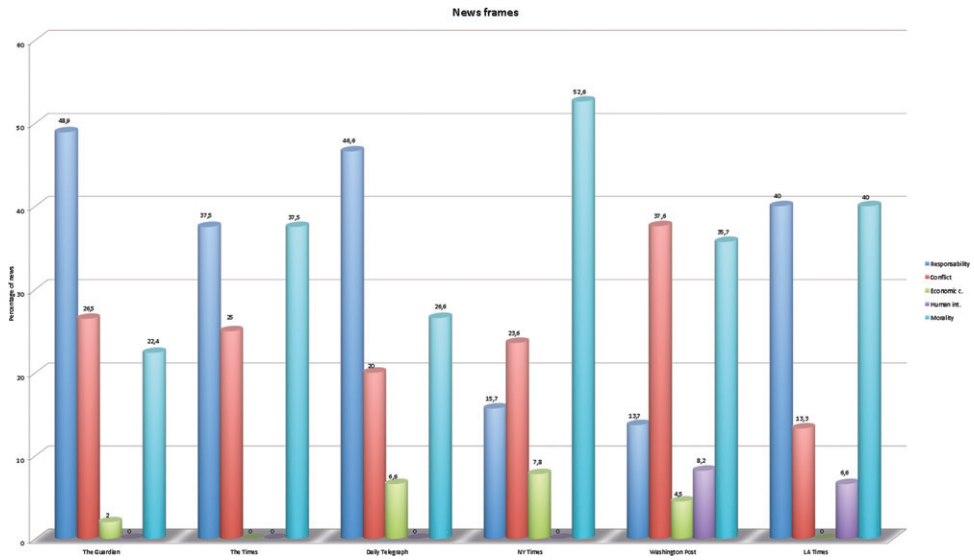
By individual newspaper, the media that dedicated the greatest number of texts to the encyclical or that mentioned it within other texts not specifically about it are: *The Washington Post*, accounting for nearly half of the total number of texts analysed (47%), and *The Guardian*, with just under a quarter of them (21%). The rest are shared out among *The New York Times* (16%), *The Times* (6%) and *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Los Angeles Times*, with 5% each.

In reference dimensions, the political dimension features most in *The Washington Post* (57% of the texts), *The Daily Telegraph* (54.5%), *The Guardian* (52.2% of the texts) and *The New York Times* (35%). The other newspapers give the information a social dimension: *The Times*, in 63% of its texts and the *Los Angeles Times* in 54.5%. The scientific dimension hardly features other than in *The New York Times* (15%), which, as we can observe in Graph 1, pays attention to all four dimensions fairly equally. The religious dimension is given a fair amount of importance in all media, especially in *The New York Times*, accounting for 32.5% of the texts.

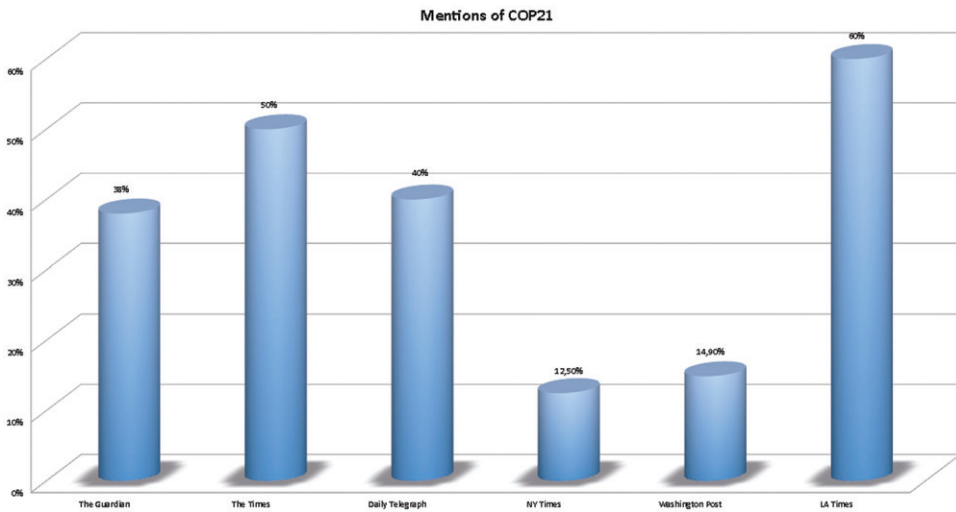
The presence of the political dimension in opposition to the social one is a result of the newspapers making much of responsibility and the solutions for mitigating the damage caused to the environment. Some place the emphasis on institutional causes and measures, and on countries and governments, whereas others highlight the need for a change of lifestyle, particularly in wealthy countries. Incidence of the religious dimension is chiefly due to the onus that the encyclical placed on Catholics to take action against climate change and to the conflict between the Pope and Catholic conservative politicians, above all in the USA, who do not share his vision of the problem. In this case, we have a double dimension: political and religious. In some cases,



