

Sources and frames in the media discourse of school bullying in El Mundo and El País

Fuentes y encuadres del discurso mediático del acoso escolar en los periódicos El Mundo y El País

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Abstract:

This research outlines an analysis of the treatment of school bullying in two Spanish newspapers based on the ability of the media to set the public agenda and influence the perception of topics of interest. Journalistic texts are analyzed from September 2014 to June 2015 following the approach of framing theory to identify the main sources and reveal whether the messages convey a particular representation of the phenomenon, investigate the causes, suggest a moral evaluation or what its treatment should be in the future. The newspapers we selected for the analysis were *El País* and *El Mundo* as they are the main national print references. This research shows that despite being an ongoing phenomenon, school bullying only receives media attention when a dramatic event takes place, such as the death of a teenager.

Keywords:

bullying; mass media; framing; public agenda; sources.

Resumen:

Partiendo de la capacidad de los medios de comunicación para configurar la agenda pública y la percepción de los temas de interés, esta investigación propone un análisis del tratamiento del fenómeno del acoso escolar de dos diarios de alcance nacional. Siguiendo los planteamientos de la teoría del framing se analizan los textos periodísticos -de septiembre de 2014 a junio de 2015- para identificar cuáles son las principales fuentes y desvelar si los mensajes transmiten una especial representación del fenómeno, indagando en las causas, proponen una evaluación moral o apuntan cuál debería ser su tratamiento en el futuro. Los diarios seleccionados para el estudio han sido El País y El Mundo por ser dos de las principales referencias impresas de alcance nacional. La investigación demuestra que a pesar de tratarse de un fenómeno permanente y continuado el acoso escolar recibe la atención de los medios de comunicación cuando tiene lugar un suceso dramático como la muerte de un adolescente.

Palabras clave:

acoso escolar; medios de comunicación; encuadres; agenda pública; fuentes.

1. Introduction

At the beginning of 2016, the Foundation Help Children and Adolescents at Risk (known in Spanish as ANAR) informed of the increase in phone calls to its hotline from January of that year, just as a Leganés (Madrid) boy's suicide became known. Diego had allegedly fallen victim to bullying. While 50 days before the case there were 72 calls, in the 50 days following 267 were registered. As mentioned in the report *School Bullying: I Report about bullying according to the affected and guidelines*, published together with the Foundation Mutua Madrileña. The number of calls made by parents asking for help increased, as well as teachers asking for action plans, children, and adolescents who affirmed that they were victims of bullying, and parents of children who had been witness to violence. Furthermore, the report maintains that journalistic information does not generate more harassment, but a more significant social reaction to tackling the problem given the notable increase in calls to the hotline once the case of the Leganés boy became public (Foundation ANAR and Foundation Mutua Madrileña, 2016:9). This increase in calls suggests that media coverage generates a more significant social reaction.

Based on the media's ability to set the public agenda, that is to say, to provide societies with topics of interest and critical thought about these matters be it by choice of sources or specific approaches. This research aims to address the phenomenon of school bullying, strictly, based on its presence and treatment in the daily press.

As previously mentioned, the media exercises three forms of power: first of all the power to set the agenda. Secondly, the power to define- not the what but the how- the way in which a topic or a particular social group is discussed. The third way in which it can show its power is through its representation of normality. The constant repetition of a specific way of referring to a social group in the media can make it become considered as natural and normal for everyone (Morduchowicz, 2003:7).

Following these theoretical approaches this work aims to achieve the following objectives:

- O1. To identify the media attention on school violence in the newspapers El País and El Mundo from September 2014 to June 2015.
- O2. To reveal the sources and key players in the journalistic texts on school bullying in the period and the media analyzed.
- O3. To analyze the representation of school bullying that the informative and opinion texts convey.

These three objectives are directly related to many other questions in the research:

- QI. 1. Is the coverage of school bullying linked to particular events such as attacks or suicides?
- QI. 2. What are the dominant sources in the media discourse of El Mundo and El País on school bullying in the period of analysis?
- QI. 3. Does the media discourse of school bullying promote a particular representation of the phenomenon?

1.1. Concepts of bullying and school violence

Most authors and studies consulted coincide in using Dan Olweus's formula from 1973. It is used as a starting point for proposing a definition of school bullying; "A student is bullied or victimised when he/she is repetitively subject to negative actions by one or more students, not having the ability to defend themselves" (cited in Rubio, 2013: 2). Based on this proposal the conceptualization of school bullying can focus on "the intent of the subjects," thus, the actions are deliberately hostile (Armero, Bernardino and Bonet de Luna, 2011:662). In the school setting, it is equally important to distinguish the bullying from a fight between classmates. In the case of bullying, a relationship of "submission-dominance" exists (Cepe-da and Caicedo, 2013:2).

Oñate and Piñuel (2007: 52-55) developed the concept known as harassment and school violence in Spanish (*Acoso y Violencia Escolar, AVE*) in the public report known as *Informe Cisneros X* as the sum of different terms and realities. Thus, violence and physical intimidation together with verbal and social violence result in harassment and school violence (AVE). The practices of physical abuse would correspond to what is typically known as bullying, while the rest is brought together under the broad term psychological violence. Furthermore, by comparing the phenomenon to an iceberg, physical abuse is 10% of what is seen, while the rest is the big mass of ice that remains unseen but causes harm such as posttraumatic stress, somatization, depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, changes in personality, low self-esteem, etc.

In legal terms, the State Attorney General (2005: 5) highlights the component of an "unbalance of power" due to peer pressure, the difference in strength or age or the victim's disability. Besides, it will be ongoing, involving specific acts that can consist in and fall under physical attacks, threats, harassments, duress, insults or the deliberate isolation of the victim.

1.1.1. Characteristics of the persons that take part

Different people participate and adopt separate roles in school bullying and, at the same time, these roles are variable depending on the context and the time in which it occurs (Comunidad de Madrid, 2012:10-14). To distinguish the figures and the possible roles in what is referred to as the "triangle of bullying" (victims, bullies, and passive bystanders) it is necessary to address their profiles.

