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A news discourse analysis of La nación

Jimen Chan
Portland State University

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Jimen Chan for the Master of Arts in Speech Communication presented October 25, 1989.

Title: A News Discourse Analysis of La Nacion.

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

[REDACTED]

Peter Ehrenhaus, Chair

[REDACTED]

Steve Kosokoff

[REDACTED]

Larry Steward

[REDACTED]

Earl Rees

This thesis is a study of La Nacion, the largest circulating newspaper in Costa Rica. The purpose of this study is to examine whether claims made by La Nacion regarding their fairness and balance of news coverage are justified.

In view of La Nacion's own editorial statements and the journalistic profession's commitment to "objectivity," this study seeks to establish: (1) if there is a systematic bias in La Nacion's news coverage; (2) if there is, what is the direction or character of this bias; and

(3) what is the relationship between the bias found in the news reporting and the editorial posture?

One month of La Nacion's issues, from June 1 to June 30, 1988, was selected for analysis. Front page news reports were the subject of the analysis along with articles published in the news portion of the main section. Although editorials were not analyzed, their main topics or themes were described in order to examine the correspondence between news reports and editorial positions. The sample was chosen at random and the month selected could be considered typical.

The perspective used in this study, News Discourse Analysis (NDA), is based on the premise that all discourses (e.g., speech, writing, and stories) cannot help but have a structure to them in which certain elements are highlighted and others downplayed or ignored.

The study establishes that there is a systematic bias in La Nacion's news coverage, and this bias is oriented towards the public ideological stance of the newspaper. News events are highlighted, downplayed, or ignored according to the degree that they enhance or frustrate the advancement of the newspaper's ideology as reflected in the editorial content.

La Nacion plays the role of a political force in Costa Rica, a force so effective that it has the power of a political party. It has disguised its partisan bias by the

assumption and defense of the code of objectivity. What this study indicates is that objectivity has been a shield against criticism that the newspaper has used to undermine all the movements that seek to change the status quo.

A NEWS DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LA NACION

By

JIMEN CHAN

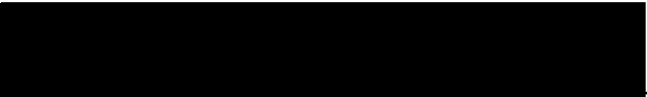
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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Jimen Chan presented October 25, 1989.


Peter Ehrenhaus, Chair



Steve Kosokoff


Larry Steward


Earl Rees

APPROVED:


Theodore G. Grove, Chair
Department of Speech Communication


C. William Savery, Interim Vice Provost
for Graduate Studies and Research

DEDICATED TO

Mac and Susan McCorkle,
my American parents.

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CHAPTER I

THE ANALYSIS OF NEWS REPORTING IN COSTA RICA

As is suggested by Wesley and MacLean's (1957) classic model of the process of mass communication, "news" does not exist as a natural element of the world. "News" is a complex creation by sources, journalists, editors, and publishers of bounded structures called "events" into coherent constructions called "news stories." It is this process that, according to McQuail (1987), elevates and distinguishes the dissemination of news, by paper or broadcast, from other mass media.

Moreover, a cursory examination of news on a global scale suggests a universal human curiosity about activities, events, and issues not immediately accessible. But beyond that general desire for involvement with the larger world, the content and the orientation of news-as-product varies, based upon which dominant model guides the news media in their relationships with the broader cultural, political, economic, and educational institutions (Altschull, 1984; McQuail, 1987).

The first model typifies the Western approach to news. Here, news media are market driven, and an independent press has the responsibility to protect the people against

potential abuses of power by the government. Central to this purpose is an essentially professional commitment to protection of freedom of expression as the centerpiece of democracy, and a commitment to a code of "objectivity."

The second model typifies an approach to news taken by authoritarian regimes. In communist regimes, for example, the press has the responsibilities of following Lenin's three press roles--propaganda, agitation, and organization--each pursued in conjunction with the government. Here, the press operates with its own code of objectivity, and has a critical function of education. However, there are authoritarian regimes in countries allegedly democratic, like Chile or South Africa, for example, in which the press is also controlled by the groups in power.

Finally, we find an emergent model of the press in developing Third World nations. Here, elements of the other two models are appropriated and adapted to the indigenous historical and cultural milieu. Costa Rica is one case in point and a valuable case for study for a number of reasons.

COSTA RICA

Although Costa Rica has a long history of close relationship with the United States, and an open policy for foreign investment, the people and leadership of Costa Rica

have managed to preserve an independent stance among the nations of the world. Costa Rica has considered itself among the "non-aligned" nations, at least until the early 1980s, when economic crisis and the wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua aligned the nation more clearly with the interests of the United States (see Del Aguila, 1982; Tartter, 1983).

Yet despite its closer ties with the U.S. in this period, Costa Rica forged a path different from that of the U.S., thus maintaining an identity distinct from the U.S. As a result of the efforts of the Costa Rican government to secure regionally-based peace, President Oscar Arias received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 (see Burns, 1987; Hufford, 1987; Gudmundson, 1987).

As an emerging nation, Costa Rica is still in the process of developing its own model for the role of the press. Earliest development of this role came from the Spanish presence in Costa Rica which lasted from 1563 to 1821, followed by influences from other European nations. Most prominent among Western European models were those offered by Great Britain and Germany, from the beginning of the coffee exportations in 1832 to the first years of the twentieth century. That influence remained throughout the 1940s until a liberal capitalist constitution of European style was replaced by a social democratic one in 1949 (see Fonseca, 1977). And most recently, the U.S. model has been

most prominent, coincident with the economic and political expansion of the United States into Latin America since the turn of the century, especially at the end of the second half of the 1970s and strongly in the 1980s (see Fejes, 1986).

In 1969, however, Costa Rica became the third nation in Latin America to establish a journalists' collegium, a professional guild. This initiative gave rise to a controversy between the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), an association of multi-national news organizations that provides them with a coherent and unified voice in the Americas, and the collegia of Latin America, which represent the voice of the emerging nations (Gardner, 1987; Strauss, 1987).

In this context of conflict between the IAPA and the collegia in Latin America, generally, and in Costa Rica, in particular, the role of the Costa Rican press is key. The press historically plays a key role in the resolution or escalation of regional conflicts; the Costa Rican press therefore can have an effect upon the public's perceptions of the Esquipulas, Guatemala peace agreement of August 7, 1987, signed by the five Central American nations, which called for establishing a lasting regional peace through democratization, national reconciliation, amnesty, a cease-fire, free elections, cessation of assistance to irregular forces, and the denial of territory for

aggression against one another's countries (see Current History, December, 1987, p. 430).

In contrast to the Arias government, the Costa Rican press has been advocating the partisan involvement of Costa Rica in the Nicaraguan war (Costa Rica has had no military of its own since 1949). This partisanship is anti-Sandinista and supportive of the Contras. This orientation by the press has been well documented (Coronado, Sobrado, & Trejos, 1988; Dobles, Ovares & Leon, Perez & Gonzalez, Ramirez, Sobrado, Zeledon, 1987; Kendrick, 1988; Ovares & Leon, 1983). Upon close inspection, this divergence of press and government becomes readily apparent: The major news media in Costa Rica are all controlled by individuals of conservative viewpoint, people whose economic and political well-being depend upon further development of the market model of the press. And, their commitment to a market theory has implications for the ways in which they would like those Central American conflicts resolved.

By nature, definitions are incomplete, tendentious, or absolutistic. For this reason, this study departs from the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences' definition of conservatism. Rather, I offer three perspectives on conservatism, in different periods of Costa Rica's history. This study understands conservatism as follows:

If we bring together in imagination a goodly number of conservatives of temperament and situation, then thrust them into the hurly-burly of active politics, we move naturally toward a

third definition of conservatism that is roughly synonymous with the worn but still convenient label, "the Right." Most persons who talk of conservatism mean political conservatism, that is to say, the aspiration and activities--most of them defensive rather than creative--of parties and movements that celebrate inherited patterns of morality and tested institutions that are skeptical about the efficacy of popular government, that can be counted upon to oppose both the reforming plans of the moderate Left and the deranging schemes of the extreme Left, and that draw their heaviest support from men who have a substantial material and psychological stake in the established order (Rossiter, 1968, p. 291).

Referring to the early years of Costa Rica as an independent country, Gudmundson (1984) indicates that:

The earliest versions of this rural democratic egalitarian model were associated with conservative and elitist politico-ideological positions, which were increasingly challenged after the 1920s by reformists of various political persuasions. In pointing out the shortcomings of this model for mid-twentieth-century Costa Rica, however, major reformist thinkers consistently blamed coffee culture and the oligarchy for any departure from the supposed earlier norm of smallholder homogeneity and self-sufficiency (p. 428).

Tartter (1983) also refers to the same background of conservative ideas, but this time related with modern Costa Rican electoral contests in which opposition parties to the National Liberation Party (PLN):

. . . have been formed and have melted away or have been absorbed into new combinations after election defeats. These forces although not identical, included the same conservative elements of the political spectrum. Their main bases of support have been the large farmers and ranchers, the traditional elites, wealthy business executives, and entrepreneurs (p. 214).

Reding (1986), discussing the changes that have transformed Costa Rica since 1949, outlines that:

The press is the one institution that was left virtually untouched in the social transformations of the past half-century, and has remained the preserve of the Costa Rican upper classes. It was their newspaper, La Informacion, whose agitation led to the military dictatorship of 1917-19 after President Gonzalez Flores established an income tax. A popular movement eventually restored democratic rule, burning down La Informacion in the process. But the families that had owned it regrouped to found La Nacion, the newspaper that has dominated the country's press ever since (pp. 302-303).

Thus, beyond theory, conservative ideas in Costa Rica have been permanently related with elite interests to preserve the status quo, which means the rule of the 'free' market and the blocking of all those movements oriented to social reforms (Tartter, 1983; Reding, 1986).

NEWS IN COSTA RICA

Although I have classified Costa Rica as an emerging nation, its news media follow the Western model of a press guided by market forces. Consequently, news is a commodity, and as such, the owners require that the public purchase their product in order to turn the necessary profit. Consistent with a model driven by market forces, news tends to stress the negative.

In the U.S., negative events are newsworthy because the negative is an aberration (the expectation is for

positive things to happen) (see Schoenback, 1983). In Costa Rica, negative events are viewed as part of the price of progress (see Biesanz, 1985). Even President Arias complained that the Costa Rican press is excessively negative. He did so in his address to newsmen at the inauguration of the First Costa Rican Journalists' National Congress, under the topic "Everything that has to be communicated is not divulged," which was covered by Rodriguez (1988), La Republica (10/28, p. 6) under the headline: "Arias tells journalists: I WILL NOT ALLOW ANARCHY."

Ruotolo (1987) notes that Costa Rican journalists are willing to adopt a stance of cooperation with the government to help develop the nation; Fonseca (1977) points out that the ownership of the nation's newspapers do not share that willingness.

The owners of the press operate with an assumption of the Western model of the press--that the public will be able to make wise decisions on the basis of the information provided by the news media. Unfortunately, as studies show, the Costa Rican people often fail to understand the significance of the news reported, lacking the background information needed to give news its context (Findahl & Hoijer, 1981a,b; Thorndyke, 1979). Most journalists in Costa Rica believe that without schools, hospitals, and food, free expression is largely irrelevant (Fonseca,

1977). Again, the owners of Costa Rica's newspapers do not share this belief (Reding, 1986).

An Overview of La Nacion

Financial stability has been growing steadily in the Costa Rican press since the first decade of this century (Fonseca, 1977; Pierce, 1970; Tartter, 1983). Three of the Costa Rica's four dailies have been open without interruption since 1950: La Nacion, La Republica (LR), and La Prensa Libre (LPL). The fourth daily, Extra, is a recent creation and a sensationalist paper. Referring to the consequences of the similar ownership pattern of the Costa Rican news media, Reding (1986) points out: "The result is that a class of people who have for the most part not accepted the social-democratic reforms of the past half-century have a virtual monopoly on the provision of news," (p. 303).

La Nacion is the largest and most powerful politically, because of its ability to shape public consciousness. Tartter (1983) outlines this influence of the print media over the electronic news media, which contributes to the establishment of the news agenda besides the logical consequences of the common ownership already cited. Although no newspaper has certified circulation, LN claims 98,000 daily; LR, 35,000; and LPL, 15,000 (see Tartter, 1983). According to Pierce (1970), and Fonseca

(1977), 70% of LN's pages are devoted to advertising (and its revenues). Moreover, the staff of LN is at least three times larger than any other news organization in Costa Rica. The sheer size of its staff enables LN to set the news agenda for all of Costa Rica's papers and news broadcasts.

This newspaper was created by the members of the coffee oligarchy, represented in ANFE (National Association for Economic Development), whose stated purpose is to promote the interest of the businessmen, to foster the conservative ideological point of view and, "which devotes itself to criticism of the process of social reform" (Fonseca, 1977, p. 25). According to Tartter (1983), this organization "had a small but elite membership of business leaders, politicians, civil servants, and educators. Its belief in the free operation of market forces and minimal government interference in the economy was well to the right in the modern-day spectrum" (p. 269).

In the editorial of its first issue (10/12/46) LN defined its policy as follows:

This newspaper . . . will not be tied to a political party, in the sense of active partisanship Our attitude will be of attentive impartiality studying the national problems with serenity in our judgment Whether or not the expressions of governmental functionaries agree with our way of thinking, LN's columns will admit those declarations. This practice in any form will diminish our freedom to expose contrary opinion, freedom to which we will never renounce.

For the fortieth anniversary of the newspaper's creation, LN published a book, La Historia en Primera Plana: 1946-1986, in which they restate their policies (10/12/86):

Four decades later we can continue watching our friends and enemies to their eyes, face to face, because in spite of the adversities we never betrayed our goal, which was to make a free journalism, impartial and without any compromise. We have kept open our pages to everybody's opinion, without distinctions of any sort.

In the sample for this study (See Methodology), there is an even more recent restatement of information policies by LN (6/2/88). The newspaper claims it has been fighting for the people and that its ascent, without stumbling,

. . . is the reason of our independence, a guarantee of veracity and honesty for the people of Costa Rica. This independence strengthens us and drives us to exercise the right to inform and investigate, without being subjected to pressures or retaliations, both in the face of public power and before the sordid workings of drug traffic or corruption.

To reiterate, impartiality and neutrality are considered necessary conditions to be objective (Westerthal, 1983).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The accurate presentation of events has always been a noble aspiration. It implies to people that "both sides" of the coin are presented to them in order to allow them to make their own judgments.

Although American scholars and journalists often disagree about the role of the press, both groups agree

that the press should report facts objectively and fairly (Altschull, 1984). This assumption has been so widely disseminated and accepted that by now it has become a part of the belief system of the Western world. It would be suicidal for a news service or a newspaper to publicly espouse subjectivity or persuasion in its news columns (Hackett, 1984).

Even though in the Western press the notion of objectivity of the press is not possible, fairness of coverage is the practical goal. In Costa Rica, however, objectivity, for the owners of the media and some journalists, is an article of faith. Consequently, for the purpose of this thesis, use of the term "objectivity" will denote balance, a lack of systematic bias.

In view of LN's own editorial statements and the profession's commitment to "objectivity," my first research question is as follows:

Research Question # 1: To what extent does the reporting within stories in LN deviate from their editorial commitment to neutrality, impartiality and objectivity (i.e., the lack of systematic bias)?

As Reyes Matta (1979) points out, the development of the Latin American press since the middle of the century shows that the concept of news was originally understood as a current of opinion, with newspapers presenting ideological debates and political positions. It is a

unique distinction that Costa Rica has never had a press model of its own, and its press has shifted from one influence to another, from Colonial to European to American (Altschull, 1984; Fejes, 1983; Fonseca, 1977).

Martin & Chaudhary (1983) explain that not all Western countries follow the trend to objective reporting in the American and British sense. West German journalists, for example, give their stories "perspective" with interpretative backgrounds and subjective writing. Swedish journalists, too, give a twist to their stories to give them life, for fear of boring their readers. And in the case of the Australian journalists, particularly in political matters, they "play up" or "play down" stories consistent with their political orientation.

Most of the time, characteristics like the size of a headline, the placement of a news report, the selection for the front page, the size of the news article, the use of pictures, graphics, and so on, establish the importance of an issue in the mind of the readers. This notion of importance reflects the bias of the publisher (Schulte, 1983; Van Dijk, 1988a).

Despite its commitment to a news policy of objectivity, LN is a self-declared advocate of conservative ideas, a public supporter of the interests of a class, the businessmen grouped in the National Association for Economic Development (ANFE). They may legitimately defend

their ideological orientation in the editorials, but not in the news. This distinction is consistent with the code of objectivity that underlies Western press theory. However, there are serious doubts that LN's assertion of neutrality and impartiality is a legitimate one. Their commitment may not be serious, because researchers (e.g. Soto, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1987) have found a consistent bias, an omission or diminution of certain events, as well as a highlighting of the ones with which they identify. For example, in November 1985 during the 1986 presidential election, LN did not published the results of a public opinion poll that they used to present every month.

The decision for not publishing the results of that last poll was the origin of a controversy. This poll showed that the candidate of the social-democratic National Liberation Party (PLN), the opposition to the conservative party, for the first time was ahead. LN answered its critics by simply stating that it was not their obligation to publish the results of the poll, and their decision not to publish the poll was unrelated to its findings (LN issues of February, 1986).

La Nacion is the only paper or news medium in Costa Rica that can afford to pay for a poll. The rest of the media just report the results of LN's survey. The other polls are less trustworthy because they are paid for by the involved parties.

These factors led to my second research question:

Research Question # 2: To the extent that reporting in LN reflects systematic bias, what is the nature of that bias?

Message "originators" may employ linguistic conventions rhetorically to mask the ideological nature of a text from audiences, thereby claiming the existence of an objective or non-ideological discourse (Sigman & Fry, 1985, p. 311). Further, institutional constraints affect the way in which news events are covered (Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Golding, 1979; Tuchman, 1972, 1978a,b, 1983). Various studies of the news demonstrate how it is accomplished (Cohen & Young, 1981; Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1981).

Guido Fernandez, former editor of LN (1968-1980), in an article published in LN, affirms:

Our news media, in general terms, respond to a conservative ideological structure that is reflected not only in the editorials but in the news . . . (LN, June 4, 1988, p.16A).

If this is the case in LN, then it becomes reasonable to look not only to the news but to the editorials and then ask a third question:

Research Question #3: To what extent does LN's general editorial position coincide with, or reflect, the manner in which news stories are covered?

Traditionally, a study such as this would be using content analysis, which makes much use of word counts and categories based on names, key words, descriptions, definitions, etc.; manifest content is the main focus of attention. The approach taken in this study, news discourse analysis (NDA), takes the same data but construes them somewhat differently. NDA acknowledges that what are essentially linguistic data require a treatment which is less mechanical, less concerned with manifest content, and more sensitive to the power of the language, and to the varieties and contexts of language use.

This perspective denies the possibility of neutrality and impartiality (objectivity), and it is based on the premise that all discourses (e.g., speech, writing and stories) cannot help but have a structure to them in which certain elements are highlighted and others downplayed or ignored. My study is based in the approach of two authors, Teun A. van Dijk (1983a; 1984; 1985a,b,c; 1986a,b; 1988a,b,c) and Fredric Jameson (1981).

The difference between 'classical' content analysis, and discourse analysis is a linguistic base refinement. Four different elements of the discourse focus can be enumerated according to van Dijk (1988a).

First, the NDA examines a media message as a discourse in its own right. A content analysis in mass communication research is usually done to find relations or

interrelations between some property, often from the content and sometimes from the style of the messages and the characteristics of the sender/speaker or the public readers. The media discourse is less frequently studied as a social practice in its own right. Therefore, it is legitimate to make explicit the inherent structures at all levels of analysis (see Harris, 1988, p. 72; van Dijk, 1988a, esp. Chapt. 2 and 3).

Second, NDA is oriented towards the explanation of qualitative data rather than quantitative. Of course, quantitative data could be based in explicit analysis of a more qualitative type.

Third, content analysis is primarily based in observable quantitative data, such as words, phrases, sentences or stylistic features. NDA, apart from making more explicit these superficial structures in terms of modern grammars (it is plausible that grammatical and discourse structures may indicate some features of models), also pays attention to subtle semantic structures. This makes explicit implications, presuppositions, connections, etc., that usually remain implicit in the discourse.

Finally, NDA is part of a wider social and cognitive theory about the rules and strategies that remain obscured in the production and understanding of mass media discourse. Instead of only making correlations as content analysis seeks to do, NDA tries to explain in precise

cognitive models how some structures of the news discourse "surge" and how the media discourse is understood and represented in memory. Thus, the relationship between content properties and specific effects is mediated by highly complicated cognitive models of the information processing.

News production, as I have stated, is not a direct representation of "reality." On the contrary, it is only a way to process diverse discourses. The cognitive approach taken in NDA allows us to distinguish bias, the relationship between textual structures and the selective perceptions of both journalists and readers. That is, journalists select the topics of the events they want to highlight or play down according to their own particular or general models and the readers perceive the messages according to theirs.

CHAPTER II

THE METHODOLOGY OF NEWS DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

News Discourse Analysis (NDA) approaches news reports as communicative events or acts interpretable by taking into consideration the personal and social properties of these messages. This chapter will be developed in three sections. First, I explain the terms that are needed to analyze news text, itself--the first dimension of NDA. After the terms are introduced, I present what Van Dijk (1988a) calls his "Superstructure Schema of New Discourse," which explains the repertoire of conceptual tools for NDA. These tools are then demonstrated in a brief structural analysis of a Costa Rican weekly, The Tico Times. The second section of this chapter concerns the second dimension of NDA--the social and communicative context within which news stories become comprehensible. An example is then provided in which these tools are demonstrated. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the sample of materials used for the NDA of La Nacion.

NDA is a theory of news from a new, interdisciplinary perspective (see Appendix for a more comprehensive treatment of NDA background). NDA focuses on

the discourse structures of the news and their implications for cognitive interpretation. In this perspective journalists are considered part of a dominant cultural elite, who often contribute unwittingly to the expression and legitimation of the national and international power structures.

As Reyes-Matta (1986) points out, "the state has been converted into a guardian who maintains authoritarian social control so that the economic mechanisms of the 'free market' may act for the benefit of certain power groups. Political, economical, social and cultural democracy suffers the oppressive consequences" (p. 198).

Thus, as the central purveyors of public discourse, the news media provide more than the agenda of public topics and discussions. News media may not shape the way readers and viewers/listeners react to their messages, but there is no question about one thing: They shape perceptions of reality and set certain priorities (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

News reports do not necessarily prescribe the opinion of readers. Rather, they are the main form of public discourse that provides the general outline of social, political, cultural, and economic models that structure interpretation of events, as well as re-presenting dominant knowledge and attitude structures that make such models intelligible (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978; Kintsch, 1988).