Graph 1. Dimensions present in the news. Prepared by the author.



Graph 2. News frames. Prepared by the author.



Graph 3. Mentions of the Paris Climate Conference. Prepared by the author.

a very small number, the Pope is accused of not fighting climate change because he does not accept the use of contraception in the most disadvantaged countries.

With regard to frames (see Graph 2), a duality can again be perceived. On presenting *Laudato Si'*, the newspapers analysed choose responsibility or morality. This indicates that they either place the emphasis on the encyclical as a document condemning the causes of environmental deterioration, or as a call to action. In the first case, therefore, we find *The Guardian* (48.9% of the texts), *The Times* (37.5%) and *The*

*Daily Telegraph* (46.6%), and in the second, *The New York Times* (52.6%). *Los Angeles Times* balances both frames (with 40% in each case) and *The Washington Post* puts more weight on conflict (37.6%) and morality (35.7%) as it believes that the Pope's call for change could incite confrontation and disputes just like those in which some Catholic Republican politicians found themselves playing a major part. Conflict is also present in other newspapers, but as a consequence of reactions to the encyclical, not as a key issue in presenting the document.

As for mentions of the Paris Conference (COP21), as we can see in [Graph 3](#), we find that they are more frequent in the British newspapers. Some instances are not specific mentions, but occur via a reference to the government officials who will have to implement global measures, or to the support shown for the Pope by environmental activists and by the UN Secretary General.

As to including the contextualization of Church doctrine regarding care of the Environment, *The Times* is the newspaper containing most references; they appear in one-third of its pieces on the subject. *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* only refer to this aspect in one-tenth of their texts and *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Los Angeles Times* make no mention of it.

## 6. Conclusions

The reception of the publication of the *Laudato Si'* encyclical is not the same across the Anglo-Saxon media. It cannot be said that the U.S. media dedicates more space to it than the British media, but it is true that they make more of the political reactions and the reactions of industry and energy lobbies. They are interested in the effects of the encyclical on a local level, particularly with regard to the position of Catholic Republican politicians who disagree with the Pope. The impact the encyclical could have on the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) is given greater attention in the British press, while the U.S. press emphasises the impact on internal politics and the electoral race of some Catholic candidates.

*Laudato Si'* is presented as yet another voice in the political and social debate. In fact, these are the dimensions that define the contents of the encyclical and are consistent with the frames; it is presented as a criticism of the part nations and people have played in our planet's deterioration and as a call to action from the perspective of moral commitment, in particular a commitment to the poorest of the poor. The religious implications of the encyclical are contingent upon the conflict between the U.S. Catholics who are sceptical about global warming and the Pope, or the Holy See's insistence that birth policies be revised. There is very little reference to the Doctrine of Church on care for the Environment before Pope Francis' time, but neither is the encyclical presented as a dramatic shift in doctrine; it is simply presented as a politically charged document.

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