1.1.1.1. Victims

The victims of school bullying usually demonstrate the characteristics that will be listed below, although it does not mean that all the students that possess these traits are victims of school bullying, nor that any student that does not present them cannot be a victim:

1. Physical or psychological vulnerability.
2. Inadequate defense strategies and way of confronting the problem: Isolation, resignation, the assumption of guilt.
3. Low self-esteem.

4. Lack of social abilities, especially when they are accompanied by academic success and good relationships with teachers.
5. Disability.
6. Personal characteristics different to the dominant ones: obese, short-sighted, a traditional or sloppy way of dressing, lack of hygiene, belonging to ethnic or cultural minorities.

1.1.1.2. Bullies

Bullies usually fit the following profile, even though, once again, it is not to say that all students that meet this profile are necessarily bullies, nor that a student can not be a bully if they do not fit the following profile:

1. They are usually physically strong.
2. They need to dominate, have power, feel superior.
3. They have a strong temper, easily angered.
4. They are impulsive.
5. They demonstrate low tolerance to frustration.
6. They are rebellious and aggressive towards adults.
7. They do not usually show anxiety nor insecurity.
8. They demonstrate antisocial behavior early on.
9. They are not very popular among classmates; only some follow him/her.
10. They demonstrate a negative attitude towards school.
11. They are selfish, have limited ability to be self-critical and demonstrate a lack of guilt for the bullying, of which the victim is usually blamed.
12. They demonstrate a definite lack of empathy and ability to perceive other's pain.

1.1.1.3. Passive bystanders

The power that a bully exerts over others is evidenced by the lack of classmates' support towards the victim. Acts of this nature regularly occur with classmates knowledge as they are incited by a social contagion inhibiting them from helping the victim or which makes them afraid of being included in the victim's circle. They do not do anything even though they feel that they must. The main characteristics of the passive observers are the following:

1. They are aware of the abuse.
2. They tolerate it and systematically refrain themselves from helping the victim when it occurs.

3. They know the subjects that are involved (abusers and victims).
4. They collaborate in the bullying.
5. They record the attacks.
6. They approve of it with their presence.
7. They reinforce the bully's conduct.
8. They ignore and isolate the victim.

1.2. Scope of school bullying in Spain

Even today, almost a decade after being published, there are still two documents that are a reference when it comes to measuring the scope of the school bullying phenomenon in Spain. They are the report *School bullying: abuse among peers in Compulsory Secondary Schooling 1996-2006*, developed by the Ombudsman's Office (2007), and *Bullying and school violence in Spain*, published in 2007 by Araceli Oñate and Iñaki Piñuel, which is also known as *Cisneros X Report*. Both studies, together with the most recent *I Report on bullying according to the affected and guidelines* (Foundation ANAR and Foundation Mutua Madrileña, 2016), represent necessary points of reference for addressing the question of school bullying, despite the divergence of the figures given in some cases.

1.2.1. School violence: bullying among peers in Compulsory Secondary Education 1999-2006

The study sample consisted of 3,000 students in Compulsory Secondary Education belonging to 300 public schools, state-subsidized private schools and private schools in the entire national territory. In addition to this, 300 teachers that were directors of studies in each of the centers were surveyed.

Concerning the results of the report, it is worthwhile to dwell on the frequency of the different abusive behaviors among peers resulting from the abuse of power, as well as its development in the various school years in secondary education. In this sense, following the results of the report, a little more than 20% of secondary students claim to be victims of some verbal aggression (nicknames or put-downs). However, in the case of insults, 3.9% say that they occur on many occasions, as well as 5.2% that indicate the use of nicknames and 4.2% that report put-downs. In other words, the typical practices are verbal aggressions of some kind.

On the other hand, there is a general recurring theme- with some exceptions- regarding offensive practices throughout the four years of Compulsory Secondary Education. A notable decrease in the use of nicknames or insults is detected from the first year (seventh grade) to the fourth (tenth grade). Furthermore, the percentage of students that claim that their classmates "do not let them participate" decreases. The decrease in the use of physical violence is also notable ("they hit me") and threats. These evaluations refer to the shaded cells, taken as is from the original document.

Based on the data compiled, the document from the Ombudsman's office (2007:144) concludes that all the types of abuse that have been investigated take place in secondary schools in Spain, even though each one has a very different incidence level. Thus, following the estimated incidence made by students who declare themselves to be victims of the different types of abuse, the highest percentage corresponds to verbal attacks, whose different manifestations are between 27% and 32%. The next most common is social exclusion and attacks on possessions (in this case, hiding them). Robbery and threats to intimidate are at the lowest rate, followed by direct physical attacks (hitting) and damage to possessions. Less than one percent of school children allude to blackmail (forcing someone to do things that they do not wish to), sexual assault and armed threats. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is an inverse relationship between the seriousness of the behavior and its incidence level. Taking into account the clarifications that must be made when "seriousness" is referred to in the different types of abuse.

1.2.2. *Cisneros X report. Harassment and school violence in Spain*

Even today, almost a decade after its publication, the document *Bullying and School violence in Spain* (Oñate and Piñuel, 2007), also known as the *Cisneros X Report*, is a reference when measuring the scope of school bullying in Spain. The ambitious study analyzed a sample of almost 25,000 students from second to seventh grade in 14 autonomous regions¹. 52% were boys, and 48% were girls.

Among the results of the analysis, it is worth mentioning issues concerning the incidence of school bullying, the development of the incidents according to the grade as well as the behavior, violent conduct and the most widespread types of bullying. Regarding the incidence, the report reveals a percentage of 24.4% of boys being bullied and 21.6% of girls, placing the total frequency at 23.3%. Furthermore noting the visible decrease in the rate of school bullying in lower grades compared to higher grades; the highest rate is observed in the 3rd grade and the lowest in the 10th grade.