The meaning of any discourse might therefore best be captured under the notion of a communicative event or act, which includes the text or dialogue, itself, as well as the personal and social properties of this act of communication (the context model). In this sense, a conversation, a courtroom session of a trial, a session in Congress, a lecture, a news broadcast or the production or reading of a newspaper, could be examples of such complex communicative events. These events can be further analyzed into smaller units, such as a story within a conversation; a plea by a defense attorney within a trial; an explanation of a subject by a teacher in class or by a lecturer; the speech of a congressman in parliamentary session; or the structuring of a news story into headline, lead-in, description of event, commentary, etc.

According to van Dijk (1988a) a news report can be understood adequately only if we analyze it in terms of two dimensions: its structural composition and its communicative context. The first is a result of cognitive and social processes of discourse and meaning production by journalists. The second concerns the interpretation processes and media usage by newspapers readers or listeners/viewers of broadcast news.

The first dimension concerns the analysis of the text. It examines such aspects as:

1. Grammatical structures.
2. Coherence (sequence of sentences).
3. The role of knowledge in interpretation.
4. Macrostructures.
5. Superstructures.
6. Relevance structuring.
7. Rhetorical structure

The concerns of the second dimension, the actual processing or uses of news in social and communicative contexts, include a consideration of the following:

1. News participants as social actors.
2. Social cognitions and news processing (language, codes, frames, scripts and attitudes).
3. Context models.
4. Strategic processing and control.
5. Social representations, ideology and news production.
6. News comprehension.

Let us turn first to the structural concerns of NDA.

STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE (FIRST DIMENSION)

(1) Grammatical Structures, (2) Coherence and, (3) The Role of Knowledge in Interpretation. Van Dijk (1988a) points out that discourse semantics is not autonomous in the sense that we only have to know the lexical meanings of words and their combinations. What people know in a given

culture is important, because they use such knowledge in the interpretation of discourse in general and the establishment of coherence in particular.

Our subjective understanding of the coherence of a news report may depend on whether or not we share a particular knowledge script or socio-political attitude. A text is coherent if it describes a possible sequence of events (acts, situations). Hence, coherence depends on our knowledge and beliefs about what is possible in the world.

Key Terms. The systematic analysis of the textual structures of news must begin with an explication of notions like theme or topic.

A topic or theme is what the discourse is about, globally speaking.

Propositions are the smallest, independent meaning constructs of language and thought.

Macrostructures are organized sets of propositions. Yet, unlike the propositions expressed by clauses or sentences, they are only expressed indirectly, by larger stretches of talk or text. The term local coherence refers to coherence at the level of propositions, and global coherence is coherence at the level of macrostructures.

(4) Macrostructures and (5) Superstructures.

Macrostructures are derived from sentence meanings (propositions) of a text by a set of rules such as selection, generalization and construction. In a

cognitive theory of discourse processing, these rules operate as tentative but effective macrostrategies that enable readers to derive the topic from a sequence of sentences (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). These operations also depend heavily on our knowledge of the world (scripts).

In the same way that we need a syntactic form to express and organize the meanings of a sentence, we also need a form to organize the overall meaning (or macrostructure) of a text as a whole. The schematic superstructure fulfills that need. If we know or guess that an upcoming text is a story, we may activate our conventional knowledge about story schemata in our culture.

Without macrostructures and superstructures we would have to interpret and establish coherence only at the microlevel and construe ad hoc higher level structures. Experimental research has shown that this is very difficult, if not impossible, for language users (van Dijk, 1988b). Hence, global structures, both those of thematic content as well as those of schematic form, are crucial for theoretical analysis and for the actual production and understanding of a text.

News Schemata (textual superstructures) concern those expected structural elements of the text. Scientific discourse, such as journal articles or lectures, generally have a conventional form, which often features an

argumentative schema, a number of premises followed by a conclusion. Theoretically, discourse schemata are accounted for in terms of so-called superstructures (van Dijk, 1988a). These are global structures of discourse.

The topics of news discourse are not a simple list. Rather, they are hierarchically structured. NDA assumes that a higher level macroproposition (like the news lead) can be derived from a sequence of lower level macropropositions or micropropositions (e.g., the 'lead' can be inferred from specific paragraphs in the story). This means that the macroproposition is entailed by the propositions from which it is derived.

Global structures of discourse are defined by superstructure categories and rules in a similar manner as for stories. The necessary link with other discourse structures is established through semantic macrostructures (topics) in order to assign a global form or schema to the text. Thus, each superstructure category is associated with a macroproposition (topic) from the semantic macrostructure. This category assigns a specific discourse function to the macroproposition and, consequently, to the sequence of sentences or propositions summarized by that macroproposition. A narrative category (e.g., setting) may be filled by two or more macropropositions, that together, describe the setting of the story. This link between

superstructure and macrostructure enables the researcher to formulate specific mutual constraints.

(6) Relevance Structuring. Since macrostructures are derived for or from a text on the basis of our knowledge and beliefs, they may of course be intersubjective. The most important information of a news event for one person or group may not be so for another. This also means that the thematic or schematic organization of a news report may well be biased, for instance, when relatively important information is placed at the end or omitted altogether.

The major communicative functions of news reports seem to determine their structures at all levels in the process of production and reception. Important information must come first; this is the general principle for the journalists in the production of news. This may affect the ordering of sentences in paragraphs describing an episode and the ordering within the sentences themselves, as well as the overall thematic or schematic organization.

Through this relevance ordering of the news, the researcher can determine the social groups (actors), the type of events, etc., that are given prominence by the journalist and which are given less relevance or ignored. This logistic can be found in most journalism textbooks and it is taught in journalism schools (Harris et al., 1981).

In the setting of a novel, for example, only information that describes the initial situation and

participants may be inserted. The complication and the resolution in a narrative schema also requires specific information. Once the overall form is linked with the overall content of the text there is also a link with the microstructures of the actual text, namely via the macrorules or specification rules. Each macroproposition is related to a sequence of propositions, which in turn is related to a sequence of clauses and sentences.

(7) Rhetorical Structure. The rhetorical dimension may affect all structural levels of a text. Well known rhetorical devices are syntactic operations such as parallelisms, and semantic operations such as comparisons or metaphors. Similarly, news reports may use words that function as hyperboles (overstatements, exaggerations) or understatements, or word and sentence meanings that establish contrast or build a climax. Van Dijk (1988b) says that these structures further contribute to a tighter organization of news information and thus may lead to better recall of the story by the reader and, hence, to enhanced persuasion. A good example is the case of demonstrations, rhetorically framed in terms of violence by the use of comparisons or metaphors borrowed from military scripts. Even in the case of peaceful demonstrations, the scripts or attitudes activated could be of violence and disruption.

News schema categories. Turning to the news discourse, the researcher cannot be sure a priori whether or not news in the press exhibits a fixed, conventional schema. Van Dijk (1986a) established a set of news discourse categories and formulated rules and strategies for their ordering and inter-relationships. They are Summary, Headline, Lead, Main Events, Backgrounds, Context, Previous Events, Consequences, Verbal Reactions, and Comments. These categories are presented schematically in Figure 1.

Superstructure Schema of News Discourse

Summary, Headline and Lead. Headline precedes lead, and together they precede the rest of the news item. Their structural function is to express the major topics of the text. That is, they function as an initial summary. Hence, as in oral storytelling, the category Summary is introduced, dominating Headline and Lead. The semantic constraint is obvious: Headline + Lead summarize the news text and express the semantic macrostructure.

Main Events in Context and Their Backgrounds. A news text may feature Backgrounds or an Evaluation of the news events, and these categories may be taken as constituents of news schema, although they are not exclusively appropriate for news. Usually, Background follows later in a news discourse, that is, after the section that deals with the actual or main news events.

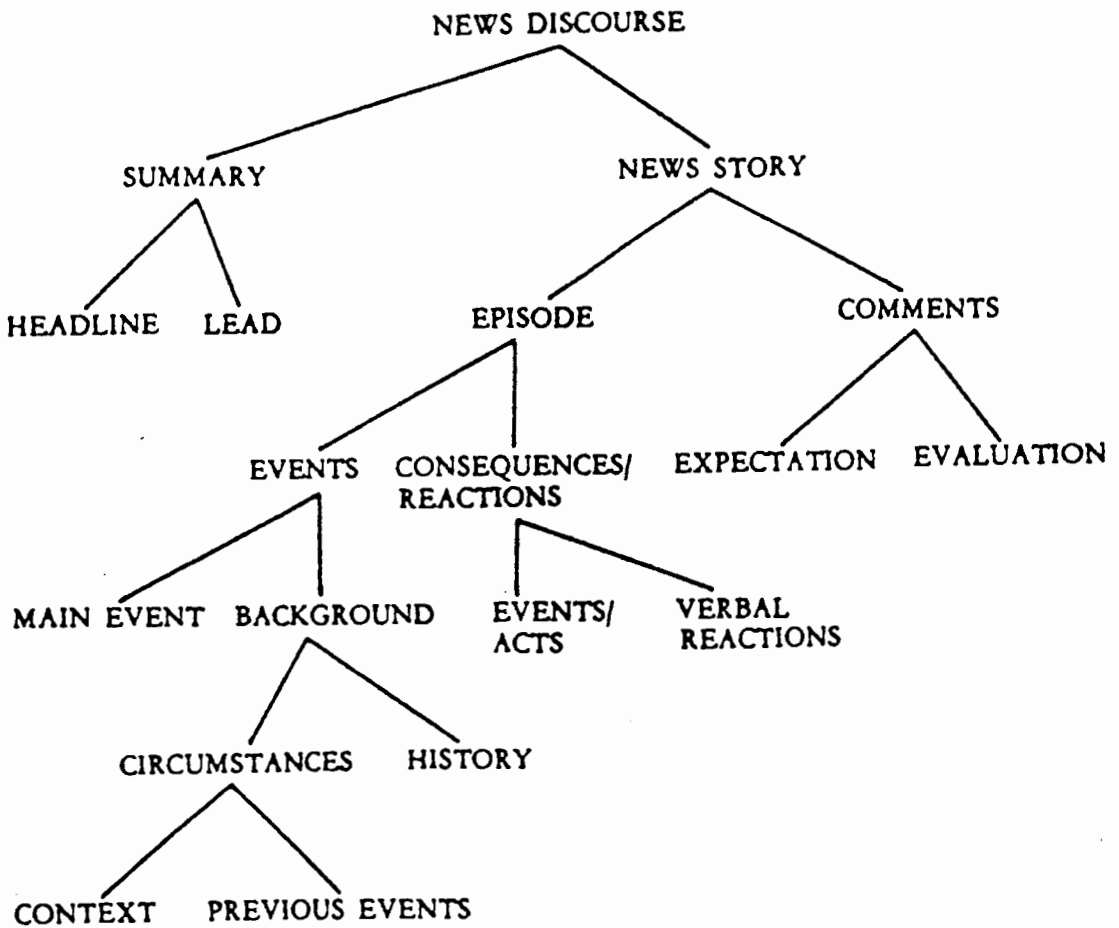


Figure 1. Superstructure schema of news discourse. (Source: van Dijk, 1988a, p. 55)
Therefore, there is also a category of Main Events.

Similarly, the information in the Main Events category may be embedded in what is called Context. Context is often signaled by expressions such as "while," "during," or similar expressions of simultaneity. Semantically, Context must denote actual situation, consisting of other concrete news events. Often, Context is Main Event in other or previous news items. Context in this respect is different from Backgrounds, which have a more comprehensive, structural, or historical nature. Indeed, part of Background may include the history of the actual events and their Context. Of course, in actual cases, it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish between backgrounds and Context. Such would be the case with the category of Previous Events, which is often used to remind the reader of what has happened before (and what was probably reported earlier in the same newspaper). The Previous Events category is taken as part of the actual circumstances, which also includes Context. But Previous Events also has a historical dimension. History pertains only to the section of a news text that deals with non-recent past history of actual situations and their events. In practice, a History section cannot be Main Event in news items that appeared recently. Since History denotes events that embraces years, not days or weeks, the difference between Previous Events, Context and History are marked by different verbs, verb tenses or temporal adverbs.

Consequences is another category that routinely occurs in news discourse. The newsworthiness of social and political events is partly determined by the seriousness of their consequences. By discussing real or possible consequences, a news discourse may give causal coherence to news events. Sometimes, consequences are even more important than the main news events themselves. In that case, topics in the Consequence category may have the same hierarchical position as the Main Event topics, or they may even become the highest level topic and be expressed in the headline.

Verbal Reactions is a specific news schema category that may be seen as a special case of consequences. Most important, journalists covering a news event follow a standard procedure of asking the comments of important participants or prominent political leaders. The rationale for such a Verbal Reactions section is obvious. It allows journalists to formulate opinions that are not necessarily their own, but which nevertheless are allegedly objective because they have actually been stated. Of course, the selection of speakers and of quotations need not be unbiased. The Verbal Reactions category is signaled by names and roles of news participants and by direct or indirect quotes of verbal utterances. This category usually comes after the Main Events, Context and Background categories, toward the end of the news discourse, although

important reactions may be mentioned earlier in the item, under the additional constraint or relevance ordering.

Comments is a news discourse category that features the comments, opinions and evaluations of the journalists or the newspaper. Although many newsmakers share the ideological view that fact and opinion should not be mixed, this final Comment category frequently appears in the news, albeit sometimes in an indirect form. Comments consists of two sub-categories: Evaluations and Expectations. Evaluation concerns opinions about the actual news events and situation. It may, for instance predict future events.

These major news schema categories together define possible news discourse forms. Their linear and hierarchical ordering is determined by rules and strategies. The different news values are the rules (Harris et al., 1981) and the strategies are determined, for example, by the relevance structuring principle: Most important events are offered first, thus the answers to the five Ws (who, what, where, when, why) of the lead constitute the top macrostructures, and less important details are left to lower level macrostructures (the superstructural ordering). The schema proposed by van Dijk & Kintsch (1983) is theoretical in the sense that all categories are mentioned, although it is obvious that many news texts only use some of these categories. Strictly speaking, only Headline and Main Events are obligatory in a

minimally well-formed news discourse. Categories such as Backgrounds, Verbal Reactions and Comments are optional. Some categories may be recursive, that is, they may be repeated several times. For example, several main events may be subsumed under a higher level episode mode. The same text sequences may serve diverse functions simultaneously.

By definition, the news schema also determines the overall ordering of topics in the text; it organizes the topics and the realization of the thematic structure. If one wishes to distort readers' understanding, the relevance of specific persons, actions, or events must be manipulated (e.g., by moving Consequences, Verbal Reactions, or Comments to earlier positions). Since topics may be developed cyclically throughout a news report, this is also the case for superstructure categories. For example, a Main Event may be expressed discontinuously throughout the text. The basic strategy is top-down. Present high level information of each category/topic first; then, express lower level information of each category/topic. However, the general relevance principle is so powerful that it may overrule this strategy. In some cases, semantically minor details are nevertheless expressed in prominent positions, such as the headline or lead. This salient detail move in news production strategies can be directly influenced by

fundamental news values such as negativity, unusualness, unexpectedness, etc.

A Structural Perspective Example

Two news reports were selected to offer an example of news discourse analysis (see Figure 2). The topics of these news reports are directly related to two of the topics found in the La Nacion sample, Drug trafficking and Costa Rican President Arias' activities. The news articles used for this example of structural analysis were published on July 21, 1989, by The Tico Times (TTT), 13 months after the period covered by the La Nacion sample (see p. 39). This sample analysis will provide the reader with a better understanding of the research tool of this study.

In addition, this sample allows a comparison between LN's news coverage and that of TTT. Although TTT is a weekly, and LN is a daily, in this case the journalists who wrote the news articles for TTT were under deadline constraints similar to those at LN. This news article, "Probe Rips U.S. Local Officials" (see Figures 3 and 4), concerns the Drug Commission's report of the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly (Congress) given on June 20, 1989, the same day as publication. The comparison is made using the June 21 issues of both papers. In the second news article, "Arias Diplomacy Yields Progress in Nicaragua," the weekly perspective can be easily deduced in Figures 5 and 6.

Together these two examples demonstrate the full array of NDA tools for structural analysis.

In the case of the first news article: several structural news categories are readily apparent (see Figure 4). The top-down principle of relevance organization and its installment character are discernable. Each topic is delivered in parts in order of importance: high-level specifics are given first, followed by lower level details, in such a way that if a part is cut off, the rest of the news discourse will remain intelligible.

This structure of relevance could be used to determine the presence of bias in the case of LN's news coverage of the same event. This will be discussed later in this chapter (see "An Ideological Construction Example"). The TT (pp. 35, 38) highlighted these aspects of the Commission's report: the prohibition against certain U.S. officials entering Costa Rica, the kicking out of a contra supporter, Costa Rican-American John Hull; and the demand that former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber resign his political posts. The principle of relevance was put to work in a general manner, although it is understandable why the headline highlighted only the case of the American officials--the newspaper is published in Costa Rica but most of its readership is American. However, this American social perspective found its balance in the lead where a relevant Costa Rican politician, former President Daniel

THE TICO TIMES

CENTRAL AMERICA'S LEADING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER

Member of the Inter-American Press Association

San Jose, Costa Rica, Friday, July 21, 1989

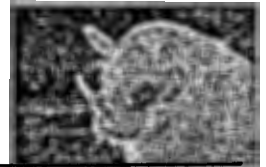
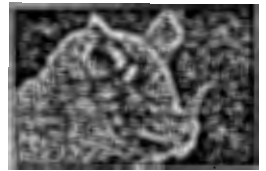
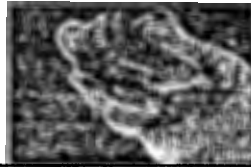
VOL. XXXIII No. 1025

Who's at Bat?

THE LINEUP includes just a sampling of Costa Rica's 103 species of bats — of which only one, the Common Vampire Bat (*Desmodus rotundus*) has given all the rest a bad name because he occasionally varies his diet with human blood (see story, Page 9). He's third from left, top row. With him (from left) are the Sword-Nosed Bat (*Lonchorhina aurita*), the False Vampire Bat (*Vampyrus spectrum*), and *Micronycterus nicotari*; from

left, bottom row, are the Tent-Making Bat (*Uroderm. bilobatum*); the Mastiff Bat (*Eumops perotis*); Parnell's Moustached Bat (*Pteronotus parnellii*); and the Honduran White Bat (*Ectophylla alba*). Though they might not win any beauty contests, the vast majority of Costa Rica's bats are harmless, and play vital roles in the ecology.

Photos by Martha D. Tuttle, courtesy Pat O'Connor/Corbis International



Probe Rips U.S., Local Officials

By PETER BRENNAN
AN outraged Drug Commission of the Legislative Assembly this week demanded that U.S.-Costa Rican contra supporter John Hull be kicked out of the country. That former President Daniel Oduber resign his political posts in the National Liberation Party, and that some of the once-most powerful U.S. officials in the region never be allowed into Costa Rica.

In releasing his long-awaited report late yesterday afternoon — the result of a six-month investigation — the Commission also asked that Benjamin Piza be "censured for his actions" when he was Minister of Public Security from 1984 to 1986, and if convicted of the charges pending against

him, that he never be given another government post. The Commission found it "incomprehensible" that Piza claimed he wasn't aware of the increase in drug and weapons trafficking during the years he was Minister. The most unusual request in the report was the Commission's demand that former high-ranking U.S. officials — Oliver North, former Gen. Richard Secord,

former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambor, former CIA station chief Joe Fernandez, and former U.S. National Security Adviser John Poindexter — be denied admission to Costa Rica. Citing the five men's role in trying to establish a Southern Front here for the Nicaraguan contra, the report also noted that North had enticed the help of Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega to fight the Sandinistas, with dire consequences for Costa Rica.

"The participation of General Noriega in the anti-Sandinista fight resulted in the entrance into Costa Rica of a series of pilots, who under the orders of the General, had been dedicated to trafficking in drugs; and under the circumstances of helping the 'contras,' did not abandon in any manner their illegal activity," read the report.

THE report also accused Supreme Court Justice Jesus Ramirez — who refused the Commission's request last November to resign — of perjury.

In its far-reaching report, (Page 5)

C.R. Moves To Control Big Deficit

By MARIA ELENA CARVALLO and RICHARD DYER

Faced with an increasing balance of trade deficit, falling coffee prices and the prospect of losing \$80 million of a World Bank credit promised earlier this year, the government this week announced the stiffest currency devaluation of the last 18 months.

Central Bank president Eduardo Lizano on Wednesday fixed the dollar purchase rate at 182.45, while maintaining the selling rate at 180.95, increasing the differential between dollar buying and selling rates from C 1.00 to C 1.50. Coupled with two mini-devaluations earlier this month, this week's action amounted to the largest devaluation since the 6 percent currency adjustment Jan. 8, 1988. Lizano, who also boosted requirements for prior deposits on all imports blamed his decisions on three major factors:

A severe skid in world prices for coffee, Costa Rica's major export; an unexpected six-months deficit of \$156 million in the nation's balance of trade, and the probable \$80 million loss this year of a \$100 million World Bank credit that had been negotiated earlier.

The plain-speaking Central Bank chief, after (Page 3)

Arias' Diplomacy Yields Progress in Nicaragua

By EMMA DALY

PRESIDENT Oscar Arias' recent diplomatic initiatives paid off this week, as Nicaraguan government and opposition leaders moved closer to an electoral pact following meetings with the Costa Rican leader last week.

After a seven-hour meeting with Arias Friday, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega offered to begin an immediate dialogue with Nicaragua's opposition parties, and told reporters that he would be willing to discuss "adjustments, refinements or reforms" to electoral and media laws which have been criticized by Arias and the Union of Nicaragua's Opposition (UNO) anti-govern-

ment coalition.

"This announcement is very exciting," said Arias, describing Ortega's offer as "a very positive and constructive step."

"It fills us with optimism, renews confidence and hope that the plan we signed two years ago is the only way the Central America people can achieve democracy, liberty and peace," he continued during a news conference Friday evening.

THE Nicaraguan President, dressed in his usual olive-green uniform, explained that he had decided to meet with UNO because the 15 member parties had confirmed their

(Page 11)

Figure 2. Two news examples.

Oduber is mentioned, together with the naturalized Costa Rican, John Hull. The rest of the news report follows the relevance principle by which each topic is delivered in order of importance. The assumption of importance by the journalists, or course, must be subjective.

Another characteristic of this news report is the paper's assumption about readers' social knowledge about drug trafficking, and accusations and counter-accusations by different political groups dealing with their involvement with narcotic smugglers. This fact concerns the serial dimension of NDA. It is another well-established characteristic of news production using a 'market' model. Negative acts are highlighted.

The newspaper's headlines and leads could indicate bias as well, as could the placement of the full news report on the front page and the space given in the inside pages. Leads and headlines activate certain scripts that pervade all the understanding of a news article (van Dijk, 1988a,b). And, the most important news is presumed by news producers and consumers, alike, to be that which appears on the front page, and has the largest headline or the best placement in this page.