Regarding the practices, and in light of the results from the report, the most common methods are what the report indicates as verbal or psychological violence: calling people by nicknames, not speaking to them, insulting or laughing at mistakes, etc. However, and according to what the text reveals, "violent psychological behavior based on teasing and social exclusion is what most increase the risk of suicide" (Oñate and Piñuel, 2007: 28)

1.3. *Violence in classrooms and the media.*

After observing the most prominent news in national and regional newspapers, Guerrero and Suarez (2012) concluded that it is not very usual to read about different cases of violence or bullying in the press; despite the fact that these cases

¹ The community of Valencia, La Rioja, and the Balearic Islands, as well as the autonomous cities Ceuta and Melilla, were left out of the sample

are not only appearing in Compulsory Secondary Schooling but also at an increasingly early age. In his opinion to eradicate the problem, it is necessary, “to make an effort for all news about the problem to reach citizens, as insignificant as they may be, to develop methodologies that involve values established from Primary Education” (Guerrero y Suárez, 2012:1989).

On the other hand, Márquez and Jáuregui (2005:116) consider that the media’s treatment of the issue of school violence reveals the existence of differing views about it depending on the speaker’s discourse. Politicians deny it; teachers raise the alarm and specialists refer to the phenomenon as a social ill. After analyzing the newspapers *ABC*, *El País*, *El Diario de Sevilla*, *Ideal*, *La Vanguardia* and *Metro*, these authors concluded that political representatives seek to neutralize social criticism, especially regarding what is referred to as the adequacy of measures in education policy. Teachers’ and specialists’ discourse raises awareness and act as a legitimization of the explicitly stated idea of the need for reforms. Specialists highlight the need to change the social climate that generates violence, specifically the imperative to recuperate the teaching of forgotten human values.

Jokin Cebreiro’s suicide in September 2004 after being victim to school bullying presented for Navarrete (2009:336), “the appearance of the issue of bullying in the media’s agenda.” This author gathered and analyzed information from several national newspapers both immediately after Jokin’s suicide and years later. Considering that the press had generated a social awareness of the issue based on criticism and condemnation.

Rodríguez’s work is even more critical of the media’s and journalists’ treatment of violence in the classroom referring to the dissemination by *El Mundo* of the well-known *Cisneros X Report* and the speed at which somewhat alarming information was published without asking why other institutions referenced lower bullying figures. Rodríguez (2007:28) thus concluded:

The information that we have commented on is nothing more than many daily examples in which the journalistic class (or a part of it) carries out their work in a deficient way. Too often, the media acts like mere loudspeakers of information of those that are not necessarily scrutinized, granting all the responsibility for their content to their promoters. Those cases in which the published news are presented in the form of objective scientific knowledge, underpinned by surveys and allegedly uncontroversial statistics, are particularly serious. The uncritical dissemination of those messages defies the ethical obligation of the press to contribute to creating an informed and free public opinion and contributes to forming public opinion, attitudes, and behavior based on statements that are at best doubtful.

2. Methodological Frame of the study

Based on the objectives presented in the introduction and following the theoretical approaches of framing and the methodology of content analysis of the texts about school bullying published throughout the school year 2014-2015 by the newspapers *El Mundo* and *El País*.

2.1. Analysis of the content based on framing theory

The technique that has been used to carry out this study is a content analysis based on framing theory. Krippendorff (1990:28) defines content analysis as “an investigation technique intended to formulate, based on certain information, replicable and valid inferences that can be applied to its context.” He also adds that context would be the element that surrounds any message and its meanings. Therefore, any content analysis that is carried out must be done so taking into account the context in which the information appears, besides basing in it the justification for this. Therefore, in research, information put into its social context gives us the opportunity to find out its meaning. The messages do not only have one meaning which needs to “unfold.” On the contrary, there are a variety of perspectives to interpret their meanings, such as words, associations, etc. Also, Krippendorff (1990:40-44) gathers a series of characteristics typical of content analysis that bring the aforementioned ideas together. It can be summarized in the following: content analysis is not an interfering technique: it accepts unstructured material; 3) it is sensitive to the context and therefore capable of processing symbolic forms: it can deal with a large volume of information.

Therefore, we have tried to achieve the objective of this research, which is no other than the search for a general structure of the interpretation of reality based on informative news coverage on school bullying. For this reason, we have chosen to employ the theoretical approach of framing. As Entman, Matthes and Pellicano (2009:180) acknowledge, the analysis of frames in the media has become an active and relevant methodology. Essentially, framing studies the selection and the relevance of certain aspects of a problem by exploring the images, stereotypes, metaphors, agents, and messages. Thus, for Entman (1993:52), framing selects “some aspects of reality perceived and highlights them in a communicative text so that they promote a particular definition of the problem, coincidental interpretation, moral evaluation and/or recommendation of its treatment.” He considers that framing is strategic, which generates these four consequences in the discourse: definition of the problem, attribution to coincidence, the creation of a moral judgment and recommendation of the treatment or a solution to the problem, in this case, the phenomenon of violence among peers in the context of schools.

Despite framing being a recurring theoretical line in communications research in the last few decades, there is still certain theoretical ambiguity. In this sense, proposals for delimitation have been carried out or, at least, the reorganization of 40 years of study. For instance, Vicente and López (2009:16) questioned the state in which the research on framing in com-

munication sciences is found, and if there are noteworthy differences between the international context and the Spanish one. Following their conclusions, this theoretical perspective has currently been consolidated in its final stages as, “a theoretical basis that begins to be shared by the whole specialization” (Íbidem:22).

2.2. Selection of the sample and period of analysis.

The newspapers selected for the study are *El País* and *El Mundo* because they are two primary references on a national level. Although in this research, a priori, the ideological line has little influence, we have chosen two different lines: center-left wing and center-right wing respectively which are traditionally attributed to these two titles. The sample for the analysis was obtained from the database MyNews, which provides the newspaper pages in PDF, where the reference “school bullying” was searched. 19 published pieces were analyzed in total in the newspaper *El País* and 31 in *El Mundo*.

Since we are dealing with a subject of study that is linked to the educational sphere, it is necessary to limit the period of analysis to the duration of a school year. Taking into account that the dates of the beginning and the end of the academic year vary in each autonomous community, the approach has been to establish the journalistic text analysis between September 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015, to be able to study the full school year.

2.3. Description of the analysis sheet

Following Igartúa (2006) we have carried out a codification program that gathers a description of all the quantitative and qualitative variables taken into account in the analysis sheet according to each unit gathered. The analysis sheet contains the following elements, of which some of them are coded following a closed list of options, while others are an open answer:

- I. Media: The name of the newspaper is codified in each case.
- II. Date: The date of the analysis unit is included both as a way to monitor it and develop media attention graphs by weeks.
- III. Headline: the headline of the piece is copied
- IV. Section: Even though the general media share the same parts, the names can change. Thus, for instance, the section on current events in the country can be called in one newspaper Spain, and another, National; or the culture section can be called Culture or Cultures. For this reason, in this case, the choice was made not to offer a closed list of sections and to leave the codification open.

- V. Authorship and identification: First of all the type of byline of the unit of analysis is codified if there is one at all. That is to say, if it carries the byline from someone from the editorial staff or an agency, as well as other possibilities. Secondly, the author of the text is identified and their position where necessary.
- a.) Editorial office: whether or not the editorial is under a byline or a writer's name.
 - b.) Agencies: whether it is under an agency's byline.
 - c.) Collaborator: whether it is under a columnist's byline.
 - d.) Without a byline: some pieces do not carry bylines such as briefs or opinion pieces or editorials.
 - e.) Citizens: this formula is employed in letters to the editor and other forms of citizen collaboration.
 - f.) Sporadic: the bylines of published opinion articles are codified this way, typically, a thread of an event, an event or particular theme. For instance, in the case of this work, an article by an expert in counseling or a mother of a victim of school bullying.
 - g.) Others: Any option that has not been previously contemplated.
- VI. Genre: Following some of the many classifications of journalistic genres available (López, 2002:21; López, 2007:188; Grijelmo, 2002:27; Parratt, 2008) the following list of possibilities has been set out:
- a) Analysis: pieces in which the interpretation predominates over the information and those which establish a hypothesis, causes or consequences about specific current events.
 - b) Article: texts with a byline by people external to the media but because of their public recognition or position, provide a point of view about a current issue.
 - c) Brief: A short text, often without a byline, containing the essential elements of the news. Sometimes they are identified because several briefs are gathered together, for example, in the same column.
 - d) Column: units with periodicity, and often location, fixed in the newspaper with opinions and personal interpretations.
 - e) Chronicle: texts that chronologically recount an event, although containing literary elements or a particular style of those that write it.
 - f) Editorial: pieces in which the newspaper, as a company or an institution, reveals its stance or opinion about a current event.
 - g) Interview: a public figure's conversation in the form of Q&A. It is also identified as an interview if it is done narratively.
 - h) News: the primary informative text, which contains essential elements of an event. In the case of the written press it is characterized by the use of past verbs, usually referring to the day before.

- i) Report: informative text which includes newsworthy values, different sources' statements, atmosphere and descriptive character. Literary elements are permitted on occasions like the chronicle, for instance in the headline.
- j) Loose: texts which accompany the editorial with the same objective: to present the media's opinion about a theme, even though it is brief.
- k) Cartoon: illustrations linked to the latest news containing interpretation or opinion.
- l) Letter to the editor: texts that gather citizens' opinions about different themes.
- m) Others.

VII. Source and critical players: Following a deductive analysis after the first reading about the units gathered, a list with key players or sources was set out. In the cases with a variety of sources the one which appears the most is identified as the main one. The option of balance has been considered in the circumstances in which it is not possible to determine something as principal.

- a) Politicians: members of the administration or political class.
- b) Teacher: teaching faculty.
- c) Student: the most critical aspects of the content is about the students.
- d) Family: both the victims' and the bullies'.
- e) Experts: sources that due to their position, training and profession act as a specialist source. In this case, university profiles are usual or professional collectives.
- f) Victim: the victims of school bullying are a source or key players.
- g) Others: any aspect that is not included in the previous variables.

VIII. Frame: Following the proposal by Entman (1993) already described, the following options are established according to the text.

- a) Definition of the problem: the unit of analysis promotes a particular explanation of the problem. Furthermore, the text does not go further to describe some of the facts.
- b) Identification of the causes: in the text, the goal is to find out the reasons or the people responsible for the problem.
- c) Moral assessment: the pieces promote an explicit moral evaluation of school bullying.
- d) Recommendation for treatment: the journalistic text contains proposals for action for the future or solutions to the phenomenon of school bullying and violence in the classroom.

IX. Observations: Any relevant aspect about the text that could be taken into account is included here.

3. Results of the analysis

The results follow the described variables in the analysis sheet. Some examples are also provided.

3.1. Media attention

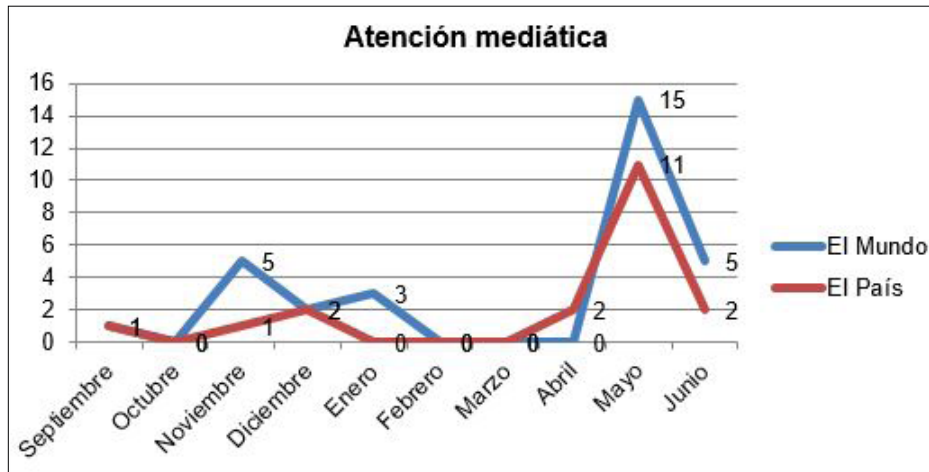
Arancha's suicide in May 2015 after being victim to school bullying indicates the media attention on the issue shown in the two newspapers analyzed, as can be seen in graph 1. Upon finding out about the case, the newspaper *El Mundo* published 31 texts throughout the whole period examined, most of which correspond to the months May (15) and June (5). The case of the newspaper *El País* is similar. Of the 19 analyzed pieces from this newspaper, most of them correspond to the months May (11) and June (2). The figure described by the lines in graph 1 shows the peak in media attention after finding out in May about the suicide of the youth from the Madrid High School, Ciudad de Jaén.