In the second TT news report (see Figures 5 and 6), the rhetorical characteristics are easily discernable throughout. The article shows the effects of Arias'

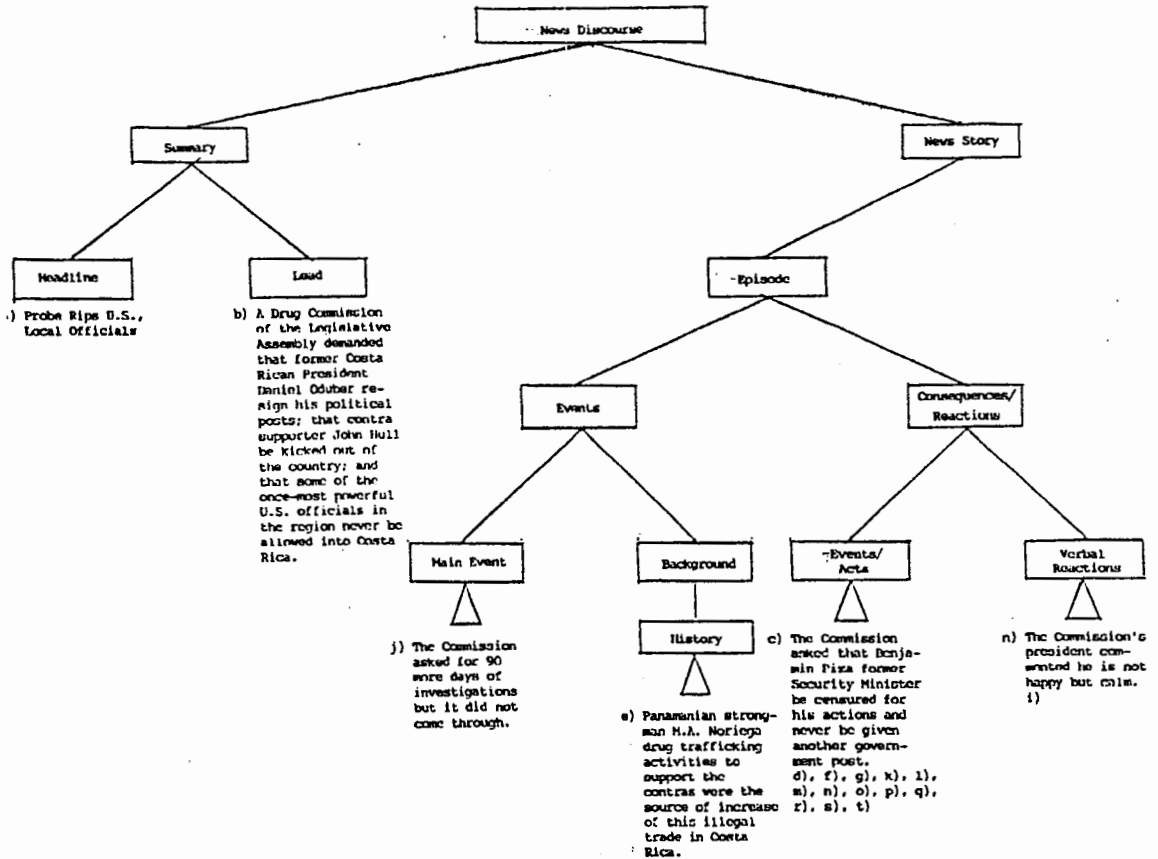


Figure 3. Thematic structure of the news report in "The Tico Times." Semantic categories in upper case. The first macrostructure is written, the letters refers to the rest of them. Triangles indicate macrostructural organization of topics.

Headline

Probe Rips U.S., Local Officials

Summary
by PETER BRENNAN

Lead

All outraged Drug Commission of the Legislative Assembly this week demanded that U.S.-Costa Rican contra supporter John Hull be kicked out of the country, that former President Daniel Oduber resign his political posts in the National Liberation Party, and that some of the most powerful U.S. officials in the region never be allowed into Costa Rica.

Cons. (E/A)

In releasing its long-awaited report late yesterday afternoon — the result of a six-month investigation — the Commission also asked that Benjamin Piza be "sanctioned for his actions" when he was Minister of Public Security from 1984 to 1986, and if convicted of the charges pending against him, that he never be given another government post. The Commission found Piza "incomprehensible" that Piza claimed he wasn't aware of the increase in drug and weapons trafficking during the years he was Minister.

Cons. (E/A)

The most unusual request in the report was the Commission's demand that former high-ranking U.S. officials — Oliver North, former Gen. Richard Secord, former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambo, former CIA station chief Joe Fernandez, and former U.S. National Security Adviser John Poindexter — be denied admission to Costa Rica. Citing the five men's role in trying to establish a Southern Front base for the Nicaraguan contra, the report also noted that North had enticed the help of Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega to fight the Sandinistas, with dire consequences for Costa Rica.

History

"The participation of General Noriega in the anti-Sandinista fight resulted in the entrance into Costa Rica of a series of pilots, who under the orders of the General, had been dedicated to trafficking in drugs; and under the circumstances of helping the 'contra,' did not abandon in any manner their illegal activity," read the report.

Cons. (E/A)

The report also accused Supreme Court Justice Jesus Ramirez — who refused the Commission's request last November to resign — of perjury.

A Drug Commission of the Legislative Assembly demanded that former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber resign its political posts; that contra supporter John Hull be kicked out of the country; and that some of the most powerful U.S. officials in the region never be allowed into Costa Rica.

Former Security Minister, Benjamin Piza was demanded to be censured for his actions.

Five men of the Reagan administration will not be allowed to enter Costa Rica. The existing of Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel A. Noriega by Oliver North to fight the Sandinistas was of dire negative consequences for Costa Rica.

Noriega drug trafficking activities to support the contra were the source of the increase of this illegal trade in Costa Rica.

The Commission also accused Supreme Court Justice Jesus Ramirez.

(From Page 1)

the Drug Commission demanded the resignations of Rodolfo Ulate, General Manager of Banco de Costa Rica; Civil Aviation Authority Chief Carlos Viquez; and the chief of the Aviation board's Legal Department, Javier Vargas.

"I am calm. I'm not happy," commented Drug Commission President Alberto Fall after announcing the report. "Some of these people are my friends. This country is very small."

COMMISSION Secretary Luis Manuel Chacon said he is "extremely" satisfied by the report. When asked why the report did not censure many of the nation's top politicians for accepting political donations from dubious sources, Chacon said there wasn't enough time.

"We asked for 90 more days of investigation, and it didn't come through," he said. The Commission began its work on this report last January with an original deadline of April, but developments kept postponing the report, among other recommendations, the report said:

— EX-PRESIDENT Daniel Oduber (1974-78) should return the C1 million contribution he accepted for the 1986 election campaign from James Leavel Casey, a North American awaiting extradition to the U.S. on drug-trafficking charges.

— If Casey is not extradited, he should be kicked out of the country and never be allowed to return.

— THE Electoral Code should be changed to restrict campaign contributions from foreign or national companies, and contributions should be limited to C500,000 per year per person.

— RANCHER John Hull should lose his naturalization and be kicked out of the country after the charges against him of drug-trafficking and gun-running have been resolved. The report noted that Robert Corbin, former secretary to Oliver North, notified that in 1985, Hull "saw" have a private army of 75 to 100. The Commission reiterated the testimony of convicted drug-traffickers who claim Hull has been involved in trafficking. Hull has always staunchly denied these charges.

— ACCUSED money-launderer Ricardo Alem, Costa Rica's former representative to the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, should never be given a government job again.

— WHOEVER approved the naturalization of Fernando Melo, suspected of ties to traffickers, should be investigated. The report said Melo received a diplomatic passport when Oduber was Foreign Minister from 1982 to 1986. The report quoted Oduber as saying this was following a "little open-handed" political tradition.

— ACCUSED trafficker Sheik Tajudeen should never be allowed to return to Costa Rica, and if not extradited, he should be kicked out.

— SECRET bank accounts should be eliminated, and any deposit over \$5,000 in the nation's banks should be recorded, and access to the account records should be allowed by an investigative authority without the need for authorization from a judge.

WITH this report, the commission concluded its work, which has entailed numerous investigations, accusations and resignations during the previous year. One of the final recommendations was that a permanent commission to investigate trafficking be established.

The Commission also asked the resignation of a bank's general manager and two officials of Civil Aviation.

Commission's president commented he is not "happy but calm."

The Commission did not censure many of the nation's top politicians for accepting political donations from dubious sources.

Commission asked for 90 days more to investigate but it did not come through.

October should return one million colones contribution.

James Casey if not extradited should be kicked out of Costa Rica.

Electoral Code should be changed.

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Accused money launderer Ricardo Alem should never be given a Government job again.

Whoever approved the naturalization of Fernando Melo, suspected of ties to traffickers, should be investigated.

Accused trafficker Sheik Tajudeen should never be allowed to return to Costa Rica.

Secret bank accounts should be eliminated.

The Commission concludes its work with this report.

News Schema Categories	
Cons. (E/A):	Consequences (Events/ACTS)
M.E.:	Main Events
V.R.:	Verbal Reactions

Figure 4. News schemata and macrostructures of "The Tico Times." On the left, news schemata, (textual superstructures); on the right, top-level macrostructures (script: narcotics traffick).

diplomacy and how peace policy in Central America centers upon him.

This second news article reveals the tendencies of weeklies to interpret events by integrating them. The journalist was writing about events, the results of which were already known; thus we find the cause-effect orientation that assigned Arias the merit of the accomplishments (causal coherence). The journalist believes Arias has been successful and his diplomacy has yielded progress, so, enhancing the results she is using a rhetorical device (parallelism) that increases persuasion (see Consequences, pg 31).

This news article also shows how two different events could be related by the journalist and be brought together in one news item, although the events were different episodes (see Figure 5). As the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Bernard Aronson said: "I came here to talk with one President, and that is President Arias." It happened that Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega was in Costa Rica too, and journalistic speculations were made about a possible meeting. Again, a weekly perspective allowed the journalist to write such a news report about two different episodes bringing both together under a common topic.

Another characteristic of this second news report is the presence of Comments, with its two subdivisions.

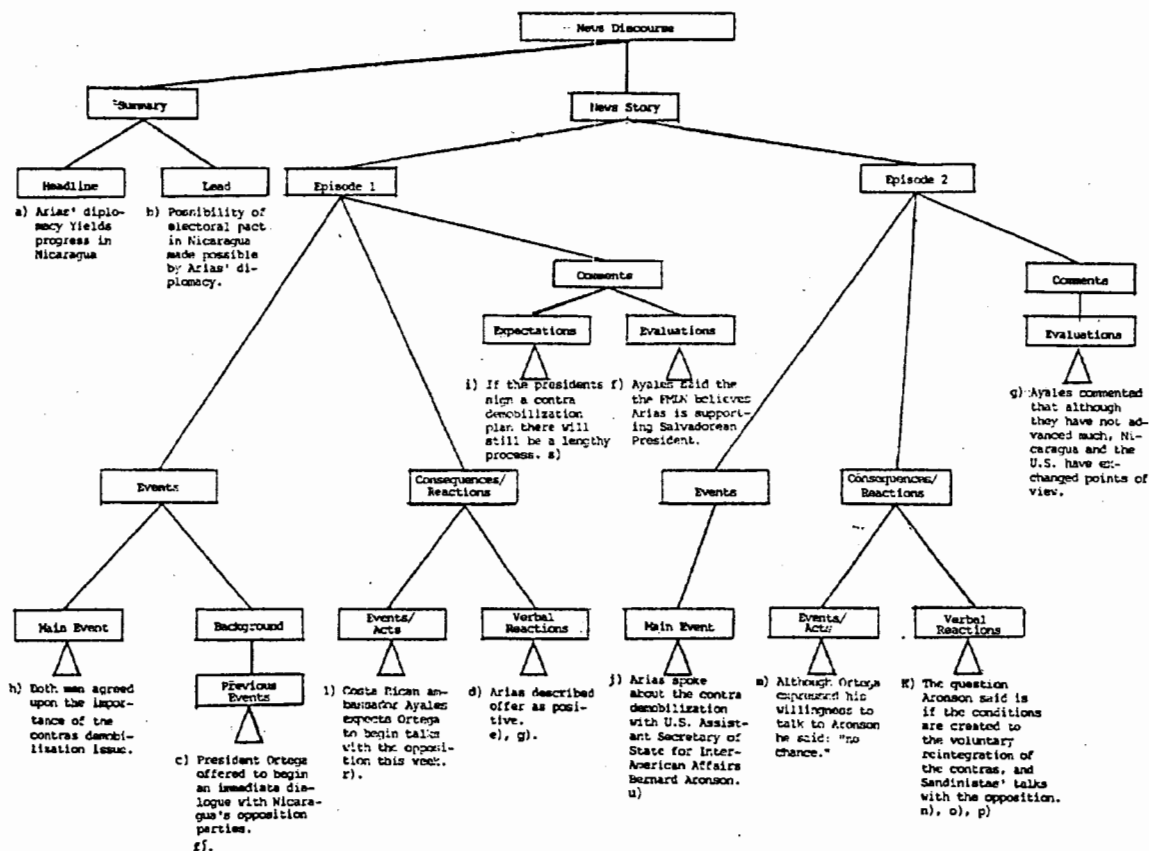


Figure 5. Thematic structure of the news report in "The Tico Times." Semantic categories in upper case. The first macrostructure is written, the letter refer to the rest of the macrostructures. Triangles indicate macrostructural organization of topics.

Arias' Diplomacy Yields Progress in Nicaragua

Headline

Summary
By EMMA BALT

Lead

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P.E.

After a seven-hour meeting with Arias Friday, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega offered to begin an immediate dialogue with Nicaragua's opposition parties, and told reporters that he would be willing to discuss "adjustments, refinements or reforms" to electoral and media laws which have been criticized by Arias and the Union of Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) anti-government coalition.

V.R.

"This announcement is very exciting," said Arias, describing Ortega's offer as "a very positive and constructive step."

V.R.

"It lifts us with optimism, renews confidence and hope that the plan we signed two years ago is the only way the Central American people can achieve democracy, liberty and peace," he continued during a news conference Friday evening.

P.E.

THE Nicaraguan President, dressed in his usual olive-green uniform, explained that he had decided to meet with UNO because the 15 member parties had confirmed their

(From Page 1)

intention of participating in next February's general elections following their visit to Costa Rica, thus fulfilling a previous Sandinista demand that only parties contesting the election should be involved in such discussions.

V.R.

"I was taking his (Arias') opinion and constructive suggestions into account," noted Ortega, adding that "I want to recognize the role played by Costa Rica and by Arias in particular in favor of regional peace."

M.E. 1

Both men agreed that an "important" topic for discussion at the forthcoming regional summit meeting, scheduled for Aug. 5-7 in Honduras, will be the proposed contra demobilization plan, which calls for the "voluntary demobilization, repatriation or relocation" of the estimated 11,000 Sandinista rebel forces now based in Honduras.

Comm. (Exp.)

"If the Presidents do sign a contra demobilization plan at the summit — which is quite possible — there will still be a lengthy process," said Fard Ayales, Costa Rican Ambassador to Nicaragua. "The Nicaraguans know this, so they are asking for a clear show of political will."

M.E. 2

"We think that having the will of the Central American leaders, we can achieve this," Ortega asserted; Arias spoke of the "very worrisome theme of contra demobilization," a topic he reportedly raised during a second meeting Friday night, this one with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard Aronson.

M.E. 2

ARONSON, a Democrat who has lobbied for military aid to the contras in the past, said later that "the United States is committed to supporting the Esquipulas agreements that include voluntary reintegration of the Nicaraguan Resistance under safe and democratic conditions."

V.R. 2

"The question is, can you create a process that will permit this?" he continued. "Will those conditions be created? Will the Sandinistas talk to the opposition and take them into account, hold a dialogue? It's the only way to make such a process work. So if there's a credible process that's consistent

Possibility of an electoral pact in Nicaragua made possible by Arias' diplomacy.

President Ortega offered to begin an immediate dialogue with Nicaragua's opposition parties.

Arias described offer as positive.

This renews confidence in the peace plan signed two years ago.

UNO (Union of Nicaraguan Opposition) announced intention to participate in next February elections was decisive.

Ortega recognized role played by Costa Rica and by Arias in particular.

Importance of the contra demobilization for regional summit meeting.

If the presidents sign a contra demobilization there will still be a lengthy process.

Arias spoke about the topic with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Bernard Aronson.

Aronson said U.S. is committed to supporting the Esquipulas agreement.

Aronson doubts if conditions are created to the voluntary reintegration of the contras and Sandinistas' talks with the opposition.

with Esquipulas, we will support it."

Ayales expects Ortega to begin talks this week, noting that such a dialogue must be under way before the summit.

Comm. (Exp.)

Although Aronson and Ortega both spent Friday night in San Jose, the two did not meet; the Nicaraguan leader expressed his willingness "to hold talks with the U.S. government," but Aronson responded, "no chance."

Cons. (E/A)

"I have no intention of meeting Ortega," stressed the U.S. official, adding, "I came here to talk to one President, and that's President Arias."

V.R. 2

QUESTIONED about his response to Ortega's earlier statement, Aronson replied that "the opposition has sought this dialogue for many months, and if such a dialogue takes place, that's a positive sign."

V.R. 2

The diplomat denied media stories claiming he had talks with Nicaragua's Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco. Aronson admitted the two have been present at several big social occasions, but said, "Perhaps the Vice-Minister has a more vivid imagination than I."

V.R. 2

However, Ayales maintained that, "Although they have not advanced much, they have exchanged points of view," discussing "what the U.S. wants in return for a normalization of relations, and what conditions will be necessary for reintegration of the contras."

V.R. 2

Arias discussed August's presidential summit with both his visitors, telling reporters at a joint news conference with the Nicaraguan President. "Now we must also concern ourselves with initiating dialogue in El Salvador."

Comm. (Eva.)

Cons. (E/A)

Costa Rican ambassador Ayales expects Ortega to begin talks this week.

A meeting with Ortega, Aronson said: "No chance."

He came to Costa Rica to talk to Arias.

He qualified the dialogue Ortega-UNO as a positive sign.

The diplomat denied he held talks with Nicaragua's Deputy Foreign Minister.

Although they have not advanced much, Nicaragua and the U.S. have exchanged points of view said Ayales.

Arias said they must concern now with initiating a dialogue in El Salvador.

Arias will have a meeting with the members of the Salvadorean guerrilla movement.

Ayales said the FMLN believes Arias is supporting Salvadorean President Alfredo Cristiani.

Arias and Aronson would discuss the political crisis in Panama and next week's OAS debate on the trouble nation.

News Schema Categories

- P.E.: Previous Events
- V.R.: Verbal Reactions 1 and 2
- M.E.: Main Event 1 and 2
- Comm. (Exp.): Comments (Expectations)
- Cons. (E/A): Consequences (Events/Acts)
- Comm. (Eva.): Comments (Evaluations)

Figure 6. News Schemata and Macrostructures of "The Tico Times." On the left, News Schemata (textual superstructures); on the right, Top Level Macrostructures (Arias' successful peace policy, script).

Expectations and Evaluations appear in the case of the Episode 1; only Evaluations appear in the case of the Episode 2 (see Figure 5). Market theorists differ about the appropriateness of Comments in news reports. Journalists and editors use comments and also the Verbal Reactions as a way to appear objective or balanced. While the report reproduces what a source says, the selection of the individuals, the quotations or the subject of inquiry are not necessarily balanced.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATIVE CONTEXT (SECOND DIMENSION)

NDA also assumes that news participants are influenced by the broadest historical, cultural or socioeconomic contexts, but that the links may be very indirect, allowing a certain degree of indeterminacy and individual variation. Hence, the link between news text and context is defined at the level of social practice and social cognitions of news processing. These various types of social knowledge and beliefs, including language, codes, frames, scripts, and attitudes, form the general representations used to interpret concrete incoming information such as situations, events, actions and discourse.

To be able to participate in a communicative event, we build a model of the context, featuring a communicative setting, location, circumstances, speech participants, and the kind of speech acts or other communicative acts involved

(Forgas, 1985). No reader, for instance, is able to reproduce all details of the scores of news reports broadcast or published during a few days about x event. Rather, on the basis of all those texts, we try to imagine what happened by building a model of the situation; it is this model, and especially its higher level macrostructures, that are later used for reproduction, for example, in conversations about news events (Graber, 1984).

To manage and monitor all this information in an orderly, fairly efficient and goal-directed way, NDA assumes that there must be an overall control system. One of the central cognitive functions of headlines in the press is precisely the establishment of a macrostructural representation in this control system. Together with the activated scripts and models, this tentative topic will further guide, facilitate, and sometimes bias understanding of the rest of the news report (Frederiksen, 1986).

According to van Dijk (1985a) "models are the experiential basis for more general and abstract 'frames' or 'scripts' in (semantic) memory." Models not only feature knowledge about concrete events, but also beliefs and opinions (evaluative beliefs).

In the same fashion, quoting Schank (1982), van Dijk (1985a) points out a distinction between particular and general models, in which the former represents unique information about one specific situation--for instance, the

one about Costa Rican news media. General models (e.g., how media operates in democratic societies) represent combined information from several particular models about the "same" or the same "kind" of situation. Particular models may contain the "new" information with which general models are updated. When one is reminded of something, this may involve the retrieval of a previous particular model, or the retrieval of a general model about a situation that is "recognized." As van Dijk (1985a) says:

General models that appear to be socially relevant may be transformed to frames or scripts in semantic ("social") memory, for example, by further abstraction, generalization, and decontextualization. Hence, we now have a gradual transition from personal, particular models, to socially share general frames or scripts (p. 63).

Thus, models are more personal and contain the information we have derived from our personal experiences as well as from previously read texts about given events or situations. We have personal models of our last quarter at PSU, about summer's weather, as well as about the situation in Central America, the Sandinistas, the Contras, and about President Arias' peace initiative. Obviously, these models will also feature personal evaluations--that is, opinions. We have culturally shared social scripts, which feature the stereotypical information members of a culture or a group use about everyday events and episodes (e.g., shopping in the supermarket, going to the movies, or having a birthday party). Similarly, we may all have scripts about Third

World countries, civil wars and guerrilla warfare, which allows us to understand the news from Central America.

The very structures of scripts and models are probably derived from our participation in social interaction through a long and complex learning process. This appears to be one of the reasons why in scripts, models, and even in semantic representations or syntactic structures of sentences or stories, we find similar organizing categories such as setting, event/action, and roles of participants, rather than the shapes, colors, or sizes that organize our visual perception. In other words, memory and cognition are as much social as they are mental phenomena.