Indeed it is the newspaper *El País* that first publishes the information highlighting the victim's disability (*A disabled adolescent commits suicide in Madrid after being a victim of school bullying*, *El País*, May 23, 2015). The following day, *El Mundo* published the information mentioning its rival newspaper in the text. Although it included a statement by the president of the Association Against School Bullying (known as ACAE in Spanish), Encarna García in the title (*"Killing at school comes at no cost"*), *El Mundo*, 24 May 2015). However, this newspaper published this information in the local edition in Madrid. The attention lasts about a week, and both newspapers try to reconstruct the sequence of events which led to Arancha's suicide based on the statements made by the family and school circle. (*The abuser of the girl who committed suicide: "If you don't give me 50 euros I'm going to hit you ..."*, *El País*, May 26, 2015; *Aranzazu's hell and her abuser*, *El Mundo*, May 27, 2015).

On the other hand, both newspaper headlines had featured in September 2014 the two adolescents' charge by the District Attorney for minors of the Principality of Asturias for the death of Carla Díaz Magnien, a 14-year-old girl who committed suicide in Gijón in April 2013 after suffering months of school bullying. In both cases, the information focused on the reaction of the victim's mother (*"They told me: "They are childish things"*, *El País*, September 28, 2014; *Two girls charged for Carla's suicide*, *El Mundo*, September 25, 2014).

The two minors' sentence of four months of socio-educational tasks was published, three months later and after the mother had become a focus of the media's attention. Between the charge and the two adolescents receiving their sentence, the case of a 15-year-old boy was reported on extensively by *El Mundo*. As stated by the council of Castilla and León the boy had a disability of 33% due to post-traumatic stress linked to school bullying. On November 4, 2014, the newspaper *El Mundo* titled an extensive report several pages long about this pioneering case in Spain *"Sudden pencil disability."* In its editorial on the same day, we were asked to reflect on the "collective failure" which suggests that in the place where a child must be educated, they suffer the effects of abuse which affect him/her for the rest of their life.

Graph 1: Media Attention



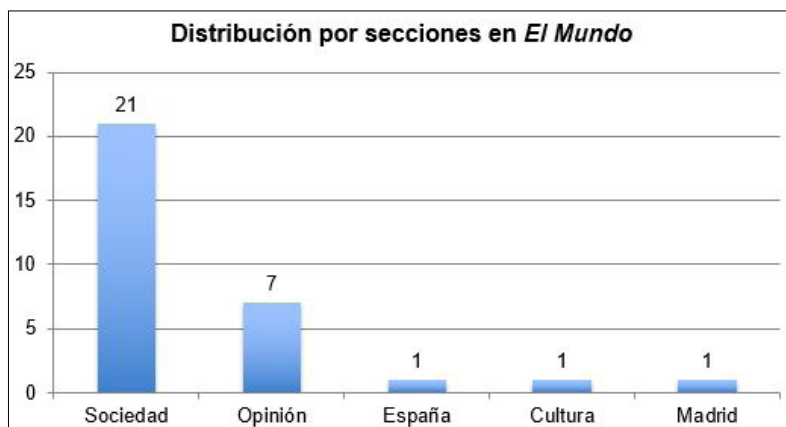
Source: own development

3.2. Section

Graphs 2 and 3 allow us to see how the analyzed texts in both newspapers are published for the most part in the national pages, although in different sections. While *El Mundo* (graph 2) chooses their location in the Society Section (21), *El País* (graph 3) prefers the pages of Spain (12). Furthermore, the number of texts that appear in the opinion pages are significant. Thus, in the opinion pages, *El Mundo* publishes 7 pieces and *El País* 4.

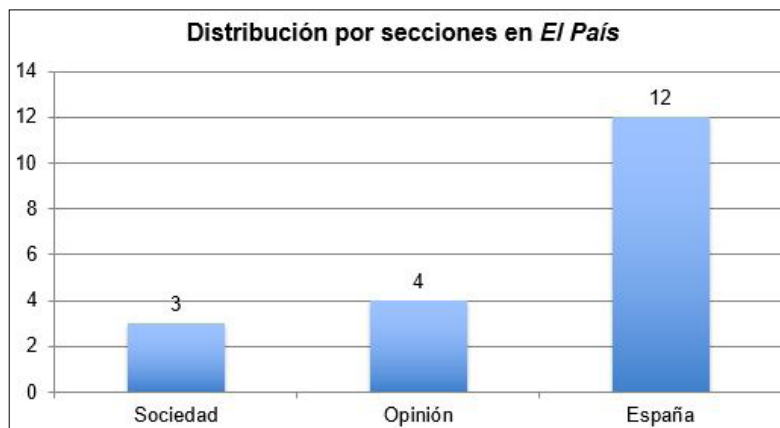
As highlighted in the section corresponding to media attention, the fact that the case of Arancha was published first in the Madrid regional edition is significant. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the information was published under the epigraph “events” the first time.