News production and comprehension crucially involve these social representations. Journalists and readers share part of these representations, which are, therefore, usually presupposed in news reports. Major social institutions and their properties, and major social groups or classes, are assumed to be known to the readers or listeners/viewers. News events and actions are made intelligible against the background of such culturally shared knowledge, and making such presuppositions explicit is a central goal of cultural media criticism (Hall, 1980).

From this theoretical framework, it follows that the representation and reproduction of news events by journalists is not a direct or passive operation but rather a socially and ideologically controlled set of constructive

strategies, adopted during the socialization process in the news media and sustained by the institutional constraints as well as by the social constraints in general. Whether in direct observation of potential news events or in the much more frequent processing of source texts about such news events, the production processes of journalists are inherently monitored by the models that journalists have about such news events. And these models are inherently biased by their underlying social representations. For journalists of the dominant press, these dominant representations are generally assumed to be unconscious. This does not exclude personal variation, deviation, resistance, and hence, change.

The definition of news by the journalist is also reproduced indirectly by the readers, who would be surprised about (and probably resist) a drastic change in the content or style of news reports. Especially important for the cognitive analysis of news communication is the model construed by the readers of a news event as expressed and persuasively conveyed by the news report. Personal models and differences in social representations may lead to a different interpretation of the news--that is, to different models. But, these variations are limited because the interpretative framework of most readers is constrained by the social representations that define the consensus.

An Ideological Construction Example

The ideological control of news could be seen in practice just by making comparisons between the news coverage by TTT (pp. 35, 38) and the one by LN (see Figure 7) about the same event: the Legislative Assembly Drug Commission's report.

LN dedicated almost entirely the front page and three full inside pages (4A, 5A, and 6A) to this news event (see Figure 7). The main headline (A) on the front page refers to one of the demands of the Drug Commission, which asked former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber to resign his political posts. The other three sub-headlines refer to the other demands by the Commission, which call for the resignation of a bank manager: the prosecution of a Supreme Court Justice (B); the establishment of a commission to study corruption and parliamentary ethics (C); and a request for censure for a former Security Minister, Benjamin Piza (D). Of particular note is LN's emphasis upon one of the Commission's decisions, decision that is to the benefit of the paper's editorial (ideological) stance. Equally noteworthy is what they omitted.

That decision, however, could be justified by LN's journalists or editors, with the local relevance value coverup by LN about the clear and incriminating remarks by rationale. LN is for a Costa Rican audience, while TTT is read by Americans. But most important in this case is the

Piden retiro político de Oduber

- Requieren renuncia de Rodolfo Ulloa, gerente del Banco de Costa Rica
- Solicitan procesar al magistrado Jesús Ramírez por falso testimonio
- Proponen comisión que estudie la corrupción y la ética parlamentaria
- Solicitan censurar a Benjamín Piza por sus actuaciones como Ministro



Auto obliga a los a pagar \$4000 millones

Informe sobre narcotráfico Piden retiro político de Oduber

● Accusaciones presentadas por el Banco de Costa Rica

El informe sobre narcotráfico presentado por el Banco de Costa Rica...

Informe insta a varias reformas

El informe insta a varias reformas en el sistema judicial y en la administración pública...

Respaldo y cautela ante informe

● Cálculo de apoyo con entusiasmo

● Cautela ante el informe



Diputados destacan labor de consenso

Los diputados de la oposición destacan la labor de consenso...

Las 33 recomendaciones

El informe de la Comisión de Investigación del Narcotráfico...

Dr. José María S. "El informe de la Comisión de Investigación del Narcotráfico..."

Dr. José María S. "El informe de la Comisión de Investigación del Narcotráfico..."

Dr. José María S. "El informe de la Comisión de Investigación del Narcotráfico..."

Dr. José María S. "El informe de la Comisión de Investigación del Narcotráfico..."

Figure 7. La Nacion's coverup. La Nacion's news reports in which the coverup can be seen. A. Oduber asked to resign his political posts. B. The prosecution of a Supreme Court Justice judge. C. The establishment of a commission to study corruption and parliamentary ethics. D. A request for censure for a former Security Minister.

Drug Commission about the effects that the Contra activities had on drug trafficking. LN has always denied or played down the participation of the Contras in this illegal trade. The Commission's report not only requested that former high-ranking U.S. officials in the region, including the former American ambassador in Costa Rica Lewis Tambs, be denied admission to the country, but clearly stated the dire consequences to the country of the enlistment by U.S. Lt. Col. Oliver North of Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel A. Noriega:

The participation of General Noriega in the anti-Sandinista fight resulted in the entrance into Costa Rica of a series of pilots, who under the orders of the General, had been dedicated to trafficking in drugs; and under the circumstances of helping the 'contras,' did not abandon in any manner their illegal activity (The Tico Times, 7/21/89, p. 1).

LN did not make any mention of drug trafficking or about the participation of American citizens in this activity. Even on page 6A, which supposedly reproduces the 33 recommendations by the Commission, the paper did not report those activities of the Contras and American supporters that were exposed by the legislators as the sources of actual drug trafficking in Costa Rica (see Figure 7, G).

This coverup will be analyzed in depth in the discussion Chapter IV of this thesis. This sample analysis, however, previews the results of the full analysis. Not only do we glimpse an ideological bias, but we also begin to

see how the newspaper divorces itself from its most important task--to inform the citizens so they can make up their minds by themselves, and be able to make wise decisions on the basis of the information provided by the news media.

THE SAMPLE

One month of LN's issues, from June 1 to 30, 1988 (30 issues), will be selected for analysis. A month sample was selected looking for the largest quantity of data that is possible to analyze within the limits of a study like this. In a month sample, some characteristics of the front page news reports can be compared and contrasted without losing data in cases of continuing news. Also, a month sample allows the researcher to cover a wide range of different topics that can be used to show the pervasiveness of an ideological posture, for example.

The sample was chosen at random. This NDA will use the front pages as an index of the news reports that will be analyzed in the inside pages (in tabloid size papers like LN, the front page offers the readership a summary of each news report, and sometimes only the title of the news article or a photograph, with reference to the appropriate inside page). Sports news and other news stories such as international news, published in different supplements of the daily, will not be taken as part of the sample.

The month selected could be considered typical for various reasons. It was placed in a non-election year. It is part of the regular business period, as well as the political cycle, and no one story could be considered dominant at the time.

Although the opinion articles (editorials) are not going to be discourse analyzed, they will be examined for the topics or themes. These will then be contrasted with the topics or themes of the news reports, in order to answer Research Question #3. Only the news reports that overlap with editorials will be analyzed in order to answer Research Question #3 and to have a manageable sample of news stories to work with.

CHAPTER III

REPORT OF THE RESULTS

This chapter is developed in three parts. The quantitative analysis will be offered first, to explain characteristics of the entire sample, and then to identify that portion of the sample needed for detailed, qualitative analysis. Only the news articles in this section of the newspaper which have relationships to editorials content are subject to that analysis. An analysis of semiotic signs, i.e., placement of news stories on the front page, will be presented in this first section, as will an actor analysis. In the second part of this chapter, news stories will be qualitatively analyzed. Thirdly, a macrostructural report of the editorial topics or themes will be supplied.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

From a total of 30 issues of La Nacion (June 1 to 30, 1988), 182 news summaries, titles and photographs with references to the inside pages were found on the front pages. They were subdivided as follows: 79 summaries; 84 titles; 16 photographs with references to the inside pages; and three photographs without references (news pictures). In addition, 46 more pictures were found in the 30 issues

as illustrative complement to the news on the front page.

The mean number of pages of these 30 issues is 73.2, for a total of 2,192 pages and a mean news or entertainment content of 22.96 pages. This demonstrates a ratio of advertising to news content of approximately 70 percent to 30 percent. The number of editorials published is 37, of which only 31 are related directly to news reports within the sample. Five issues were published with two sections (A-B); 21 with three sections (A-B-C); and four Sunday issues with four sections (A-B-C-D).

In general, Section A has 32 pages and they are subdivided by type of news, such as National (pp. 2 to 8); Police Events (pp. 10 to 12); Editorial (pp. 14 to 15); Forum (p. 16); International (pp. 16 to 20); and Sports (pp. 27 to 32).

Sections A and B are regular sections of the newspaper. Section B is a daily supplement called VIVA. This section is dedicated to human interest news, the so-called soft news or entertainment articles.

Section C varies in content; sometimes it could be a weekly supplement or a special business edition. Section D is a cultural supplement published only on Sundays.

Sections B, C and D, are dedicated to soft news or entertainment articles. As Tuchman (1978a) points out, news workers' main distinction is between hard news and soft news. Hard news involves occurrences potentially

available to analysis or interpretation and consists of "factual presentations" of occurrences deemed newsworthy. In short, hard news concerns important matters and soft news interesting matters, which gain importance if they are published in Section A. Sometimes the distinctions overlap and the same event may be treated as either a hard- or a soft-news story. Thus, for this thesis, the distinction between important and interesting news, in general, comes as a result of editorial decisions to place a news report in Section A or in other sections. Section A is designated for important news, and the others are for soft news. In some cases, however, interesting news is considered important at the same time, and then it is placed in Section A. Examples include a news report about a concert by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra (La Nacion 6/9/88, p. 2A), and one about the beginning of a National Festival of Dance (La Nacion 6/8/88, p. 2A). These stories, which are interesting to many people and important for a select few, were published in Section A instead of in a supplement. This is the rule in the case of news articles classified under the Cultural Matters category (La Nacion 6/17, 24 and 25/88, supplement VIVA).

Another example is the case of Sports News. Although many people consider news about sports interesting, La Nacion's editors believe it is of sufficient importance to merit placement daily in Section A, and on Mondays in a

special Sports Supplement. It is important to remember that this kind of news sells newspapers. In the Western approach to the news media, news is a commodity, thus sports news is important because it sells very well.

Only La Nacion's news section, Section A, is the subject of this study, and only those news reports which are dealt with editorially will be analyzed in order to answer Research Question #3.

Looking at Table I, we see the distinction between the full listing and full range of topics, 1 to 13, which are provided in La Nacion, and those (see column two) that are developed only in Section A. Also note that Table 1 shows those issues dealt with in Section A, and which of them have also been dealt with editorially. As it was stated above, one of the research questions of this thesis focuses on the relationship between news reporting and editorial coverage.

The Front Page

On the front page, readers encounter a variety of semiotic signs, all brought together in a combination that is both artful and ideologically coherent. This presentation draws upon all 13 categories mentioned on next page (see Table I). This analysis focuses primarily upon articles in Section A. However, some categories appear on the front page but are rarely developed in Section A. The

TABLE I
NEWS REPORTS BY ISSUES AND SUBJECTS
ON THE FRONT PAGE AND SECTION A,
AND EDITORIALS

<u>News Categories</u>	<u>Front Page</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Section A</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Edtrls</u>
1 - National "Folklore"	44	24.17	24	15.69	
2 - International Matters	21	11.54	21	13.72	5
3 - Sports Matters	25	13.74	19	12.42	
4 - Cultural Matters	5	2.75	2	1.31	
5 - Legislative Matters	7	3.85	7	4.58	2
6 - Electoral Matters	4	2.20	4	2.61	
7 - Economic Matters	14	7.69	14	9.15	1
8 - Labor Matters	7	3.85	7	4.58	2
9 - Agricultural Matters	18	9.89	18	11.76	6
10 - Educational Matters	8	4.40	8	5.23	2
11 - Presidential Matters	8	4.40	8	5.23	8
12 - Drug Trafficking Matters	9	4.93	9	5.88	8
13 - Nicaraguan Matters	12	6.59	12	7.84	4
Total	182	100.00	153	100.00	31

front page brings together many different issues, creating a cultural milieu. In looking at any work, each element contextualizes every other element in an ideologically coherent picture. Although my analysis focuses on those items in Section A that have editorials related to them, I have made an exception for International Matters; I have

chosen not to analyze this category. This decision is based upon the fact that media messages about close events (proximity value of the news) are better understood, because they are based on readers' cognitive models that are more complete and more available (van Dijk, 1988a). We know more about our own country or continent, partly through direct experience and partly through informal communications about the experiences of others. Additionally, van Dijk (1988a) reports findings by Katz et al. (1977) that indicate that domestic items are recalled better than foreign news items.

Placement and Relevance. According to van Dijk (1988a), macrostructures, schemata, detailed models, general world knowledge (scripts), attitudes, perspectives, and news values are the major determinants that account for variance in news comprehension and recall. Moreover, features of presentation and structure that help organize these representations (titles, headlines, primacy, pictures, etc.) favor retention. Complex relationships within news events tend to be mixed up, if recalled at all, and generally confuse readers. This promotes selective attention toward the more dramatic or largest headlines of the news.

Thus, the front page plays a very important role in news comprehension and recall. Journalists and editors follow the principle of "news relevance" to display news

reports on the front page according to their importance, and there are a series of standard rules to follow this principle. For example, in the U.S. the well known "rule of thumb" requires that the most important news report of an edition is placed on the front page (Garst & Bernstein, 1982; Harris et al., 1981). This means that the major news item is placed at the upper right side of the front page, where people, in general, hold the newspaper and use their thumbs to turn the pages. However, there is a headline that is considered even more important, and that is an eight-column wide headline displayed at the top of the page. But, even two eight columns headlines could be different from one another due to differences in size of the letters, use of pictures and size of the news article itself. The coherence of the front page also has to do with the presentational factors and other semiotic signs (see Hartley, 1982).

In general, in La Nacion's case, the layout follows a top-down principle, and moves from left to right as in reading. More important news is published at the top and less important at the bottom (Harris et al., 1981; van Dijk, 1988a). However, there are other indicators, such as number of columns (width) and size of the headline (height), the presence of pre-headlines and sub-headlines, the use of news photographs and their size (see Hall, 1981), and the total space dedicated to a news item.

All of these factors contribute to determining the order of importance of all of the elements on the front page. Once determined, these rankings are identified by terms such as "top first position," "second bottom position," etc. The rationale for these terms is as follows:

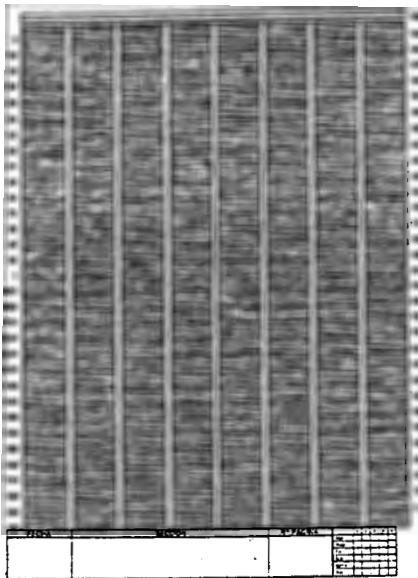
Top and Bottom correspond to portions of the paper that are either above the center fold on the vertical dimension or below that center line.

The most important story is always at the top, and this is called "first-top-position." First-top-position may be on the left side, or run across the entire width of the paper.

The second position means the second most important story. Depending upon the amount of space given to the "top-first-position" story, the second most important story could appear either in the top or bottom half of the front page. Consequently, we could have a "top-second-position" story or a "bottom-second-position" story.

The rationale continues for the 3rd, 4th, etc. As more space is devoted to the most important stories, the less likely it is that 3rd or 4th position stories would appear above the center fold (see Figure 8 for examples of placement).

There are no absolute standards to determine placement. To classify the news items in different



This is La Nacion's layout sheet or "dummy" sheet. Notice the eight-column division.



Figure 8. Illustration of the different positions of the news items on the front page.

positions, this researcher made decisions based on what he perceived the designer of the page was trying to convey to the readers through these semiotic signs. That is, all editors rely upon their own judgment while using these inexact rules.

In general, the three first positions are always easily discernable. Beyond that, to determine a fourth or a fifth place, for example, sometimes the top-down principle is enough; but other times the researcher has to look carefully at the other signs, too, in order to decide the placement. In other words, these macrostructural signals (van Dijk, 1988a) are intersubjective and they could vary according to the cognitive perceptions of the readers.

Van Dijk (1988a) also outlines the importance of repetition and concurrent information about certain events, because this may lead to a modest change or construction of current situational models. He points out that usually only one or two major macropropositions of a news story will be stored in memory in such a way that they can be integrated into more general knowledge representations (models). Conversely, the issues we know most about also lead to better comprehension and recall of such items. Therefore, the placement of a news report in a certain position on the front page acquires more significance if there is systematic repetition in the same positions. This

could reflect the editor's interest to play up a news article.

In view of these factors, Table II shows the level of importance as well as the frequency of placement in a top-down fashion of the news sample.

Table II indicates in the totals that all 30 issues of LN that were published between June 1 and June 30 had 4 news reports on the front page. Twenty-nine issues were published with five news items on the front page. In 24 issues, six news items were published on the front page and only nine issues were published with seven news items on the front page.

Taking the first and second placement positions as an index of a story's importance, we find that Nicaraguan Matters was the category with more news items published (nine) than any other. In the second place was Agricultural Matters with four in first and two in second positions. Sports Matters is in third place, followed by Drug Trafficking, Legislative Matters and Presidential Matters.

Actor Analysis. As van Dijk (1988b) indicates, controlled ignorance about out-groups, combined with group self-interest, promotes the development of stereotypes and prejudices. This is favored by Western news values because the news media outlines stories about negative events, as

TABLE II

PLACEMENT ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE'S NEWS REPORTS

News Categories	Placement Positions							TOTAL
	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>VII</u>	
1-National "Folklore"	2	7	2	7	9	12	5	44
2-Internatl. Matters	1	1	7	5	4	2	1	21
3-Sports Matters	3	4	5	7	4	2	0	25
4-Cultural Matters	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	5
5-Legislative Matters	3	2	0	0	1	1	0	7
6-Electoral Matters	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	4
7-Economic Matters	1	1	4	1	4	2	1	14
8-Labor Matters	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	7
9-Agricultural Matters	4	2	6	5	1	0	0	18
10-Educational Matters	2	0	1	2	1	1	1	8
11-Presidential Matters	2	5	0	1	0	0	0	8
12-Drug Trafficking Matters	3	2	2	1	1	0	0	9
13 - Nicaraguan Matters	7	2	1	1	1	0	0	12
Total	30	30	30	30	29	24	9	182

Placement positions: The numbers in each column indicate the quantity of news reports that were placed in first to seventh positions on 30 front pages published in June 1988. The rows indicate the quantity and placement of front page news items published in each category.

such stories are generally recalled better by the readers, especially for out-group members.

Absent in Costa Rica is critical feedback as well as resistance movements or dominant counter-ideologies that are strong enough to have regular access to the media to counterbalance the prevailing definitions of a great variety of social situations (Fonseca, 1977; Ovares & Leon, 1979; Soto, 1985; Zeledon, 1987).

Barred from public communication, non-elite groups are denied a legitimate voice. They are forced into forms of resistance that may attract public attention through media accounts. Two examples of this phenomenon are the farmers' strike and the teachers-students movement; these examples are developed in the qualitative analysis that follows. News coverage from these events has been analyzed in this thesis. These different groups attract the attention of journalists precisely because they are consistent with the news values of negativity, violence and deviance (Altschull, 1984; Shoemaker, 1984, 1987; van Dijk, 1988a,b).

The role as speakers or non-speakers is very important in the creation of a dominant framework by the press. Some actors appear more often and get more description and speaking space than others.

In Table III, we can see the results of an actor analysis of the entire sample. These figures are based on the sources mentioned in the lead or the headline, parts of the story that together constitute the summary of the news

report and provide the top macrostructure (van Dijk, 1988a).

Lichter, et al., (1986), in a study of journalists' use of sources, conclude that there is a human tendency "to turn more often to those you trust, and to trust most those who think most like you do." This would not be a problem for most individuals in different situations but for journalists it has to be taken into consideration that "A large portion of their craft rests on the ability to sift through various sources and viewpoints and pass them on to their audience" (p. 62). In other words, the way they perceive the events determine the kind of news reports they transmit to the public.

Thus, for this thesis the distinction between elite and non-elite groups is that made by La Nacion itself and have to do with its self-admitted advocacy of conservative ideas in its editorials.

In sum, elite persons or groups for this study are those actors who are given access to La Nacion news coverage in a consistent fashion. As van Dijk (1988b) points out, "The theory of news values predicts that elite actors have the highest chances to have access to the media" (p. 55).

The topics of the leads also were used to determine the main actors. If the actor did not appear in the top level macrostructure, the researcher in some cases had to

TABLE III
 QUANTITATIVE ACTOR ANALYSIS
 OF THE NEWS REPORTS SAMPLE

<u>News Category</u>	<u>Elites</u>	<u>Non-elites</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 - National "Folklore"	26	18	44
2 - International News	16	5	21
3 - Sports News	25	0	25
4 - Cultural News	5	0	5
5 - Legislative News	7	0	7
6 - Electoral News	4	0	4
7 - Economic News	13	1	14
8 - Labor News	4	3	7
9 - Agricultural News	11	7	18
10 - Educational News	3	5	8
11 - Presidential News	8	0	8
12 - Drug Trafficking News	8	1	9
13 - Nicaraguan News	12	0	12
Total	142 (78%)	40 (22%)	182 (100%)

examine lower level macrostructures in order to determine the actor's nature. In other cases, the actors are from the elite but the topics are about non-elite groups. When members of the elite spoke for non-elite groups, rather than the non-elite members by themselves, then the actor is from the elite. This differential access to the press also follows from the routine of news gathering, which favors

those organizations whose contacts with the press are best organized (Tuchman, 1973, 1978a,b).

As can be seen in Table III, in 40 news reports (22%) the quoted actors are non-elite people, in contrast with 142 news items (68%) in which the quoted actors are elite individuals. In 22 of the 40 news articles, a person from non-mainstream groups was quoted in the lead. In 65% of these, sources were pictured in a negative way from the dominant consensual point of view. In other words, these actors were depicted as agents of actions that alter normality. In the remaining 35%, the quote was due to novelty or another news value characterized by the distance from the norm. As van Dijk (1988c) points out, positive portrayal of a non-elite member or group is exceptional.

A distinction is made between the in-group members and the out-group members. These out-group members are presented as people who need help, have problems or are unemployed; they are actively represented as protesting, making demands, or as engaged in legal or illegal actions against institutions or privileged individuals. It can be inferred that non-elite members, if not depicted as active agents of trouble or as passive victims of problems, are not considered participants in the dominant La Nacion's news values. In other words, the general pattern is of ignoring non-elite groups that are not troublesome and

giving disproportionate attention to those thought to be troublesome for society.

The results of this analysis (see Table III) reflect what has been determined in many news content studies (McQuail, 1987; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1987; Tuchman, 1973, 1978a,b, 1983; van Dijk, 1988a,b) about the legitimation that elites are given as news sources and the non-legitimation of non-elite groups, especially those groups that deviate from the consensus and are depicted as active subjects of news only in negative or unusual cases.

Inside Section A

The remaining eight news categories that represent 54.25 % of the news reports published in Section A are subdivided in Legislative Matters, 7 (4.58 %); Economic Matters, 14 (9.15 %); Labor Matters, 7 (4.58 %); Agricultural Matters, 18 (11.76 %); Educational Matters, 8 (5.23%); Presidential Matters, 8 (5.23 %); Drug Trafficking Matters, 9 (5.88 %); and Nicaraguan Matters, 12 (7.84 %). These comprise a total of 83 news items.

To answer the three Research Questions of this thesis, qualitative analysis focuses upon those news reports that are also the subject of editorials. This sampling is summarized in Table IV.

In the qualitative analysis it will be necessary to make cross references, due to the interrelationship among the different topics of the eight news categories and the

TABLE IV
 SAMPLE FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

<u>News Categories</u>	<u>Stories Analyzed</u>	<u>% of Full Sample</u>	<u>Editorials</u>
Legislative Matters	4	2.62	2
Economic Matters	2	1.30	1
Labor Matters	4	2.62	2
Agricultural Matters	18	11.76	6
Educational Matters	4	2.62	2
Presidential Matters	8	5.23	1
Drug Trafficking Matters	9	5.88	8
Nicaraguan Matters	12	7.84	4
	<u>61</u>	<u>39.87 %</u>	<u>26</u>

editorials' themes. This classification was based on the topic of the headline + lead = summary, leaving out references of lower level macrostructures. However, the quantitative report by each news category that follows establishes at least what news items of the sample continue to be the subject of this study.

Legislative News. In the Legislative Matters category, seven news reports were found on the front page, five of them were directly related to this subject and the rest were classified in this group in an indirect fashion.

The four news reports that are analyzed are about the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly. Three were published in first top positions and one in a down position. They

constitute 2.62% of the sample (Section A). There are two news items for each editorial related to the same topic.

Economic News. Two of the 14 news reports classified under Economic Matters will be analyzed. These two news items constitute 1.30% of the sample (Section A), and were published one in second-top-position and the other in sixth down position.

Labor News. In this news group, only four of the seven items will be considered in the qualitative analysis.

The topic of three of these news articles is the resolution by a Labor Court of a collective conflict between the Costa Rican social security system and its employees. The other news report in this category is related directly to the Costa Rican Civilian Police. It was classified in this category due to the labor relations involved, although there are other implicit circumstances which are addressed in some editorials whose topics are not necessarily related to a labor topic.

These four news items constitute 2.62% of the sample (Section A) and were published one in first top position with an eight-column title; one in first-top-position; a third one in second-top-position; and the last one in fifth-down-position.

Agricultural News. Thirteen news reports about the Costa Rican farmers strike were published on front pages. Only 13 news articles appeared in inside pages and five

editorials. The news reports in the inside pages are not included in the sample but were considered necessary and important.

Continuing with the quantitative news analysis about agricultural matters, another five news reports are found in this group, two related to a massive toxic chemical poisoning of workers. Another two are related to speculation over basic grains and a conflict among rice growers, and the last one, although it is not about the farmers' strike, will be considered in the qualitative analysis together with that group because this event is related by La Nacion's editorials to the farmers' strike. These news reports constitute 11.76% of the sample (Section A).

Educational News. In this group, there are eight news reports, four of them are related to a student-teachers strike, and they will be the object of analysis.

In this category the role of the press as primary definers of a situation will be discussed. These four news reports constitute 2.62% of the sample (Section A).

Presidential News. In the president's news coverage, 10 news articles were classified. Two Arias stories were classified as Nicaraguan Matters. Of these eight remaining news reports, five refer to the coverage of an Arias visit to the U.S. (The other three are photographs. Two refer

the reader to inside pages and one does not. The inside pages reveal 13 additional reports about Arias.

An extraordinary event occurred during the month covered by the sample; it never reached the front page but LN editorialized the issue. This is the case of President Arias' personal advisor, John Biehl, a Chilean political scientist, economist, and lawyer, who was Arias' classmate during his college time in Essex, England. In the Biehl story, eight news reports were published in the inside pages. The eight news reports in this category constitute 5.23% of the sample.

Drug Trafficking News. In this category, as in others, the news on the inside pages was essential for understanding the report in detail. Nine news reports were published on the front page and eight editorials were written.

In the inside pages, 15 news articles were found, and in one interview with the American ambassador to Costa Rica, Deane Hinton, (classified under the Nicaraguan News category), the drug topic also was discussed. Thus, what he said about drugs will be considered in the qualitative analysis in the Drug Trafficking News. The nine news reports published on the front page in this category constitute 5.88% of the sample (Section A).

Nicaraguan News. This group of news stories also represents the largest group. Forty-six news reports were

published during the period covered by the sample, even though only 12 news articles were chosen for the front pages with 17 pictures illustrating the news reports. There were also two news pictures. The news coverage includes not only "national" news articles by the Costa Rican journalists (15), but edited and combined wire services (27), and a combination of both national coverage and wire services (2). Of the 12 front page news reports, ten are negative towards Nicaragua. Nine were published in top-positions, seven of them opening the page and two were in second positions, one top and one down. The other three news reports were positioned two in third and fourth positions, and the only one neutral or positive to Nicaragua was published with the smallest title at the bottom of the front page in the last position. The 12 news reports published on the front page constitute 7.84% of the sample (Section A).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Legislative News

In this category of news there are two stories about the Legislative Assembly each of which has a follow-up story. Although La Nacion treats these two stories as separate, both concern budgetary appropriations. According to Tuchman (1978a), continuing news focuses on the same topic which is developed over a period of time. Each time

believe that they are necessary to govern; otherwise, the country could suffer the effects of stagnation, due to the lack of flexibility in its constitutional order. One of the legislators proposed that the President could have veto power over these norms, to prevent the Legislative Assembly from becoming a dictatorship. In regular legislative procedures the President always has veto power.

This news item is not the start of the story. The structural analysis reveals Previous Events, which means that other similar events preceded this story's Main Event. This Previous Event is a statement by the president of the Legislative Assembly's Treasury Commission, stating that he believed some of the general norms sent by the Executive Power related to the budget could be "nontypical."

The Treasury Minister, whose statement is a Verbal Reaction, pointed out that the problem is constitutional: to what extent do the norms deal with the budget. He insisted that nothing is black or white, and there is a space for consensus between the Legislative and the Executive powers precisely in that gray area. He asked the legislators to indicate which general norms according to their criteria are "nontypical," and announced that if some were "nontypical" they could be excluded from the budget.

There is something missing in this news report. If a reader only read the headline, then the script that would develop would be quite different from one based upon a

complete reading of the news article. Specifically, the "complete" script indicates that the majority party acts only in its self-interest. This journalistic strategy could be explained with the Impact or Strong Attention Recall Argument, since the headline conveys partial information. The lead explains the rest. After all, the headline-lead pair constitutes the summary of the news report. However, there is a lack of background in this news item, and we have to recall that in cognitive terms, background information is necessary for the readers to activate "situational models" from memory--that is, representations of accumulated personal experience and knowledge about concrete situations (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). The major goal of news understanding is to update such models and to relate the model to other situational models. In general, then, it is the background information that makes news events intelligible and that allow individuals to update their cognitive models of the world. This news article lacks background information and inhibits understanding. At the same time, the local coherence--the analysis of discourse as a sequence of sentences--provides a partial account because we do not know for sure which norms are "nontypical" and why they have nothing to do with the budget. In sum, at this level of local understanding what is possible to perceive or conclude is that the norms are not good because even some legislators of the ruling

party are against them. In other words, readers must accept this dominant perspective at face-value, lacking sufficient information to draw conclusions. This dominant view is that the budget's general norms are an inconvenient way to legislate.

The second news item of this first pair in Legislative News is a more complete news report in which background information is found in the History structural category. Comments in both subdivisions, Expectations and Evaluations, are also found.

The lead of this news report indicates some of the "nontypical" norms that make the legislators "uneasy" about them, in general. Again, this news item generalizes in the headline and individualizes in the lead; each is a direct contradiction of the other.

In the Main Event category the story provides additional details about the "nontypical" norms that make the legislators feel uneasy. In the first paragraph of this category (the second of the news report), however, we find commentary that was the basis for the headline about the uneasiness in the Legislative Assembly about the general norms. This is despite the fact that within the PLN there are legislators willing to approve them, no matter the issue about which they legislate.

In the History category, the story provides evidence of former administrations that used "similar" procedures

(in 1978-1982; 1982-1986), and judgments of the Supreme Court of Justice declaring unconstitutional some of these norms approved in the past by the Legislative Assembly. In the following paragraph the journalist introduces a direct commentary in the sense that even with these pronouncements by the Court "the actual administration is determined to continue the use of the same *modus operandi*" (La Nación 6/3/88, p. 6A, paragraph 5). In the following paragraph he returns to the present to assert that the 138 norms actually presented by the Executive Power are the proof of the current Government involvement in the same "illegal" procedure.

History cannot be Main Event due to the inherent news values of recency and novelty (van Dijk, 1988a). The journalist violates the market model of news reporting not only when he makes direct commentaries, but when he goes back and forth from the past to the present without any transition or additional explanation. In trying to provide a rationale for his thesis (rhetorical movement), he is violating the story's global order.

The reader could also notice in this news item the lack of distance markers that journalists often use to remove themselves from comments or evaluative assertions. This case is more obvious when the journalist uses a direct quotation from a legislator (Verbal Reaction) to back up a prediction. However, this prediction is an Expectation, a

sub-category of Comments, because, the journalist, again backed by a quote, makes the comment himself. The quote by the PLN's legislator refers to his sense that all his fellow party-members will end up giving their approval to the norms "because the budget has to be ratified."

The journalist declares the legislators' apprehension over approving norms that may prove to be unconstitutional. In practice, only the legislators of the ruling party (the PLN) can introduce modifications, because they constitute the majority: "This uneasiness by the legislators, however, could be modified when casting their votes, because, usually, the pressures from the Executive Power are too strong as well as the temptations to legislate through the norms" (La Nacion 6/3/88, p. 6A).

As a result, we have two models. The first establishes that the norms within the budget are illegal, although sometimes the distinction is made between the general norms and the "nontypical." The general use of the term "norms" creates confusion, thus the journalist's model is: the general norms are illegal and their approval creates uneasiness in the Congress. Second, despite this illegality, there are legislators from the ruling party who are willing to approve these norms, and even those who reject them will end up approving them due to the pressures from the Executive and because the budget must be ratified.

The role of the opposition (the PUSC) is emphasized in Verbal Reactions and, implicitly, these legislators are freed from their responsibility due to the self-reliance of the ruling party, which has the required majority with which to endorse the budget.

However, it is not yet clear if there are legal norms or not. Implicitly there are, because only some of them created uneasiness in the Legislative Assembly, and only a handful of PLN's legislators announced their unwillingness to endorse all the norms. Even the PUSC's legislators were quoted referring only to some "nontypical" norms.

The second pair of news reports in this group of Legislative News has the following headlines:

Front Page - Imminent agreement between parties June 2

1st Top NORM ABOUT ADVERTISEMENT WILL BE ELIMINATED
 More delays in Congress will endanger
 international loans, says Treasury Minister

Front Page - TREASURY COMMISSION ELIMINATED June 11

2nd Top NORM ABOUT ADVERTISEMENT
 PLN expects SENARA will be approved Monday

Although in chronological order, the first news report of this pair precedes the second story of the previous pair. This clustering gives coherence to the topics of each pair and to the interrelationship between the two two-part stories.

The first news report of this four-part story refers to the opposition by the PLN legislators to the general norms; then the second one's theme is the elimination of the norm about advertisement through a party's agreement; the third one's topic is the uneasy atmosphere within the Congress about the norms; to finish with the four news reports' theme: the elimination of the norm about advertisement. The dates of publication are June 1, 2, 3, and 11, 1988.

The lead on the June 2 story complements the headline in the sense that the norm to be eliminated is # 137. This norm established that the news media organizations that chose to pay taxes with advertising would be allowed to pay no more than the 50 percent of it with space or time.

Table V summarizes the structural analysis of the legislative news. The schematic categories are on the left and the numbers to the right indicate how many pre-headlines, headlines or sub-headlines were found in the Headline category, and how many paragraphs in all the news reports were classified under each schema category. The dates of each news item are indicated at the top according to the pairing of the news items and not in a chronological order, and the numbers show how many paragraphs were classified under the different schematic categories for each news report. For instance, the news article published on June 1, was published with two types of headlines, one

TABLE V
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
LEGISLATIVE NEWS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>	
<u>Schematic Categories</u>							
<u>Headlines</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	
							<u>Total</u>
Lead		1	1		1	1	4
Main Event(s)		8	12		7	3	30
Context		1			1	2	4
Previous Events		1			3		4
History			2				2
Verbal Reactions		5	1			7	13
Expectations			2				2
Evaluations		<u>1</u>					<u>1</u>
No. of Paragraphs		<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>		<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>60</u>

Note: With the exception of Headline counts, all numbers refer to paragraphs.

paragraph for the lead, eight paragraphs for Main Events, one paragraph for Context, and five paragraphs for Verbal Reactions. The news item published on June 3, it can be noticed, was the only news report that offered the sub-category History already commented. In contrast, three news items presented the sub-category Context and two news

items the sub-category Previous Events, both are present backgrounds of actual situations.

The Headlines category is used to inform about this structural category but it is not counted together with the rest of the categories. The readers could visualize the schematic structure of the four news reports being analyzed. From the Main Event paragraphs of the June 2 news report, the following macrostructures could be constructed, summarized or generalized. These are the three ways according to van Dijk (1988a,b), that a macrostructure could be stored in memory.

Both the PLN and the PUSC indirectly accepted the agreement to overcome an impasse which had the Congress in the doors of stagnation. They will make the announcement in a press conference. In exchange for the exclusion of the norm 137, the PUSC will cast its votes for the international loans.

Other paragraphs of this news item refer to other topics (different episodes), about the work of the Congress not related to the elimination of the norm 137 which is the Main Event addressed in the headline-lead (summary) of the news report (the top macrostructure). This is a well-known practice in journalism (Harris et al., 1981; van Dijk, 1988a,b).

In the Context category, the alarm within the official sectors about the PUSC's decision is highlighted. The reference by a PLN's legislator criticizing this action by the PUSC as "political blackmail" is immediately played down, quoting a counter-explanation by a PUSC's legislator; all they wanted was to eliminate "an unconstitutional norm." The question is: how do they know this? The journalist does not provide any argument in this direction given by the PUSC's legislators or make any observation about it. The readership has to accept the argument of unconstitutionality at face-value.

The Previous Events are direct and indirect quotes of the Treasury Minister, who was worried about the PUSC's decision to discontinue its work within the Congress until norm 137 was eliminated. The Minister asked the opposition for a change of attitude pointing out that 12 international loans for many millions of dollars were paralyzed and in danger of being lost if the approval was not reached before a deadline.

The lead of the last news item adds more information about the exclusion of norm 137 from the budget by the Legislative Assembly's Treasury Commission. This information was given by the leader of the minority (the PUSC).

More details were provided by the same legislator, classified as Main Event, about the reinitiation of

"normal" activities within the Congress, and about the change of the daily agenda to allow the approval of the loans, including the SENARA project alluded to in the subheadline.

Within the Context category were classified the topics about the norm and its use by the PUSC, as well as a description of the SENARA project.

Finally, under Verbal Reactions, three legislators were quoted directly and indirectly. Two legislators were from the PLN and one was from the PUSC. Also cited was the Minister of the Presidency. The Minister expressed his satisfaction at the reinitiation of activities by the Congress. One legislator for each party commented on the benefits of the agreement from his own viewpoint and finally, a PLN's legislator was quoted directly affirming that they rejected a lot of "nontypical" norms, although the concepts to define them are relative.

Among the characteristics already discussed, the lack of a reliable background is the most important. Probably, most readers will accept at face-value what the news report states, because it lacks particular models from which to draw a counter-interpretation to the dominant perspective of La Nacion's journalists and editors.

Additionally, the third news report of the group presents structural inconsistencies and direct comments by the journalists that transform this news report into an

article of mixed category, in which arguments can be found as in an editorial, to persuade the readers about the negativity of the norms in general (rhetorical structure). Also present is the particular position of the ruling party legislators, who, even in opposition to the norms, will capitulate to the pressures of the Executive Power anyway. Here, the action by the PUSC (called "political blackmail" by a PLN's legislator) is a defense of the constitutionality of the laws and not an action to protect the interest of the news media corporations.

Economic News

Two news reports will be analyzed in this group of news. The headlines are as follows:

Front Page - Privatization project of the Costa June 4

6th Bottom Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE)

ICE WOULD SELL 60% OF ITS

ASSETS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Front Page - Government and USAID sign donation June 14

2nd Top agreement for \$85 million

COUNTRY ACCEPTS TO STABILIZE AND

ADJUST STRUCTURE OF ITS ECONOMY

The first news report was published in sixth down position. The lead complements the headline in the sense that the ICE would sell 60% of its stocks after the

approval of the project by the Congress. The Institute will keep one quarter of the telecommunications sector according to the project.

In the Main Event Category, more details about the project are provided, including one which refers to the plan as "version number eight." No more background detail is supplied beyond this. The sub-manager is quoted announcing that meetings with workers and their leaders will be held the coming week, to discuss matters that could interest them. The selling of the ICE assets will be in the hands of a new corporation, the Costa Rican Telecommunications Company (ECOTEL). Mechanisms will be established to assure a real distribution of the property, in such a way that nobody could have more than 1% of the stocks and that no more than 15% could be sold to foreigners. The necessary measures to guarantee the employees' rights will be established, as will provisions to assure them a voice in administrative matters. Another project is alluded to in this part and it refers to the privatization of the energy sector.

As Context, the journalist made reference to the tense environment produced by the privatization project within the unions. These organizations will give Costa Rican President Arias a document in which they protest for the so-called privatization project. The president of one of the unions (ANTEC) complained about the lack of

communication between the management and the labor, and pointed out they are talking about meetings after the project was given to the Executive Power. He also indicated that now the ICE's administration is talking about selling all the services, while earlier only nonstrategic services were mentioned.

This news report is a continuing news event whose coverage has been maintained for a long period of time, considering that the actual event over which the news report is based is the eighth version of the project. This could explain the sixth down position while the importance of the event has probably been taken with great regard because, after all, the recency factor is always a decisive news value. Eight times could be considered more than enough to continue publishing a news report on the front page, assuming that the other events were also covered and the news articles published were on the front page or on the inside pages. The actual version was published on the inside pages in first top position with an eight-column title, which means that the newspaper was playing up the event.

The minimal use of Context, together with the lack of Previous Events and History, deprives the readership of important elements to activate a particular or general script. This contributes to the outlining of the workers' opposition, which becomes the Context of this news report.

With only this kind of information available, the predominant journalistic viewpoint is that only the workers are opposed to the project. Probably, the discourse about the project was a press release by the ICE, whose predominant perspective could not be avoided by the journalist.

The second news report was published in the second top position. The lead summarizes the statements by the Treasury Minister outlining that the Government assumed a compromise with USAID to follow a stabilization plan and a structural adjustment of the Costa Rican economy in order to receive an \$85 million donation.

In the Main Event category, more details about this compromise are given. The Government will not establish new taxes. It will reduce the budget deficit and spending; it will apply a flexible policy in currency exchange, and it will keep the credit lines between the margins established by the Costa Rican Central Bank.

The \$85 million will be given in two parts. This donation is part of the USAID economic aid for this year and will be invested to solve payment problems of the country, and to reactivate the private sector, with emphasis on infrastructure for small producers.

President Arias, the American ambassador to Costa Rica Deane Hinton, and the Treasury Minister were quoted (Verbal Reactions). Arias pointed out that no good reasons existed

for the deterioration of an old friendship between the two countries, despite the lack of agreement on the interpretation of what happens in the world. Hinton acknowledged the existence of discrepancies between the policies of his country and those of Costa Rica about Central America. Here, the journalist recalled Hinton again, but related the quote to a previous interview held with the ambassador by other of La Nacion's journalists, and published the day before. This reference was not classified as Previous Events because this category refers to another news item published before, and in this case, the journalist is not referring to a prior event but to an earlier quote obtained in a totally different event. In other words, the interview did not precede the agreement; the second event is not a continuation of the interview or a result of it.

Thus, the journalist is complementing a relevant quote with a tangential quote, obtained in a different situation. Journalists' most important task is to report new events (recency value), not to reprint old ones. What the journalist excerpted was Hinton's assessment that the private sector must be strengthened because this is the only way to generate the necessary income to obtain the economic development of Costa Rica and a satisfactory level of life for its population. (This interview will be

considered in the analysis under the Nicaraguan News, but it will be used in the discussion of economic news.)

Finally, the Treasury Minister was quoted commenting on the soft conditions of the actual agreement in relation to the preceding accords, in which the country applied some strong measures to stabilize the economy and adjust its economic structure. According to the Minister, these conditions have been complied with. He added that this time the Costa Rican Central Bank will not have to pay interest for not using the resources as was the case in the past.

Although this news report was published in second top position, the picture that complemented the headline was the largest item on the front page, occupying almost 50 percent of the space. This suggests almost the same importance as the first top position news report. In other words, La Nacion was playing up this event. The relevance structuring principle requires that most relevant topics or persons have to be placed first. In this news report, the Treasury Minister appears in the lead as the most relevant personality--over the Costa Rican President. The signing of the agreement itself was not the most important event, because everybody knew in advance that it would take place. A picture was enough to capture the moment. Generally, in this kind of activity the participants' words are news (recency value) and the signing of the agreement became a

Previous Event or the Context. Due to the circumstance that the American ambassador was interviewed by La Nacion, which published the news item in two full pages, a sense of fairness or balance, called for the President's words, if not only for the relevance and recency value of what he could have said. Having failed to do that, this news article did not report any news; everything was already known.

Labor News

Four news reports will be analyzed in this group of news. Three relate to the same event and the other one is an isolated news item. The headlines are as follows:

<u>Front Page</u>	- Collective conflict solved	<u>June 18</u>
<u>1st Top</u>	JUICY BENEFITS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM EMPLOYEES Institutional crisis is envisioned	
<u>Front Page</u>	- DISCREPANCIES SPRING UP ABOUT	<u>June 19</u>
<u>2nd Top</u>	SOCIAL SECURITY EMPLOYEES PRIVILEGES	
<u>Front Page</u>	- Workers press for better	<u>June 27</u>
<u>1st Top</u>	labor conditions CONFLICTS INCREASE IN PUBLIC SECTOR	
<u>Inside Page</u>	- (Due to a collective conflict STATE CANNOT ASSUME SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM'S EXPENSES)	<u>June 27</u>

The following item is unrelated to the previous news reports.