Graph 2. Distribution by sections in *El Mundo*



Source: own development

Graph 3. Distribution by sections in *El País*



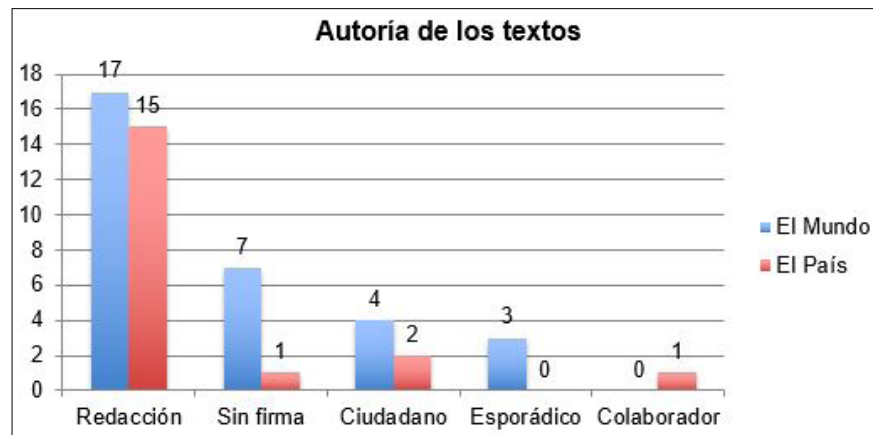
Source: own development

3.3. Authorship of the texts

The published texts in both *El Mundo* (17) and *El País* (15) mainly contain bylines by journalists from the newspaper, which can be seen in graph 4. However, the variety regarding the names of the authors indicated, first of all, and primarily at the beginning, when there are no journalists assigned explicitly to the issue. Secondly, in the phase of most attention; when there is interest in providing the highest number of contents as possible.

On the other hand, it is convenient to highlight the presence of the category “citizen” both in *El Mundo* (4) and *El País* (2), corresponding to the bylines of letters to the editor. In the newspaper *El Mundo*, besides, three pieces that carry the signature of what has been called “sporadic” and that are specifically published related to the theme by outside bylines to the newspapers or the columnists. Texts without bylines have also been gathered (7 in *El Mundo* and 1 in *El País*) some of them corresponding to editorials in both newspapers. Both the bylines and the opinion articles, as well as editorials, is commented on in the following section, which refers to the journalistic genres.

Graph 4: Authorship of the texts



Source: own development

3.4. Genres

The main genres considered to be informative- news and report- are the preferred when it comes to addressing the issue of school bullying in general and, in particular, the young Madrilian’s suicide. We must not forget that as seen in the section corresponding to media attention, school bullying only reaches the agenda of the media after the death of an adolescent student.

Graph 5 gathers this variety of genres employed by both newspapers. Thus the newspaper *El País* opts for the news to deal with the information in more than half of the data (11) and for the report analyzed in three parts. The newspaper *El Mundo* places more importance on the detailed explanation a report implies (8) once the information and fundamental aspects are provided with the texts presented as news (6). The genre news is used, for example, when a fact is known for the first time or novelties about a case with longer duration are made known. For instance, (*Wert announces a plan against school violence*, *El País*, April 22, 2015; *The document to the principal from the student that committed suicide outrages teachers*, *El País*, May 29, 2015; *Three minors arrested for school bullying in Madrid*, *El País*, June 11, 2015; *Two girls charged for Carla's suicide*, *El Mundo*, September 25, 2014; *Two minors convicted for bullying Carla who committed suicide*, *El Mundo*, December 31, 2014; *The District Attorney's Office charges another minor*, *El Mundo*, May 28, 2015).

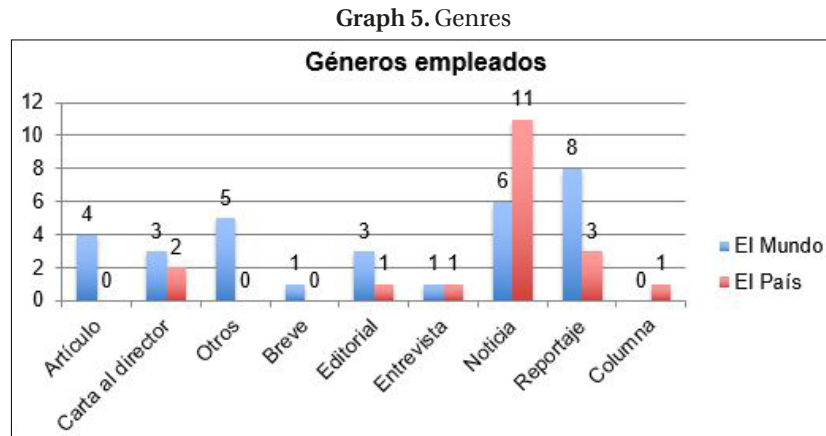
On the contrary, the report genre is chosen to provide further depth to an issue in search of causes and consequences and usually includes more sources, greater freedom in the headline and even may be written creatively, going beyond the classic inverted pyramid. Thus starts the report entitled *A minefield from which to learn the lesson*:

“The balloons were kept at the edge of the conference room. In the wardrobe, partywear which had been so difficult to pay for... Friday, May 22 everything was prepared in the high school Ciudad de Jaén for the high school students' graduation party. It should have been a glorious day for the neighborhood of Orcasur (in Usera, in the south of the capital).” (*El País*, May 31, 2015).

It has a somewhat literary element, marked by the first person, in this case, it is also observed in the opening paragraphs of *Aranzazu's hell and her bully*:

“She was 16 years old, a difficult age, a nobody, introverted, a delay in her reply and a very slight dysfunction: if you didn't look too closely, if they didn't tell you, if you didn't take out your magnifying glass, you almost wouldn't realise that this girl in 9th grade had a slight disability” (*El Mundo*, May 27, 2015)

On the contrary, *El Mundo* provides the majority of genres. Thus, it publishes up to four articles and three letters to the editor. It is remarkable that *El Mundo* carries the theme in one of its editorials on three occasions (*A laudable decision that forces us to reflect on school bullying*, November 4 2014; *The fight against school bullying, the direct responsibility of school centres*, December 31 2014; *School Bullying, a hidden reality that only becomes visible when a child dies*, May 26, 2015). These articles indicate the importance that the issue of school bullying acquires for the media in a particular moment. In this sense, *El País* takes the themes to its editorial only on one occasion (*Confronting school bullying*, June 2, 2015). As has been noted, there is less variety of genres in the *Prisa* newspaper.