Front Page - Expatroller denounces

June 1

5th Bottom POLICEMEN ARE ILL-PREPARED

The June 27 (third) news report's headline is for a special "in depth" news report which was published on first top position, although the news item was not placed on the upper right corner on the front page. Rather, a sports photograph occupied that space. (Traditionally, this photograph is published on top across the eight columns.) This type of news article in Costa Rica is usually written by the initiative of the journalist, because he/she believes the issue deserves a piece of work different from the usual news report.

Some authors in the U.S. call this type of work "in depth reporting" (Harris et al., 1981). In Costa Rica a report such as this does not necessarily resemble the characteristics that are expected in the U.S. News reports written in this fashion at least go beyond the usual boundaries of regular news reports, even if they do not satisfy the expectations of well-researched journalism (see Table VI, last column, and compare it with the three columns in the middle).

The regular news report was also published June 27th, with its headlines in parentheses and printed on the inside pages. This June 27th news article will be analyzed, as

will the "in depth" news report (see last column, Table VI). The June 1st news article will be analyzed at the end as a separate item (see first column on Table VI).

The first three regular news reports (middle columns, Table VI) present almost identical structural characteristics. This circumstance is quite understandable in the first news item if it is considered that the news article refers to a judgement by a Labor Court, about a judicial complaint that was presented to it by the social security system's employees two years before. The third regular news item offers information of a new development which needed to be put in its new context. Besides these particular structure categories, all the news reports offered information classified under the category Main Event and the subcategory Verbal Reactions.

This news report was published in first top position with a pre-headline (Collective conflict solved), an eight-column headline (JUICY\BENEFITS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM'S EMPLOYEES), and a sub-headline (Institutional crisis envisioned). In the inside pages, the news item also was published in top position, filling more than 50 percent of the page's space. Notice the use of an adjective in the headline, which is unusual, especially because 'market' press theory is based on the premise that news ought to be offered value-free.

TABLE VI
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
LABOR NEWS

<u>DATES</u>	June	1 - 18	19	27		
<u>Schematic Categories</u>						
<u>Headline</u>	3	- 3	1	1	2	
					3-Day Total	
Lead	1	- 1	1	1	3	1
Main Event(s)	12	- 8	1		9	0
Context				1	1	5
History		1			1	4
Events/Acts					0	1
Verbal Reactions	1	- 5	12	8	25	13
Evaluations						<u>1</u>
No. of Paragraphs	14	- 15	14	10	39	25

NOTE: With the exception of Headline counts, all numbers refer to paragraphs.

The headline is a summary of the principal benefits that workers will receive: the payment of an additional month every year; substitution of workers on vacation; the payment of contributions to the social security system; and food facilities.

In the Main Event category, more details are provided about the judgment by the Labor Court. The social security system will have to pay additional billions to cover its new obligations. The judges approved the most important

economic demands by the workers and modified some of them. One judge did not cast his vote to change the payment system. And the managers of the social security system do not know how much the reduction of the workers' quota will cost.

As History, the journalist only supplied a date about the historical background of the collective conflict presented to the judicial system in 1986. It is also revealed that only 70 points out of 99 were resolved by the Court.

For Verbal Reactions, the journalists sought comments on the court's decision from representatives of the social security system and from the workers. Because they were unaware of the specifics in the court's decision, they were unable to comment. However, they did offer some viewpoints. In general, the workers seemed to be happy but the employers' top managers were worried and especially apprehensive about the economic impact that the judges' decision could have over the system.

The second news article was published in second top position and on the top in the inside page, using more than 60 percent of the page's space; it is comprised of 14 paragraphs. It is what is called a "reaction" or "consequences" report. Thus, this news item presents the opinions of the Government and private sector speakers as well as those of the union's leaders. The lead then is a

summary of these opinions. In the Main Event category a summary of the benefits (paragraph 2) is also offered. Paragraphs 3 to 14 offered the comments by the Treasury Minister, the secretary of one of the national unions, the Chamber of Commerce spokesman, another national union leader, and the President of the Costa Rican Central Bank. Only the workers' comments are positive.

The third news article (the "in depth" news report) was the first top position news item published on the front page, complemented with a full inside page. It is composed of 25 paragraphs, including the lead.

The presence in the sample of this type of "in depth" news report is an example of the need of backgrounds that could lead to the establishment of links with old models or scripts by the readership. And if the scripts or models are not available, the information provided could lead to the creation of a new script, or at least new knowledge. In this case, the lead provides the journalists' conclusion after their investigation, arbitration is actually the only legal tool available to the public workers to demand and fight for their rights.

As Tuchman (1978a) points out, the tempo of newswork mandates an emphasis on events, not issues. Outlining that events are completely embedded in the web of facts (the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the traditional news lead), she affirms that issues are not, because they

are based in analytic explanations of the everyday world as a socially experienced structure. Especially important, according to this distinction, is that issues do not have the same sort of temporal anchoring as events such as, for example, a trial, as in the case in discussion which has a beginning and an end. Precisely, the news events which have been analyzed in this group refer to the end of a Labor Court trial and its consequences. The end of the trial establishes the beginning of a new process, a new conflict.

The two journalists who wrote this news article forgot about the event, they left it behind. In fact, as was stated before, the regular news item about this event was published in the inside pages and was written by one of the two journalists. That inside page report, examined issues and not events, thus providing the background essential for understanding. Basically, the topic of this news report is arbitration as the only way public employees have to fight for their rights. This background information was established through the traditional journalistic tools, the experts' opinions.

It seems that the editors treated this piece of journalistic work following the same model of the preceding news items. Thus, the headline does not refer to the lead. It was extracted from a low level macrostructure (paragraph five, classified under the History subcategory). The

editors also used a photograph to illustrate the article whose script is "lines." That is, it shows a senior woman with a bank check or other kind of document on her hand, in front of a counter, and a man at the other side talking to her. Supposedly, he is talking about the closing of the window to public service, because there is a sign indicating that they are in a low-key strike. It is not necessary to explain the negative feelings that everybody could feel when they have been waiting in a queue and when they finally get to the window, it closes. The use of this photograph is exactly the same as what happens when the press covers a passive demonstration that was expected to be disruptive. It does not matter that the event was really a peaceful demonstration. The negative script was recalled anyway and it created the mood from which the rest of the news article is perceived as violent (van Dijk, 1988a).

The same illustrative resource has been used by the newspaper regularly. The window with a sign that indicates the service is closed. Complaints have been expressed in the Letters to the Editor published on the same month of this thesis's sample (6/4/88, p. 16A). And the newspaper provides a comparative table about the different benefits obtained by the workers of four public institutions through collective conventions or collective conflicts (discrimination script).

In sum, although this news item is the most complete report about the situation, and facts are given in such a way that the readership could make up their minds by themselves about the collective conflicts nature, the presentational characteristics, beginning with the headline, the top macrostructure, the semiotic signs, maintain this report within the boundaries of the general script of the series: The workers received juicy benefits or privileges over the rest of the Costa Rican workers--in one word, discrimination.

The fourth news report was published in the inside pages in a top position, and it is analyzed because the "in depth" news item substitutes it on the front page, as was already explained.

The lead is a complement of the headline that brings up a new element not alluded to in the previous news items, which is that the state cannot assume by itself the expenses that the social security system will have to make due to the judgment by the Labor Court. It means a strategic movement to transfer directly to the readers the costs of the conflict. In other words, if the state cannot pay, all Costa Ricans will have to pay higher quotes to cover the deficit.

Through the Context subcategory, the situation is explained to the readers: The social security system's financial support comes from the quotes payed by the

employers and workers, and from the Government. If the employees oppose an increase in the quotes to employers and workers as well as any decrease on the services, it means that the Government will have to pay. And, if the Government cannot pay, who will?

In the Verbal Reactions sub-category, the arguments by two members of the board of directors of the social security system and the administrative manager, follow the same script.

From the beginning, the publication of this series of news reports revolved around the consequences of the judgment by a Labor Court, which are clearly depicted as negative. The beneficiaries of this judgment are also negatively depicted and contrasted with the rest of the Costa Rican workers who, as a consequence of the trial, have been discriminated against. The importance given to the event reflects also clearly on the presentational characteristics: two first top positions and one second top position front page news item, and in other semiotics signs already mentioned. Although the third "in depth" news report provides new insights, its presentational characteristics as well as a biased headline, reinforce the general script of the series. It also shows the lack of reliable backgrounds on the other news items and the pervasiveness of a dominant perspective.

The isolated news report about the policeman was published in fifth down position and in a down position also in the inside pages, under the heading Police Events (see Table VI, first column).

This news report presents one of the most unusual characteristics. In fact, it is the only hard news item of all the sample in which a non-relevant person, a non-elite member is given the role of principal actor in almost a monologue. Only one other actor is quoted in one paragraph (Verbal Reactions), stating the reason why the principal actor was fired from the police patrol corps.

The topic of this news article is the lack of knowledge by the police members about almost everything that deals with their task, and how this circumstance could have cost the life of the complaining policeman.

It also calls attention to how the journalist traveled outside the capital to interview the actor at his home. Usually, a journalist visits the police headquarters as a news beat, where they pick up the daily press releases or read the different police reports by themselves (see Tuchman, 1978a). Non-elite members also are quoted after elite members or official speakers; they usually never achieve legitimacy as reliable sources of news. An example in this study are the farmers and other workers.

Finally, in Costa Rica the civilian police is not a professional corps but a political one. Every four years,

when a new government is elected, a new group of policemen is chosen. This practice is also a part of the anti-militaristic Costa Rican culture, in which this lack of police skill is accepted instead of the risk that an experienced group of police represents to a democratic system in Latin America (Blachman & Hellman, 1986; Furlong, 1987).

Although this news report never states the need for a professional police group, implicitly, that is the script. In other words, if the topic is that policemen are ill-prepared, and in the news article it is shown that at such a high level they learn how to shoot a pistol in job training, the complete script then is: ill-prepared policemen need training to protect us and to protect themselves.

Agricultural News

As the following headlines suggest, the news coverage in agricultural news is about the consequences/reactions of the dispute between the farmers and Costa Rican Government, a conflict in which the principal goal of the farmers--to get the Government's and the media's attention--is by creating disruptions: demonstrating and blocking roads, bridges, railroads; stopping the food supply to different towns; taking public buildings; impeding export production and transport to the seaports. The following are the headlines published on the front page. To provide a more

complete picture, the titles of stories found on the inside pages have been inserted in a chronological order; this allows the readers to consider editorial choices about story placement. The front page headlines are marked, the inside page headlines are not. Some presentational characteristics are also indicated:

<u>Front Page</u>	- Beginning tomorrow	<u>June 7</u>
<u>4th Bottom</u>	FARMERS ANNOUNCE PRESSURE MEASURES	
<u>Top</u>	- POLICE ON ALERT	<u>June 8</u>
	BEFORE FARMERS' STRIKE	
	Agriculture Minister says there are funds for agricultural production	
<u>Front Page</u>	- GOVERNMENT DEMANDS TO LIFT BLOCKADES	<u>June 9</u>
<u>4th Bottom</u>		
<u>Front Page</u>	- Police opened the way in	<u>June 10</u>
<u>3rd Bottom</u>	Parrita and Guanacaste	
	MOBILIZATIONS AGAINST BLOCKADES	
<u>Front Page</u>	Five people were kept hostages	<u>June 11</u>
<u>5th Bottom</u>	for many hours	
	COUNTY BUILDING TAKEN IN SANTA CRUZ	
	48 hours term to lift blockades	
<u>Top</u>	- Blockades maintained	<u>June 12</u>
	AGREEMENT WITH FARMERS IS NOT YET POSSIBLE	
	Santa Cruz county facilities evacuated	
<u>Front Page</u>	- Conflict with the farmers persists	<u>June 13</u>
<u>4th Bottom</u>	PRICE RAISES DEMANDED FOR	

RICE, CORN, AND BEANS

- Top - Farmers demand Arias' presence June 14
DISAGREEMENT CONTINUES AS WELL AS THE
BLOCKADES
- Front Page - By the First Lady's mediation June 15
1st Top BLOCKADES LIFTED IN THE ATLANTIC REGION
Farmers will meet with Arias today
- Front Page - A settlement is expected this June 16
3rd Bottom coming Wednesday
GOVERNMENT & FARMERS BEGAN NEGOTIATIONS
- Bottom - Neighbors from Guacimo June 17
integrate Civic Committee
IMMINENT RAISES IN PRICES
OF RICE, BEANS, AND CORN
- Bottom - Farmers and Government parley June 18
MINISTERS DO NOT REJECT PRICE
RAISES IN BASIC GRAINS
Changes in the Rice's Office analyzed
- Front Page - FARMERS MAINTAIN STRIKE June 21
4th Bottom Uncertainty about rice stocks
- Front Page - Official proposal will be
answered today June 23
- 2nd Bottom AGREEMENT WITH FARMERS IS UNCERTAIN
- Front Page - FARMERS REJECT PROPOSAL June 24
1st Top New pressure measures announced
- Front Page - Conflict with farmers June 25

- 1st Top GOVERNMENT SAYS IT WILL NOT GIVE IN
- Top - PRODUCERS COULD NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE June 25
OF BANANA HIGHER PRICES
- Top - MEASURES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT June 26
OF AGRICULTURAL SECTOR INITIATED
Government gives instructions
- Front Page - FARMERS ANNOUNCE A VIOLENT ANSWER June 28
- 3rd Bottom The Government supposedly intimidated them
- Front Page - Supposedly they are armed June 29
- 4th Bottom GOVERNMENT DENOUNCE UPAGRA MILITARIZATION
Organization would receive money from abroad
Leaders reject accusations
- Top - Farmers' predicament continues June 30
RICE GROWERS AFFIRM THAT
BANKS DO NOT FULFILL PROMISES
Struggle for leadership accepted

These headlines (including pre- and sub-headlines) suggest that La Nacion is primarily interested in topics that concern the Government, the police, and other groups affected by the farmers' strike against the establishment. Thus, the news coverage is about the strike and the police actions to control its effects, and the maneuvering in the negotiation process. In other words, the newspaper reproduces the definitions of the powerful, without

necessarily being pro-Government. This will be discussed later.

It is necessary to point out a crucial distinction between primary and secondary definers of social events (Hall et al., 1981). The media do not create news items autonomously, but they are provided with a dominant pre-established perspective by regular and reliable institutional sources (Tuchman, 1973, 1978a,b; Turk, 1986). Reproducing the definitions of those who have privileged access to the media as "accredited sources," the media stand in a position of structured subordination to the primary definers. But the media not only reproduce, they transform an event into a news report to the degree that they select what the primary definers say with respect to a particular topic. By exercising selectivity, the media begin to impose their own criteria on the "raw material" provided by the primary sources, and they do this using the rules and strategies of news discourse; that is, the superstructural ordering, the news values, and so on (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983).

The size of a headline in La Nacion provides a news report a dramatic news value. It also shapes popular knowledge (scripts), established over time. This includes scripts created by the newspaper's previous coverage of the farmers' demonstrations. Just by turning its attention to certain events and issues over a period of time, La Nacion

gives them the status of high public concern, and this generally is understood by the readership (van Dijk, 1988a,b). In this sense, the news media are secondary definers of social events (Hall, 1981).

Despite the media's dependence on the role played by primary definers, the portrayal of deviance through imagery of criminality and illegality, is a powerful arm of social control. La Nacion has created an unfavorable public opinion toward the group that is a threat to society--the farmers. For instance, the Vice President was quoted complaining about the pressure measures ". . . the destabilization of Costa Rica's democratic regime" (6/15/88, p. 4A).

Although the leaders of the organizations involved in the strike were given a role among the primary definers of this social conflict, this role differs from the one given to Government officials or a private corporation's spokesmen. The farmers' organizations were reliable and truly representative news sources. Yet La Nacion's journalists in most news articles quoted unidentified farmers' sources (e.g.. "leaders of the farmers stated.."). LN even made inferences about internal division within the farmers' movement, based on circumstantial evidence, suggesting that one of the organizations, the National Chamber of Basic Grains, with offices in San Jose, the capital, made an initial agreement with the Government,

while the national organization established that the dialogue would be held in Guacimo, a rural town, and not in the capital (6/10/88, p. 8A). This is a way to delegitimize the role of primary definers for all or some leaders of the farmers' movement.

At this level of the analysis, I can only add that La Nacion not only defined what to publish about what the primary definers say or do but also implicitly established the issue. In other words, La Nacion shaped the problem (Hall, 1982).

In this chain of events, the news reports on the front page were published only three times in first top position. On June 15, the First Lady offered her mediation to the farmers and the dialogue with the Government was restored. This is a clear example of the relevance news value. Before that, there were other instances of mediation but the news coverage was not the same, probably because of the absence of a news personality like the First Lady. This was the only case in which a four-column by 19-centimeter picture was published on the front page, and this picture was the First Lady's. Only in two other cases were small pictures published on the front page, one of a group of farmers in a blockade (four-column by three-centimeter) and the other of the Security Minister (one and a half-column by three-centimeter). The other two first position news reports were published when the farmers rejected the

Government's proposal on June 24. This was extraordinary and probably unexpected, making the event newsworthy. Then, the newspaper on June 25 also published the Government's countermove in first top position.

The remaining nine news articles were published at the front page bottom, not a relevant position. Four of these news reports were introduced to the readership only by the headline on the front page, while the rest, besides, offered a front page head or lead. Only two news reports on the inside pages were published at the bottom of the pages. The other 11 were placed at the top.

None of the fifteen pictures published in the inside pages showed a farmer in the foreground, and in the only one in which a leader appeared in that position, he was not identified. Only President Arias and the First Lady were identified; in other pictures, President Arias is in the foreground and in the background are Government officials, but not one farmer. Most of the pictures show groups of farmers or the blockades they made on the roads, bridges, and railroads. In other words, they were not given any relevance as news subjects.

These details characterize the way in which La Nacion published the news reports, subject to the analysis of what van Dijk (1988a) calls the "delivery," making a comparison with the way a speaker delivers his/her speech. Based upon these characteristics, it is clear that La Nacion covered

these events because they conform to the journalistic values of deviance (Hall et al., 1981; Hall 1982; Shoemaker, 1984, 1987), and exercising their role as social controllers, they tended to reproduce those very definitions of the situation which favored and legitimated the existing structure of things. The representational characteristics enhanced the importance of the news reports where the Government officials or spokesmen for the private sector appeared in dominant positions (in nine of the 13 news reports); in the case of the farmers acting as dominant actors, the presentational factors played down the importance of the event.

The overall characteristic of the farmers' demonstration coverage is partly reflected in the different themes or topics of the report. Basically, the farmers' movement is against the Government, which regulates the prices of crops, fertilizers, and pesticides. Therefore, the farmers are asking for new and better rules of the game, more credit with lower interest rates and better prices for their crops. On the other hand, the Government does not want to increase the prices of food because this is an unpopular measure with the whole population.

In the middle of this dispute lies the difference in economic approach between the ruling party (with a Keynesian approach) and La Nacion's owners, who are advocates of the privatization of the economy and the rules

established by the free flow of commodities and prices-- that is, the 'free' market.

Among the farmers are beneficiaries of the Government's policies on land distribution, technical and credit assistance, who seem not to be very efficient in the production process. There are large producers too, very efficient and economically powerful, but annoyed by the lack of clear policies by the Government.

The problems of the farmers are not presented as an inherent, structural property of capitalist society (the production of wealth by itself), but as a consequence of the presence or demands of a specific group. Elite wealth or the production of wealth to benefit the elite is virtually absent as a problem in this news coverage.

In this context, group demonstrations, like those of the farmers, which are used by different organizations to protect themselves against the inequalities of the system, are subject to more and more systematic attacks.

Table VII summarizes a structural analysis of the agricultural news on the front pages. The schematic categories are on the left and the numbers to the right indicate how many pre-headlines, headlines or sub-headlines were found in the Headline category and how many paragraphs in all the news reports were classified under each schema category. The dates of each news item are indicated at the top and the numbers show how many paragraphs were

classified under the different schematic categories for each news report. For instance, the June 7th news item was published with two types of headlines, one paragraph for the Lead, five paragraphs for Main Events, three paragraphs for Context, three paragraphs for Previous Events, one paragraph for Events/Acts, and four paragraphs for Verbal Reactions.

TABLE VII

SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
AGRICULTURAL NEWS

<u>DATES:</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	
<u>Schematic Category</u>															Total
<u>Headline</u>	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	
Lead	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	14
Main Event(s)	5	2	5	4	3	5	8	7	3	8	3	6	9	68	
Previous Events	3													3	
Context	3	5	4	4	4		1	1		3	2	1		28	
Events/Acts		1		3		7	1		1			1		14	
Verbal Reactions	4	8		1			2		4	1	6	1	11	38	
Expectations			1							1	1		1	4	
Evaluations			1											1	
No of Paragraphs	16	17	12	15	8	13	13	9	10	14	13	10	22	170	

NOTE: With the exception of Headline counts, all numbers refer to paragraphs.

Consistent with the findings in other categories, we can see that only context is offered as a type of background. This schematic subcategory covers all the information in the news report about the actual situation in which the news events take place. History is totally absent. Thus, readers cannot construct a model of the situation because they lack the necessary knowledge to recall past models from memory. In contrast, the two types of consequences, Events/Acts and Verbal Reactions, are present in almost all the news reports (in six news items in the first case and nine in the second); this demonstrates the emphasis on actual events and not on the strike as an issue. This also can be corroborated observing that 68 paragraphs concerned Main Event(s), 34% of all the paragraphs in all the news reports.

The two subdivisions of Comments, Expectations and Evaluations, were used by the journalists to present their own expectations or evaluations to delegitimize the strike, making direct allusions to internal division or using indirect quotations to back up their own comments.

Three other news items are related indirectly to the farmers' strike. The first two, published on June 6, refer to speculation on basic products in small grocery stores, especially rice, and to a problem among the rice growers. These were published in second and third down positions, and are really a type of "in depth" news reports. The

first one provides information to the readership about prices and how to denounce speculation. The second one provides background information about the problems of rice growers and changes in the national policies that led to the importation of this grain. Costa Rica used to be self-sufficient in food production but now must import part of its food needs. This is the issue never precisely alluded to in the series of news reports about the strike, and as was mentioned before, it calls attention to this need for background information. La Nacion never offered to its readership this kind of "in depth" news report.

The headline of the third news report indicates its topic:

Front Page - VIOLENT EVICTION OF LAND INVADERS June 17

1st Top Two civil guards wounded

 Police car burned

This news report was published in first top position with a photograph using more than 50 percent of the space on the front page. In the inside pages, the news item also was published at the top with two more photographs. The burned police car appears in the photo on the front page, while in the pictures in the inside pages a policeman shows his helmet where, according to him, an evicted land invader hit him with a "machete" (cane knife). The other inside

photo shows the land invaders' shelters which have been dismantled.

The headline does not indicate the agent of the eviction but only the subject, which is a well-documented tendency in most newspapers (Fowler et al., 1979; Kress, 1983). The local coherence in this case makes the reader relate violence to the land invaders and not to the police, circumstances that are outlined by the two sub-headlines: "Two civil guards wounded" and "Police car burned."

Four paragraphs also explained how the violence surged. Two were classified as Previous Events and two as Context. The local coherence here is "peaceful intentions were answered with violence."

In the Verbal Reactions category, the journalist creates an echo of the official version about the land invaders. It is insinuated that they do not really have the need of land, because they already have it; this delegitimizes their movement. Thus, the script has been implicitly established: If they are not poor farmers without land and are violent, then they are social agitators, "communists."

The other two news reports in this category refer to a massive poisoning of agricultural workers. The headlines of these news items are as follows:

Front Page - ONE DEATH AND 47 PERSONS AFFECTED BY June 3

3rd Bottom A MASSIVE TOXIC CHEMICAL POISONING
Emergency with chemical substance in
Puntarenas

Front Page - Judicial Police runs investigation June 4

3rd Bottom NEGLIGENCE COULD BE THE CAUSE OF
A MASSIVE TOXIC CHEMICAL POISONING
Confusion among experts

The first news item was published in third down position and a photograph was published on the front page. Two additional photographs were published in the inside pages under the heading Police Events (6/3/88, p. 10A). It is comprised of 11 paragraphs including the lead.

The second news item was published in third down position and on top position in the inside pages. The news report was moved from the Police Events heading to page 5A, under the National heading. That is, it was given more importance than the first time.

This news report concerns a consequence/reaction, and is reflected in 11 paragraphs dedicated to consequences: Events/Acts and Verbal Reactions. In other words, the news report is not a police event anymore and it ceased to be treated like that.

As a journalist who worked for ten years for La Nacion and other newspapers in Costa Rica, I am intrigued by the news item about the death and toxic poisoning with a follow-up. This interest in non-elite people, humble

agricultural workers, who as a rule only appear in the headlines when they die in a violent event or are victims of unusual circumstances, is out of the question when corporate interests are involved. Most often La Nacion plays down everything that could damage the image of private corporations. Thus, it is not clear why La Nacion assumed by itself the active role of a researcher instead of waiting for the experts' opinions, the results of an official inquiry.

Educational News

The four news items in this category are related to a faculty-student movement that included a symbolic strike to initiate the protest, and the announcement of a real strike if the Public Education Ministry (MEP) would not listen to their concerns.

Until 1974, all Costa Rican high school students needed to pass a comprehensive test in order to graduate. In 1988, the country's educational authorities announced the reestablishment of this comprehensive test.

The country has three educators' organizations. One is a union, another is a combination of a union and a professional guild APSE (National Organization of High School's Professors), and the third one is a collegium, a restricted association whose associates have to have a specific college degree to be a member (Collegium of Licentiates and Professors in Education).

The APSE accused the educational authorities of making impromptu decisions and decided to back up the students or to include the students in its movement against the reestablishment of the comprehensive test. The Collegium, to the contrary, decided to back up the educational authorities and asked its members to take the reestablishment of the test as a professional challenge.

Two high schools, which are among the oldest and best known educational centers in the country, one exclusive for women and the other one exclusive for men, are intertwined with the movement against the test. The two schools maintain their male/female-only policy despite the fact that Costa Rican society believes in co-education. They also use their traditional uniform despite an Executive Decree, approved a decade ago, stating that all high school students would use the same uniform. Costa Rican society believes in egalitarianism; the philosophy behind a uniform is that it makes everybody equal and expenses on clothes unnecessary.

Having provided this social knowledge, the topics alluded to in the series of four continuing news reports about this event can be better understood.

Front Page - TENSION GROWS IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR June 1

1st Top

Front Page - PARTIAL APPROVAL TO STUDENTS' STRIKE June 1

5th Bottom

Front Page - Education Minister would June 10

2nd Top accept conditions

WAY TO HIGH SCHOOLS' COMPREHENSIVE

TESTING IS CLEARED

Front Page - APSE AND MEP gave up June 11

1st Top STUDENTS WILL HAVE COMPREHENSIVE TESTS

This series of news reports was published on June 1, 2, 10, and 11 respectively, in first top position, fifth down position, second top position, and first top position. In the inside pages, the same degree of importance is maintained. That is, all the news items except the second were published in top positions, and this coincides with the downplaying of the strike.

There are some characteristics at the local level in these news reports that suggest the playing up of some topics over others (e.g., the parents' role, and economic problems related to the change of uniform). In the first news item, the parents were just mentioned as actors in the movement: "divergences between students and parents with the MEP were present since the beginning of the school year" (6/1/88, p. 5A, paragraph 2). In the second news item, the parents were mentioned again as actors who asked their children not to go to classes. Not one parent was interviewed in the whole series of news reports.

The students' leaders are quoted in a way that they seem to be challenging the authorities without any reason,

as in the case of the president of the women's high school: "tomorrow we will use the same uniform; it is a day like the others" (6/1/88, p. 5A). They were supposed to respect an agreement that they signed with the Education Minister whose deadline expired precisely the following day.

Most people seem to have a negative image about this problem with the uniforms, because only two high schools in the whole country have not complied with the Executive decree. What is more interesting is that this problem is not related to the movement against the comprehensive test.

But the first eight paragraphs of the first news item that introduces the new conflict are all related to this old conflict about the uniforms. It is a local and a global incoherence, but obviously, the readers, up to this moment, would have recalled from memory the script about the first conflict and it will continue pervading the understanding of the rest. The topics are so different that the news items are divided by a subheading: "Protest for comprehensive test," and then follow six more paragraphs that have nothing to do with the first eight paragraphs. More than this, the first paragraph in this second part presents all the characteristics of a lead, which makes it reasonable to speculate about the possibility that this news item was originally two news reports converted into one by the editors. Then they asked a journalist to write (or they wrote) a lead or head for

the front page, in which the possibility of a strike is the Context of the conflict about the uniforms. The Context category is signalled, according to van Dijk (1988a), by expressions such as "while", "during", or a similar term (see Chapter II). The expression used in this case to connect the two events in the front page's lead was "meanwhile."

The headline also explains this editorial decision. It has nothing to do with the two news reports; it is a value judgment, "TENSION GROWS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR," that is not present in the leads or the rest of the text.

Another indication that two stories were merged by editorial decision, is that in the second news item, the conflict of the uniforms is mentioned shortly after the most important event (the strike): "In the men's High School and in the women's High School, lessons were developed in a normal fashion although the students wore the traditional uniform. This happened in spite of the expiration of the grace period given to them by the educational authorities to use the standard uniform" (6/2/88, p. 5A). The topic was never mentioned again in this news report and in the other two published later.

The editorial decision to combine stories is not unusual. However, what is unusual is that the most important (relevance value) and most recent (recency value) event was selected as a second event. There may have been

other reasons to have made that decision, but those reasons are not related to any journalistic values. I have commented, for example, in *Legislative News*, how other topics (different episodes) are introduced in the same news item, but they were not related to the main topic and their importance was in accordance with their placement. In other words, low interest details are placed on the lower levels and high interest details are placed on the top levels, that is the headline, the lead, the first paragraphs.

The Table VIII summarizes a structural analysis of the educational news on the front pages. Only in the first news items are two types of Backgrounds offered--Context, which refers to the present, and History which refers to details that could have happened some months or years before. The role that background information plays in knowledge has already been explained (see *Legislative News*). The only historical background given is that the problems with the standard uniform began a decade ago due to an Executive Decree that established it. The Context is about a most recent agreement between the students of both high schools and the Education Minister at the beginning of the school year, in March. No background at all is given about the reestablishment of the comprehensive test, which is the center of the actual conflict.

TABLE VIII
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
EDUCATIONAL NEWS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	
<u>Schematic Category</u>						
<u>Headline</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	
						<u>Total</u>
Lead		1	1	1	1	4
Main Event		2	10	1	6	19
Context		2				2
History		1				1
Verbal Reactions		8	5	6	2	21
Evaluations					<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
No. of Paragraphs		<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>50</u>

NOTE: With the exception of Headline counts, all numbers refer to paragraphs.

In the rest of the news reports, the journalists limited themselves to informing readers about the events (Main Event) and to obtaining the Verbal Reactions they are interested in. In the last news report, an evaluation was even made to comment on the hesitation and contradictions of the APSE's leadership, maintaining the perspective of delegitimization that pervaded all the news coverage.

La Nacion acted in this case as a primary definer of the situation since it provided the only framework through which the strike was to be seen; it played up those aspects

that could delegitimize the movement and played down or ignored those that could have helped the readers to understand the students' and educators' arguments (see Agricultural News). They acknowledged that 25 percent of the students participated in the symbolic strike, although a student leader claimed 65 percent. This leader also pointed out: "We did not have deficient support, what really happened is that the students are afraid" (6/2/88, p. 5A).

The Education Minister has warned that students who participated in this strike would be graded down for each day they failed to go to classes. A student could lose credit for up to a year of study. This circumstance was never acknowledged as a possible cause of the failure of the symbolic strike, thus maintaining the implicit message of the news coverage: the strike is a failure because only a minority agree with it.

This conflict, ended by negotiation between the APSE and the MEP, in which a number of conditions by the professors were accepted by the MEP. This indicates that the strikers did have specific reasons to protest, although their reasons were always implicitly or explicitly labeled as illegitimate in the news coverage. For example, when the leaders of the collegium were quoted, they showed an antagonism towards the APSE's members and appeared more helpful. This delegitimized APSE's position. But the

readers did not know what exactly the APSE's position was until the third news report, when the topic of negotiations appeared eight days later. But, by that time, the negative atmosphere about the movement was such that APSE decided to negotiate and put an end to the dispute.

Presidential News

Coverage of Presidential News is particularly important in light of the division that exists between those stories about the President that are given front page coverage and those that appear only inside Section A.

In the following headlines, front page titles are marked, inside page headlines are not. Some presentational characteristics are also indicated:

<u>Top</u>	- ARIAS OUTLINES WORK BY PEOPLE OF ISRAEL	<u>June 2</u>
<u>Front Page</u>	- Tomorrow he will travel to U.S.	<u>June 3</u>
<u>1st Top</u>	ARIAS WILL MEET THREE PRESIDENTS	
<u>Front Page</u>	- Arias is gone	<u>June 5</u>
<u>4th Bottom</u>	PRESIDENT WILL TALK WITH RAUL ALFONSIN FERTICA's board of directors asked to eliminate raise in fertilizers	
<u>Front Page</u>	- \$50 million for draw-back	<u>June 7</u>
<u>1st Top</u>	AMERICAN CORPORATIONS ANNOUNCE INVESTMENTS	
<u>Top</u>	- ARIAS ASKS MEDIATION IN PANAMA	<u>June 7</u>
<u>Bottom</u>	- ARIAS WILL PROPOSE NUNCIO	<u>June 8</u>

AS MEDIATOR IN PANAMA

Between the Government and the opposition

<u>Front Page</u>	Speech in the U.N.	<u>June 9</u>
<u>2nd Bottom</u>	ARIAS ASKS FOR SANCTIONS TO ARMS PRODUCERS	
<u>Front Page</u>	- HONORARY Ph. D. TO ARIAS	<u>June 10</u>
<u>2nd Bottom</u>	IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY	
<u>Bottom</u>	- PRESIDENT CLAIMS TO BACK PACIFICATION	<u>June 10</u>
<u>Bottom</u>	- GROUP OF INVESTORS WILL VISIT US, SAYS ARIAS Early return to the country	<u>June 11</u>
<u>Bottom</u>	- INCAE WILL CONFER HONORARY DEGREE TO PRESIDENT ARIAS	<u>June 15</u>
<u>Bottom</u>	- ARIAS RATIFIES SUPPORT TO THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR	<u>June 17</u>
<u>Front Page</u>	- KEEPING THE PURITY	<u>June 18</u>
<u>2nd Bottom</u>	(caption headline of a news picture)	
<u>Top</u>	- Arias during the inauguration of the home's fair LOW DOWN ON PRICES OF HOUSES' MATERIALS ASKED	<u>June 18</u>
<u>Bottom</u>	- From the Government, private enterprises and communities ARIAS ASKS TO FORM AN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEFORESTATION	<u>June 23</u>
<u>Front Page</u>	- New draw-back corporations	<u>June 24</u>
<u>2nd Bottom</u>	ARIAS INAUGURATED FREE ZONE	

- Bottom - ARIAS INSISTS ON BETTER TREATMENT June 26
 BY THE INTERNATIONAL BANKS
 INCAE conferred him an honorary degree
- Front Page Commemorating a far yesterday June 29
- 2nd Bottom 425 YEARS' CELEBRATION
 OF CARTAGO FOUNDING
- Bottom - ARIAS PROMOTED ALEM'S DEPARTURE June 29
 FROM THE CENTRAL AMERICAN BANK
 Due to reports about questionable
 banking operations

The following are the headlines about the Biehl case, which is a situation directly related with the President. An editorial was also written about it.

- Top - JOHN BIEHL CRITIZES REAGAN
 ADMINISTRATION June 11
 Calls it a blot on American Democracy
- Top - CRITICS TO JOHN BIEHL'S DECLARATION June 14
- Top - BIEHL REFUSES TO WITHDRAW June 15
 CRITICISM OF REAGAN
- Bottom - BIEHL'S CASE June 16
- Bottom - DISAGREEMENT WITH BIEHL June 17
- Top - PRESIDENT BACKS UP June 18
 BIEHL BEFORE CRITICISM
- Bottom - BIEHL WOULD LEAVE THE COUNTRY June 21
 AT THE END OF THIS YEAR

Top - CANCELLATION OF JOHN BIEHL'S June 25
 DIPLOMATIC STATUS ASKED
 PUSC considers he violates the laws

In this news group, the use of the relevance value, one of the most important values of the news considering its pervasiveness, has to be considered.

Important information must come first; this is the general principle for journalists in the production of news, and perhaps this ordering is perceived by the readership in the same fashion as the producers. Through this relevance ordering, social groups can be identified and the types of events that are either given prominence by the journalists and editors, or are given less relevance or ignored (van Dijk, 1988a,b; Harris, et al., 1981), can be determined.

In Costa Rica, the uniformity of the news media is not only institutional; the common ownership is reinforced by the advertising control and there is no real competition for the news because all media have reached an agreement about what to cover and what not to cover (Reding, 1986; Zeledon, 1987). Some authors have shown the same patterns in the U.S. news media, even though they do not refer to an actual agreement as in Costa Rica but rather to other patterns, like the persistence of similarity or a propaganda framework (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

The advertising dependency establishes the limits of the independent and small news media (Altschull, 1984; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1987). Thus, the Costa Rican news media sing as a chorus in which the discordant voices are played down, ignored or just covered by the power of the mainstream news media.

One problem is how to handle the president's image. It is clear that the news media must make an effort to acknowledge the existence of the full range of current events. This sometimes educates the public in ways unintended by the communicators and, of course, in ways unwelcomed by politicians, by corporation owners, and especially by those who are affected by the phenomena.

As mentioned earlier, an extraordinary event occurred during the month covered by the sample that never reached the front page. This is the case of President Arias' personal advisor, the Chilean, John Biehl, a political scientist who was Arias' classmate during his college days in Essex, England.

The news about this case will be analyzed because its handling speaks to the research questions posed in this study, although it never appeared on the front pages. In addition, one editorial was written about the topic.

Biehl criticized the Reagan administration and pointed out that the U.S. built a shadow state in Costa Rica. His criticisms were published in the Chilean magazine APSI in

its May 23-29, 1988, issue, and this was used by the conservative party and the elites represented by it. All the news media (among them La Nacion) promoted their ideology, using the relationship between the two friends, the President and his advisor, to create the impression of wrong-doing by Biehl, supposedly a Government staff member, extending the blame to Arias through association. (Arias is a member of PLN, which PUSC opposes.)

The different models used by La Nacion are an example of the pervasiveness of face-value framing (to inform about events as they appear to be by the news media's own framing or the "objective" response by the media to a definition by a primary definer), which has characterized most U.S. press reporting since the McCarthy era (Parenti, 1986). Without ever establishing if a particular story is true or not, but treating it at face value, the press propagates misinformation.

In Biehl's case, La Nacion used rhetorical devices at the local level, the model "President's advisor," and referred to the "objective" resource of interviews (Verbal Reactions category) to create the "relevant topic": a President's advisor cannot talk publicly about our friends (the U.S.) because his action can put in jeopardy the aid and economic assistance we are receiving from them. Thus, Biehl is represented as being deviant.

He is an out-group individual and the in-group members are represented as his victims. The press selectively ignored or downplayed those voices that outlined Biehl's rights, concentrating on those that played up its own model. Although the press claims to reproduce what its sources said, the procedure is not objective because the selection of sources is clearly subjective.

The presidential news category occupied a sixth place in the placement analysis, not a relevant position for the presidency considering that a total of 21 news reports, plus eight on Biehl's case, were published during the month covered by the sample: eight on the front pages and 13 on the inside pages.

Even on the front pages, the presence of the relevant figure of the President was disguised. For example, in the lead of the news item published on June 7, in first top position, the headline outlined the investments by American corporations (\$50 million for draw-back: AMERICAN CORPORATIONS ANNOUNCE INVESTMENTS). And even in the lead, the President's role is secondary: "Three American corporations yesterday reached a compromise with President Oscar Arias and with CINDE to invest in Costa Rica . . ."

The readers have to wait until the fourth paragraph to know that all these details were given by President Arias during a press conference during his visit to the U.S.

And only in paragraph seven does the reader learn the President's opinion about the compromise, that "it is the result of the pacification of the Central American isthmus." In Arias' own words, "For the first time they know that there is an island of peace that offers them every type of guarantee" (6/7/88, p. 4A).

Interestingly, according to the schematic structure of this news report, the President's words have to be classified under Verbal Reactions. In other words, he is quoted about the act in which he is supposedly the main actor, but he does not qualify under Main Event; CINDE (Coalition for Economic Development Initiatives) and everything that its spokesman said were classified under Main Event. But in the lead this organization is mentioned in third place. It is considered neither as relevant as the President, or the topic investment by three American corporations.

Additionally, it is surprising that a special envoy, a travel correspondent who is accompanying the President precisely to cover the news about him or around him, ended up playing down the principal news personality according to the relevance value of the news.

The same could be said about the news report published on June 9, which covers President Arias' speech in the United Nations (ARIAS ASKS FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST ARM PRODUCERS). The news item was given second bottom

position, but indeed it could be regarded as third position if it is considered that a sports picture covered almost 40 percent of the front page's space. In a newspaper that traditionally gives international news great importance, we must question why a major international news item that involved the President of Costa Rica (plus Mexican and Brazilian presidents) was downplayed by the front page of La Nacion. Rather, the front page had a local photo and a story about a complaint by the national comptroller against five former PLN legislators. Here, the editors' choice lies between a common domestic event and an unusual international event in which the most relevant personality of the country is involved.

There is also a contradiction in the inside pages. Arias' news report appeared on page 4A, while the domestic news item (supposedly, the first pages are more important) was on page 5A. He appears also in a photo with Mexican and Brazilian presidents. The international press covered the event because it was important and this importance was matched with important personalities. La Nacion then replaced a front page international news photograph with a local sports picture.

This contradiction in the use of the relevance value is apparent in various semiotic signs. For example, in the news picture published on the front page on June 18, President Arias appears with the Economy Minister and the

managers of a pharmaceutical laboratory. Here, the news relevance of the President was used to highlight his visit to an international corporation. It appears that when the President's positive relevant image can make the corporate world look good, then La Nacion lets it work for them. In contrast, the same relevance value was not used to emphasize the importance of the President's activities when Arias' picture in the U.N. with Mexican and Brazilian presidents was published.

The President's image is used again in an eight-column news picture published on June 24 during a presidential visit to a free zone where new draw-back corporations began to work. Again, the formula [President's relevance + CORPORATE INTERESTS] was a good mixture. That is, the relevance of the President contributes to a positive image of the corporations.

On June 29, La Nacion published a candid photograph of President Arias interacting with citizens and children. Journalistically, the photo should have qualified as a front page picture. However, the picture was published on page 2A, and on the front page was published a static picture with two children in the foreground and a landmark church in the background, whose caption did not even mention the President. The news report was entitled "Commemorating yesterday: 425-YEAR CELEBRATION OF CARTAGO'S FOUNDING." Interestingly, the lead summarized President

Arias' address to the people of Cartago about the need to avoid actions that could lead to violence. Specifically, the President referred to Cartago as the historical source of the peace culture of the country. This is also a structural inconsistency because the Main Event is not the anniversary celebration but the participation of President Arias in it, precisely because his image and presence give more relevance to the event.

A 425th anniversary is not major news. Why then did La Nacion use that in a headline? Why does the President's image in this case not deserve front page? Why did the headline disguise a news report about what the President said in a 425th anniversary celebration?

In sum, why does the President's news relevance work in some cases in La Nacion and not in others? And what about the news items that did not even make it to the front pages? In these cases, there is also a common element present, that is, diplomacy as a way to peace and President Arias' role in this movement.

The topics of the news reports are signaled by the headlines: "ARIAS ASKS MEDIATION IN PANAMA"; "ARIAS WILL PROPOSE NUNCIO AS MEDIATOR IN PANAMA," Between the government and the opposition; "PRESIDENT CLAIMS TO BACK PACIFICATION." In other headlines, the topic is not peace directly but the event is related with the President's role

in this sense: "INCAE WILL CONFER HONORARY DEGREE TO PRESIDENT ARIAS."

In other cases, it is the bottom line that makes the difference, in the sense that the topics alluded to by the news items do not reflect La Nacion's interests: "ARIAS RATIFIES SUPPORT OF THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR"; Arias during the inauguration of the homes' fair: "LOW DOWN ON PRICES OF HOUSES' MATERIALS ASKED"; "ARIAS ASKS TO FORM AN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEFORESTATION"; "ARIAS INSISTS ON BETTER TREATMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL BANKS."

Regarding the structural characteristics of the news events on the front page (see Table IX), it is notable how all are fundamentally based on events. Forty-nine out of 69 paragraphs (71%) were classified under the Main Event(s) schematic category; only five news items included present backgrounds (Context), and just one History. But in this last case, the event called for this type of background due to its nature: the 425th anniversary of a city.

Only in the June 7 news report previously mentioned was a structural inconsistency found presenting Verbal reactions.

In the schematic analysis of the news reports about the Biehl's case (see Table X), we see how a dominant perspective is constructed by La Nacion's journalists and editors. In the first news item published on June 11, the news schematic structure was composed of only two

TABLE IX
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>29</u>	
<u>Schematic Categories</u>										
<u>Headline</u>		3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	<u>Total</u>
Lead		1	1	1	1	1		1	1	7
Main Event(s)		5	7	11	11	4		8	3	49
Context		1	3		1	1			2	8
History									2	2
Verbal Reactions				3						3
No. of Paragraphs		7	11	15	13	6	0	9	8	69

NOTE: With the exception of Headline counts, all numbers refer to paragraphs.

categories: Headline-Lead and Main Event. The explicit topic is John Biehl's attacks against the Reagan administration but the implicit topic is President Arias' role in the change of direction of the Central American policies by the U.S. Only in three paragraphs out of ten, including the lead, are direct references about Biehl made. In the rest, although Biehl is the actor, the topic is President Arias.