Source: own development

3.5. Source or key players

It is not possible, or it may be difficult to identify a specific source on occasions. This occurs especially in the case of the opinion genre, in which the usual columnist or the same newspaper gives an opinion about an issue in an editorial, offers an analysis or guidelines. In these cases there is a principal-agent due to the fact that no specific source is cited or given if the emphasis is put on the victims of the bullying, the students, the bullies, the administrations or the families.

Thus, both newspapers use a variety of sources and coincide in propagandizing both families-the victims' or the bullies'- and the experts (graph 6). In *El Mundo*, the presence of the victim's family circle is noted (4) as well as experts on the theme (5). In *El Pais*, family (5) and experts (3) are also main categories. On the contrary, in both headlines, the absence of teachers and students is noted, direct witnesses in many cases, of the events.

By utilizing the parents' testimony, the newspapers presented an approximation of the victim's final hours to the reader or denounce the inaction of the centers or the authorities.

"I heard a thud at the doorway. Around 8:05 I called out to a neighbor, "Come down! Come down!". I saw my daughter, her backpack had been left on the first floor", said Mohammed. The ambulance took the minor". (*I denounced the bullying, but my daughter is dead,* El Pais May 28, 2015).

"Why didn't they inform me about what was happening, why didn't they let me know what they were doing" Why, why and again why" (*The school neither advised me nor took measures,* El Mundo, January 2, 2015).

In this vein, the letter that Montserrat Magnien writes to her daughter's bully in *El Mundo* stands out:

“First of all, I want to introduce myself. I am Carla Diaz's mum, that girl whose dreams were destroyed, her future and the most important thing: her life. I know you, bully. You insulted my daughter and assaulted her. You even encouraged the rest of her classmates to alienate her. As if she were a person with a contagious disease” (*People like you stamped her out,*” *El Mundo*, November 4, 2014).

Thus, while the testimony from the victims' closest circle help by utilizing a raw account of the facts to establish an emotional connection with the victims of bullying, using experts provides an approach, even if small, to the causes of the social phenomenon as well as the proposals to tackle it. In this case, sometimes the media uses associations, professionals and the autonomous communities protocol on this matter.

One day after finding out about Arancha's suicide in Madrid, the president of the condeferation of Organizations of Psychopedagogy and Counseling in Spain (know as COPOE in Spanish), Ana Cobos, lamented the failure that school bullying implies.

“In bullying, and for this reason, it is so dangerous; there are one or two students that act but there are spectators surrounding them. They are the ones that know what is happening and do not do anything to change the situation” (“*There was one counselor where there should have been five,*” *El País*, May 24, 2015).

On the same day, in the pages in *El Mundo*, the president of the association against School Bullying (known in Spanish as ACAE) proposed to take legal action:

“We must legislate against bullying so that it is not considered to be a mere infringement that is only punished with community work. The bullies do not reintegrate into society because they do not have help. We must not forget that they are sick people and that they are also from the upper middle class, not from dysfunctional families” (“*Killing at school comes at no cost,*” *El Mundo* May 24, 2015).

Both newspapers try to put themselves on the victims' side on some occasions. Relating to the victims can be done in different ways, even though in this case the two newspapers coincide in presenting a public voice. *El Mundo* choses to use the writer Luis Antonio de Villena's testimony, as he was the victim of bullying in his childhood.

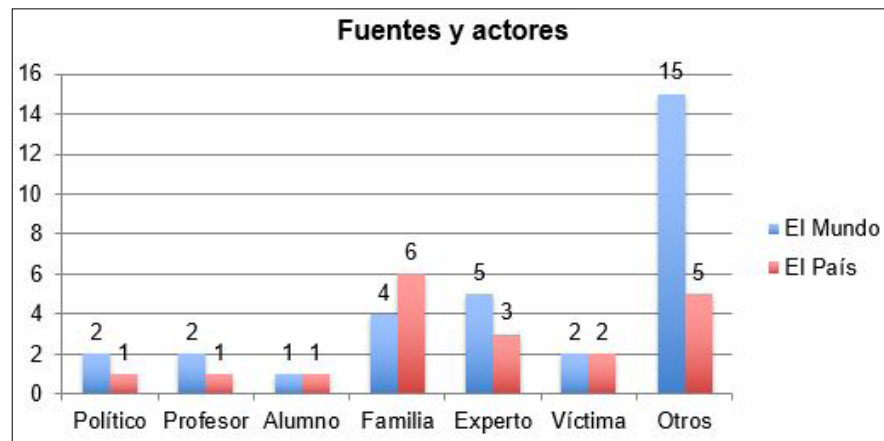
“When I told my mother about the things that had happened to me in El Colegio del Pilar in Madrid between 12 and 14- in the 60s-my mother was outraged and asked me why I hadn't told her before because she would have taken action. And my mother was lively and clever. But I told her that I couldn't say it then, I wasn't able to verbalize it. Even, after having done so, the principal- another priest-would not have hesitated in responding: madam, don't be alarmed, nothing is going on, it is childishness, they will sort it out themselves” (“*Memory and theory about school bullying,*” *El Mundo*, June 11, 2015).

In *El País*, the writer Elvira Lindo demands more attention for the victims:

“Every so often, the horror of school bullying becomes visible in the press because of the victim, finding themselves with no way of getting rid of their anxiety, end their lives. It is this crude: we find out about the victim through their suicide” (“*In memory of Carla*,” *El País*, December 4, 2015).

The reference to “others” sources or agents can be highlighted in the newspaper *El Mundo* (15). On occasions they are the main source of the texts or reports coming from judicial authorities (*Two girls accused of Carla’s suicide*, *El Mundo*, September 25, 2014); *The District Attorney’s Office charges another minor*, *El Mundo*, May 28, 2015).

Graph 6: Sources and agents



Source: own development

3.6 Frames

Most of the journalistic texts analyzed focus their content, on the one hand on the definition and description of the events and, on the other hand, on the proposals and recommendations for treatment (graph 7). Thus, in the newspaper, *El Mundo* 13 pieces in the first case have been identified and 11 in the second one. In *El País*, 10 and 7, which correspond to practically everything, since only two have been identified as texts that attempt to delve into the causes of the phenomenon. *El Mundo* gives accounts on up to four occasions that try to delve into the why of the matter. In *El Mundo* three texts that contain a moral evaluation have been highlighted, mainly due to the language employed and the fact that they are usually about the conviction.

As stated, most of the texts do not go further than presenting a reasonably accurate story. Like many, how a minor has come to commit suicide is reported as a particular event but does not go into depth about the causes or reasons that cause an adolescent to continuously act in a physically or verbally violent way towards a classmate.

“I am tired of living,” wrote the minor in a text to her friends before plunging into the gap in the staircase in the family home which she shared with her younger brother and parents in the neighborhood Usera, in the south of the capital, Madrid. It happened yesterday just before nine in the morning, when they were starting another day in the high school that she attended” (*A disabled adolescent commits suicide in Madrid after suffering from school bullying*, El País, May 23, 2015).

The frame which has been called recommendation of treatment is more suitable for the days after the case is known. This frame appears when the confusion of the first hours and the desire to know and provide details makes way for expert opinions that propose the line to work in.

“To stop it in its tracks, so that bullying does not take shape” is the fundamental demand which, yesterday, the Madrid Association against School Bullying (known in Spanish as AMACAE) expressed. “We demand that as of the new academic year a protocol for prevention be created where school bullying and violence in the classrooms is considered with a zero-tolerance policy” (*Against “The code of Silence,”* El Mundo, June 4, 2015).

To a lesser extent, and despite the fact that the theme generates strong social interest, frames called moral evaluation have been detected, even expressed explicitly. In the previously cited text by Luis Antonio de Villena (*Memory and theory of school bullying*, El Mundo, June 11, 2015), the writer judged it as “unfair and rude that the maniacs that bully get away scot-free.”

In this particular case studied, since the stories of what lead Arancha or Carla to take their lives had been discovered- recounting the insults, harassments, their behavior- to a smaller extent there is greater depth as the reasons or the causes that resulted in or provoked the bullying are examined. Again Encarnacion García, from the association Against School bullying (known in Spanish as ACAE) proposes a diagnosis:

“There is no vigilance, which aids the harassment, the insults, the attacks and the social isolation that kills. Because a majority of suicides due to school bullying is caused by social isolation, by being alone in the jungle in which many schools become for many children” (*The idiots’ plot*, El Mundo, May 26, 2015).

Graph 7: Newsworthy frame



Source: own development

4. Conclusions

School bullying is permanent, current and increasingly more present in the media. The analysis of the journalistic messages based on framing theory has served and serves to analysis the media representation of dozens of themes even though school bullying has only been addressed in this way on few occasions, henceforth the justification for this proposal of study.

Coinciding with the theoretical approaches presented in the media's role as the creators of representations of phenomenon and realities. it is relevant to ask what the image that the media is creating about the phenomenon of school bullying is, what sources are used to exam it and, ultimately what the image of this reality that reaches society is. What is more, taking into consideration some limitations of this proposed study such as the time limit or the depth of the analysis. It would be interesting to extend the period of research as well as analyze the direct relationship between the discourses of the sources and the frames detected.

For this reason, the journalistic discourse analysis about school bullying proposed in this research opens the door to other lines of study. It would be interesting, first of all, to confirm the hypothesis of media attention conditioned by a tragic event, approaching a similar study which is not limited to school bullying. Likewise, it would be desirable to give the criminal perspective after detecting that in some cases the subjects are directly accused of having the condition of bully or abuser.

The content analysis based on the theoretical approach of framing has been demonstrated to be adequate and relevant for the study of the treatment of school bullying in the newspaper *El Mundo* and *El País* throughout the school year 2014-2015. In particular and following the objectives and the research questions approached at the start the following conclusions are presented:

1. Arancha's suicide, a student from the high school Ciudad de Jaén in Madrid, in May 2015 conditioned the coverage of the newspapers *El Mundo* and *El País* about the phenomenon of school bullying during the period analyzed. Despite the fact that in its editorial the headlines described this reality as a social failure, the permanence and the continuity of this problem in the educational context does not have an answer regarding continuous media treatment.

In contrast, the way the matter in the editorials of the analyzed newspapers is reflected confirms the fact that we are facing a worrying social phenomenon. This work thus follows the lines of other studies (Guerrero and Suárez, 2012) in verifying the small presence of a phenomenon such as a school bullying in the media, which is defined by experts and administrations as continued and permanent.

2. The vital presence of sources which correspond to the family circles of bullying victims' generates a discourse based on a more sentimental declaration rather than a rational one. It is true, on the other hand, that the dialogue of the victim's circle favors the reader by relating to the victim, but it is just as easy for the discourse to become dramatic and more interested in the attainment of audiences and dissemination than the contribution of key news. Experts, who based on their knowledge and experience, provide composure and rigor to a necessary debate about the profound causes of school bullying- not in a particularly unfortunate case- are pushed into the background in favor of the dramatic discourse.

These assessments confirm the stance of other approaches about the sources and the type of message that they convey (Márquez and Jáuregui, 2005). Again, teachers raise the alarm, and specialists provide necessary information. This work adds the role of the circle of the bullying victims to this consideration, which generates affinity and empathy to achieve a greater response and social concern.

3. Concerning this, the lack of an in-depth discourse about the causes of school bullying is remarkable. Since the information about school bullying can not cease to provide relevant information about the events, this social phenomenon would require a more in-depth journalistic coverage, not conditioned by the most unfortunate events that favor the discourse so that it remains in the events section. On the contrary, the presence of a dialogue about what has been called the recommendation of the treatment has been acknowledged. That is to say, information and opinions that provide or aim to give some keys as to how to face this from all the possible contexts are problematic.

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