This news item is about other news discourse published by the Chilean magazine APSI, and La Nacion reports that this magazine dedicated two pages to an interview entitled "Oscar Arias has been tremendous," in which Biehl points

TABLE X
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
JOHN BIEHL'S NEWS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>25</u>	
<u>Schematic Categories</u>										
Headline		2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	Total
Lead		1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	9
Main Event(s)		9		6	1	2	5	4	5	32
Context				2			1		1	4
Previous Events			2	1			2	2	1	8
Verbal Reactions			13	8						21
No. of Paragraphs		10	16	18	3	3	9	7	8	74

NOTE: With the exception of Headline counts, all numbers refer to paragraphs.

out his admiration for the President. Biehl also outlines the use by the U.S. of Costa Rican territory for a military base and the transformation of the country's economy under Reagan policies as the most controversial problems that Arias has had to face. Then he comments that Arias has known how to play this political chess. Biehls adds that history will know Arias as the President who stopped Costa Rica's militarization and avoided a regional war.

Continuing with his criticism of the Reagan administration, Biehl points out that it is a blot on American Democracy because America could have one marine per square kilometer in Central America and still would not

feel safe. The administration's only trust is in the armies and not in the democratic institutions.

Asked about Arias' perception of the Sandinistas, Biehl indicates that he believes that the Nicaraguan revolution must continue its own way as an internal process not within the context of the East-West conflict.

Most controversial are Biehl's allegations that the Americans have built a shadow state within Costa Rica, in which they have established private banks and their own universities, and working within the Transportation Ministry have considerable influence over whether or not to build roads.

The following news report, published on June 14, is a consequences/reactions news item in which 13 paragraphs out of 16 were classified under Verbal Reactions. In this news report, La Nacion's journalists and editors follow the strategy of presenting different answers by pre-selected people. While the selection of the interviewees could appear balanced, the selection of the quotes, the playing up or down of the answers, or the absence of counter-prevailing viewpoints, may not necessarily be objective.

But upon examination, the group selected is found to be explicitly unbalanced. La Nacion interviewed the Transportation Minister, directly attacked by Biehl; the Foreign and Information ministers, who due to their official rank have to be diplomatic and not open

antagonists; two PLN legislators, who are in the same situation but one of whom is a well-known far-right speaker; and finally the chief of the minority in the legislative Assembly, a legislator of the opposition. In the lead, the dominant perspective is established: "While some legislators censured the presidential advisor John Biehl because he attacked the Reagan administration and its policy in the isthmus, the Transportation Minister denied that USAID has something to do with the ministry's policies."

As it was to be expected, in the second paragraph the PUSC legislator's opinion together with that of the PLN's right-wing member complete the establishment of the La Nacion's dominant perspective:

The chief of the opposition minority, Federico Villalobos and PLN's Fernando Volio, considered as inadequate the affirmations of the presidential advisor. Volio even suggested that if Biehl cannot apologize he should resign.

The third news report (June 15), completed the next step of La Nacion's strategy, which is to show Biehl's critics making concessions, and this was the top macrostructure pointed out on the headline and the lead: "The presidential advisor John Biehl affirmed yesterday that he does not withdraw his denunciation of the Reagan administration's policies in Latin America. In the second and sixth paragraphs, the present backgrounds of the situation (Context) are given: "The Chilean economist is

a close friend of President Arias and the Government has not yet denied or given its support to Biehl's critics."

There are four paragraphs classified under the Main Event category; this is interesting because supposedly Biehl has been given a second opportunity to withdraw or ratify his position. In other words, he is the main actor. However, La Nacion's journalists and editors introduced four commentaries, classified under Verbal Reactions, in the middle. After the Lead and a Context paragraph, three Verbal Reactions paragraphs were introduced, followed by the six Main Event(s) paragraphs, and after those the rest of the Main Events paragraphs (5). This means that La Nacion is playing up the negative macrostructures before the readers have a chance to know more details about Biehl's arguments. For example, he denied that he was a paid presidential adviser, but already La Nacion had played up this status, not only in the two preceding news items but in the lead of the actual news report. In the third paragraph, the Information Minister was quoted indirectly to the effect that he did not share Biehl's thesis. In the fifth paragraph, the American Ambassador also was quoted, saying that Biehl's statements were wrong and "incomprehensible in a President's adviser."

The readership has to wait until the 13th paragraph, the last classified under Main Event, to learn that Biehl believes the censure of his opinions is a way "to silence

him" which "in my opinion is not a Costa Rican's way." Positive opinions about Biehl's right to say what he thinks were also left to the last Verbal Reactions' paragraphs.

Having established a dominant perspective in the first three news reports, in the five remaining news items readers find no Verbal Reactions. Although paid spaces are not considered in this thesis, it is important to outline that during this period different groups whose opinions never reach the news resorted to paid advertising in La Nacion to persuade the general that this anti-Biehl campaign, was contrary to freedom of speech.

The presidential adviser script lost strength after the third news item in which Biehl denied being an official advisor. The third and fourth news items (June 16 and 17) just reported Executive Power and Legislative Power positions, distancing the official governmental position from that of Biehl's particular viewpoint. However, in the fifth news item, President Arias appears giving support to Biehl, probably as an answer to the PUSC's minority leader's petition for Biehl to be declared a person non grata.

Arias, in an improvised press conference, defended Biehl's right to disagree with others' points of view because, if he were not allowed to do so, "We would not live in a democracy but in a totalitarian country." The President pointed out that the non grata measure, which

would mean Biehl's expulsion from the country, could not be applied to anybody just for stating a personal opinion. He added that even he takes exception to some U.S. policies toward Nicaragua.

Realizing what was happening, Biehl decided to leave the country and this is the topic of the June 21 news item. However, in the last news report of this series, La Nacion reports about a press conference by the opposition in which the PUSC's minority chief discussed a letter sent to President Arias demanding that Biehl's diplomatic status be cancelled.

As can be seen, the script "President's adviser" is no longer of any use, so the PUSC decided to rescue the political scandal script that was getting out of its hands. The PUSC was losing credibility and risked being indicted in the censor's role. This explains why the minority leader sent a letter to the Governmental Ministry asking for the legal status of the presidential adviser, who continued to be described that way.

The paragraph that contained this information was classified under Previous Events, thus indicating that a news report in that sense was published before in news media other than La Nacion. Meanwhile, the president of the Chamber of Commerce is also quoted as a present background (Context) alluding to personal reasons of

President Arias in the treatment of matters related to his adviser.

Again, only the viewpoints of a group are used, those who help to outline the dominant perspective, which at the same time is La Nacion's perspective. According to the PUSC, Law No. 3394 establishes that diplomats "must respect the laws of the state where they are assigned," and they consider that these legal rules have been violated by Biehl. Again, another dominant perspective is provided without any additional explanation, and the readership has to accept it at face-value without even receiving an explanation about the dropping out of the presidential adviser script.

Drug Trafficking News

The topics of the headlines in this group of news are also very important, particularly to establish first hand what seems to be a political manipulation of the subject. It is evident that La Nacion is playing up the drug trafficking subject, just considering the fourth place that this category obtained on the front page. Three news items were in first top position; that is, in three cases the drug trafficking story was the most important news item of the day. Two were published in second positions, one top and one down. Four more drug news were items published, two in third positions and one in each fourth and fifth positions.

Considering 16 more news items that were published in the inside pages and the interview with American ambassador Hinton, this news category is in second place if all the news reports are considered (26). It trails the Nicaraguan category (46), and shares second place with agricultural news (26).

In the following headlines, front page titles are marked, inside page headlines are not. Some presentational characteristics also are indicated:

<u>Bottom</u>	- Of persons involved in drug trafficking	<u>June 4</u>
	GOVERNMENTAL MINISTER	
	ASKS NAMES TO ODUBER	
<u>Bottom</u>	- COURT WILL RESOLVE	<u>June 6</u>
	FIONNA'S PLEA TODAY	
<u>Bottom</u>	- Two ministers will visit him today	<u>June 7</u>
	ODUBER WILL BE ASKED NAMES	
	INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING	
<u>Front Page</u>	- ODUBER DID NOT GIVE NAMES	<u>June 8</u>
<u>4th Bottom</u>	INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING	
<u>Front Page</u>	- FOUR PERSONS WERE ACQUITTED	<u>June 8</u>
<u>5th Bottom</u>	FROM CHARGES OF DRUG SMUGGLING	
	Three Colombians and one Mexican	
<u>Bottom</u>	- FORMER PRESIDENT ODUBER	<u>June 9</u>
	ATTITUDE CRITICIZED	
<u>Bottom</u>	- PUSC ASKS UNITY AGAINST	<u>June 10</u>
	DRUG TRAFFICKING	

<u>Bottom</u>	- FIONNA'S PLEA WAS DISMISSED	<u>June 11</u>
<u>Front Page</u>	- American ambassador Hinton	<u>June 13</u>
<u>1st Top</u>	DRUG TRAFFICKING USES COSTA RICA AS A TRANS-SHIPMENT POINT	
<u>Front Page</u>	- Sanction for ties with Fiona	<u>June 14</u>
<u>3rd Bottom</u>	JUDICIAL POLICE'S CHIEF SUSPENDED BY SUPREME COURT	
<u>Bottom</u>	- About drug trafficking	<u>June 14</u>
	JUDICIAL COMPLAINT POSED FOR ODUBER ATTITUDE	
<u>Bottom</u>	- To American ambassador Deane Hinton	<u>June 14</u>
	FOREIGN MINISTRY ASKS FOR PROOF ABOUT DRUG TRAFFICKING	
<u>Bottom</u>	- AMERICAN EMBASSY TIGHT-LIPPED	<u>June 15</u>
<u>Bottom</u>	- BITTER DISPUTE IN UMANA'S CASE	<u>June 15</u>
	For one vote he was not fired	
<u>Front Page</u>	- Ties with Fiona	<u>June 17</u>
<u>3rd Bottom</u>	JUDGE SOLICITED A REASSESSMENT OF UMANA'S CASE	
<u>Bottom</u>	- LEGISLATORS WILL INVESTIGATE FIONNA'S	<u>June 18</u>
	TIES TO THE JUDICIAL POLICE Supreme Court asked information about Umana	
<u>Top</u>	- HINTON ANSWERS	<u>June 18</u>
<u>Top</u>	- Fiona-Umana investigation	<u>June 20</u>
	THE PROOFS OF A RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP	
<u>Front Page</u>	- Ties with Fiona	<u>June 21</u>
<u>2nd Top</u>	- SUPREME COURT FIRED UMANA	
<u>Top</u>	- As an answer to Foreign Ministry	<u>June 21</u>

HINTON DID NOT GIVE NAMES

Front Page - SUBSTANTIAL DOLLARS June 28
1st Top SHIPMENT CONFISCATED

Front Page - COURT GRANTED FIONNA'S EXTRADITION June 28
2nd Top Defense has time to make a plea until Friday

Front Page - MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED June 29
 IN PROPAGANDA SEIZURE

1st Top Valverde mentions an Arias'
 advisor and a legislator

Bottom - Possibility is studied June 29
 FIONNA WILL GIVE HIMSELF UP TO FRENCH POLICE

Front Page - Police expect to apprehend more people June 30
1st Top INQUIRIES ABOUT THE DOLLARS'S SHIPMENT WIDENED
 Seizure of Alem's bank accounts
 was ordered last February
 Calderon asks for suspension
 of a Government official

Who are the active agents behind the drug trafficking news coverage?

The answer to this question will provide some evidence about who the dominant actors are. In chapter two of this thesis, more actual evidence of this bias has been provided. Therefore, I will only submit a structural analysis of the last three front page news reports whose results are of such magnitude that I see no need to present more proofs in this news category. This does not mean that

there are no more examples of bias. As can be seen on the preceding list, the first news report was published on June 4. This action by the Governmental Minister originated in a letter sent to the Minister as well as the Security Minister by the PUSC'S legislator, Federico Villalobos, the minority's leader in the Legislative Assembly, thus, the following news items are the result of political pressure.

On June 9, the PUSC is on the offensive again criticizing Oduber, and on June 10, the party asked all Costa Ricans to fight drug trafficking. Interestingly, the document that was the source of the news report was a letter sent by the PUSC'S pre-candidates to their peers in the PLN. The dominant perspective of this news report is the script that the "good guys" who are not involved in drugs, are not compromised, and are the only ones who can take this initiative. Therefore, it is not surprising that the PLN's candidates declared that they had not received any letter when they were asked that by the press. It would seem that the letter was given first to the press because it was planned that way by the PUSC.

On June 13, even the American ambassador joined the local political forces in an exclusive interview with La Nacion, declaring that Costa Rica is a point of trans-shipment for drugs, and refusing to answer a question about his knowledge of names of Costa Rican politicians involved in drug smuggling. This move was a way to suggest that

there are politicians involved, but that he cannot say that publicly. Understandably, this was the source of another series of news reports on June 14, 18, and 21, and in the last one, the ambassador, in a letter sent to the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry, indicated that all the information that he had available about persons involved in drug trafficking was already given to the Costa Rican authorities.

In contrast with the case of former President Oduber, this news report was not published on the front page. The insinuation was published on the front page, but the news item that put an end to the speculation was not, which indicates La Nacion's unfairness.

Another indication of the PUSC's active involvement in the production of news about drug trafficking is the Fionna-Umana case. On June 18, a news item was published whose headline mentioned legislators in general, although, in fact, the news report was based on a report by the PUSC's legislator Luis M. Chacon. La Nacion published another article on June 20, putting pressure on the Supreme Court, which decided to fire Umana the following day. It seems that there is evidence enough to point out the active role played by the PUSC in the production of news about drug trafficking, as well as the playing up or down by La Nacion of this topic in accordance with the dominant interests of one group. But there is more, because eight

editorials were published about this topic, the largest number of the sample.

In the case of the structural inconsistencies, past occurrences mixed up with actual incidents make events that occurred three years before appear as if they were related to the actual incidents.

Beginning with the top macrostructures, the headlines, the differences among the three news reports that will be compared are more obvious:

- SUBSTANTIAL DOLLAR SHIPMENT CONFISCATED June 28
- MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PROPAGANDA SEIZURE June 29
- INQUIRIES ABOUT THE DOLLAR SHIPMENT WIDENED June 30

First the readers are offered a script about a "dollar shipment," then in the second headline the script is "propaganda seizure," and the third one goes back to the dollars. In the second case a sub-headline is added "Valverde mentions an Arias advisor and a legislator."

One of the persons indicted, Mario Valverde, mentioned during his interrogation that he worked during the last electoral campaign (1985) with two PLN members, bringing to the country party-propaganda material that was made in the U.S. He was hired to do that by Allem Leon. Notice that he gave information about similar trips that he made three years ago, during an electoral campaign that ended February 5, 1986, in which the actual Government was elected. The

actual campaign is the PLN's primary election and the only similarity with the past is that Valverde as well as Allem worked on it. Thus, naturally, Valverde declared that these two persons mentioned by him have nothing to do with the dollar shipment, but La Nacion established in the lead first paragraph which was subdivided into three paragraphs, the link with the dollar shipment, the pervasive first top macrostructure besides the headlines:

Dionisio Miranda, advisor to President of the Republic Oscar Arias, and the ruling party legislator Leonel Villalobos, were named by the carrier of the dollars seized last Saturday at the Santamaria airport, as the persons that used to receive him during the last electoral campaign when he delivered propaganda material brought from Los Angeles to the National Liberation Party (PLN).

He did not involve them in the recent dollar shipment seizure carried out at the airport.

The deposition was given by Mario Valverde before Jorge Segura, sub-chief of the Public Ministry and judicial and administrative authorities.

This contains two kinds of manipulations. At the rhetorical level, there is a blending mixture of two different episodes as if they were part of the same script. It is evident that introducing propaganda material into the country is not illegal. It would be illegal only if the corresponding custom taxes were not paid. In any event, it would not be the same crime to try to evade custom taxes than to introduce money from drugs to launder it in the country. Thus, La Nacion's script is drug trafficking-- PLN politicians. As van Dijk (1988a) points out:

Cognitive assignments of topics, that is the global interpretation of a text by language users, do not take place when the language user has interpreted all the words and sentences of the whole text. Rather, the reader starts to make expedient guesses about the most probable topics of a text, aided by the thematic signals of the writer. Initial summaries, the explicit reference to topics, or titles are examples of such signals (p. 34).

La Nacion not only manipulated facts, but also created structural inconsistencies. Valverde mentioned his participation in the electoral campaign of 1985, which has to be classified under the schematic sub-structure, History. This structure cannot be Main Event, as van Dijk (1988a) clearly states:

By History, then, we understand only the section of a news text that deals with nonrecent past history of actual situations and their events. In practice, this means that a History section cannot be Main Event in news items that have appeared recently (p. 54).

In other words, La Nacion makes comparisons between events that happened in 1985 and actual events that occurred in 1988, with the implicit purpose of establishing the script: propaganda--dollars--drug trafficking--PLN. This strategy is yet more clear in the inside pages where other news reports were published and played up, in which, for example, the opposition party demands the creation of a special investigative commission within the Legislative Assembly. In contrast, La Nacion plays down the affirmations of the PLN's pre-candidate (primary election

period) involved by his "propaganda seizure" in the sense that the propaganda material used to camouflage the dollars was made in Costa Rica. Another news report published in the same fashion has to do with the initiative of one of the opposition pre-candidates to investigate the origin of the money used in the electoral campaigns in the country. Most cases have to be investigated and confirmed before a decision to publish a news report is made. This is not only ethical but a standard procedure in the news media. La Nacion and the politicians from the opposition have assumed and present their own script as a reality, a dominant face-value framing.

Continuing with the structural analysis of the June 29 news report (see Table XI, p. 156), notice the absence of Main Event(s) and the presence of the various kinds of Backgrounds: Context, Previous Events and History as well as Consequences/Reactions: Events/Acts and Verbal Relations. This means that there was nothing new except for the consequences. La Nacion played up a non-event. The propaganda seizure was actually a construction by La Nacion used to link by inference the dollar seizure with an unconnected event. This is inconsistent with the well-known and accepted news value of recency, in the sense that the structural schema has been forced to accommodate a speculation or an implicit suggestion of linkage.

TABLE XI
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
DRUG TRAFFICKING NEWS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	
<u>Schematic Categories</u>					
<u>Headline</u>	1	1	1		
					<u>Total</u>
Lead	3	3	1		7
Main Event(s)	9				9
Context	8	4	4		16
Previous Events		1	3		4
History	3	4	3		10
Events/Acts	1	3	4		8
Verbal Reactions	2	5			7
Expectations				<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
No. of Paragraphs	26	20	16		<u>62</u>

NOTE: With the exception of Headline counts,
all numbers refer to paragraphs.

The news reports of the first two days have been commented upon. The third day, La Nacion again offered an eight-column headline in first top position and almost one full inside page. The news report of the third day is significant. Traditionally, and according to the news values accepted in the 'market' theory, the first news article is the most important in a series of continuing news stories. What the journalists and editors typically

print is a follow-up, unless a new element, more important than the original, establishes a new series of continuing news reports. Typically, the follow-up news items decrease in degree of importance in contrast with the first one (Harris et al., 1981).

There is an example of follow-up news in the sample already analyzed in the Presidential News category related to a tour that the President made through the U.S. It is obvious that in all the news articles, new details about the trip were offered, and that the importance of the news events covered in some cases was more relevant than the first news article. However, only one of the follow up news reports was published in the front page top position. The newspaper was emphasizing something different than the President. As I have noted, this could explain the relative positioning of this news item on the page.

In the Costa Rican journalistic jargon, there is an expression "zacate picado" (cut grass), which is used to denote those unimportant news reports that are the result of news rewriting. Because journalists are well aware of the people's desire for more news about some events, they construct a view of reality supposedly based on events; but if they do not have anything new, they just write what they have in a different way or they just use the obvious to maintain the suspense. This is the case of the third news report.

When an investigation is under way, it is presumed that the police will be taking new steps everyday, at least at the beginning. It is not news to report that "inquiries" about "the dollars' shipment" have widened. By conventional definition, news happens when new actors enter the story and provide more details to the puzzle.

The request for the suspension of a government official by a pre-candidate of the opposition is news. As I stated in the analysis of the second news report, the circumstances surrounding this official were not sufficiently clarified by the newspaper to allow La Nacion to make direct assumptions of his implication in the dollars affair.

The seizure of Allem's bank accounts was mentioned not only in the second news report but in another news article in which President Arias offered details about why Allem was asked for his resignation.

In view of all these details, one cannot help but ask why La Nacion's editors published this news report not only in the first top position but using an eight-column title, the most visible to the readers and an indication of the importance given to the event by the newspaper. There was, then, no news in their top news report of the day.

Obviously, this news report has a negative effect on the government and the prospects of the PLN pre-candidate Araya. This has already been discussed.

To finish with the analysis of the three main news articles about the dollars seizure, it is necessary to ask the well-known journalistic questions: (1) what happened; (2) where did it happen; (3) to whom did it happen; (4) who did it; (5) what were the results; and (6) in what context did it happen? That is, according to the normative rules of news writing, the lead must express the major semantic categories of a news event (Gars & Bernstein, 1982):

June 28, news report answers to the six questions:

1. What: Substantial seizure of a dollar shipment.
2. Where: At Santamaria airport in a flight from L.A., U.S.
3. To whom: Mario Valverde and Alvaro Allem.
4. Who did it: Narcotics Police Department.
5. Results: Valverde and Allem were arrested and they are in a jail and unavailable for comment.
6. Context: A press release by the Security Ministry indicated that the case was connected to the illegal entry of dollars into the country to money laundering.

June 29, news report answers to the six questions:

1. What: Two PLN members were mentioned by the courier of the dollar shipment as the persons who usually received him during the last electoral campaign with propaganda material that he brought

to the country.

2. Where: In the Police headquarters when Valverde gave a deposition.
3. To whom: Dionisio Miranda, President Arias' adviser, and PLN's Legislator Leonel Villalobos.
4. Who did it: Mario Valverde.
5. Results:
6. Context: Investigations about the seizure of the dollar shipment.

According to the well-known news values of recency and novelty, the third news report does not offer anything new. If answers to these questions for the two first news items are compared with these of the June 30 news item, we that the Security Minister did not offer any new details, but expectations.

June 30, news report answers to the six questions:

1. What: Judicial authorities continue the analysis of the links between the two individuals involved in the dollar shipment. The possibility of more detentions has not been discarded.
2. Where: In the Security Ministry offices.
3. To whom:
4. Who did it:
5. Results:
6. Context: Inquiries about the dollar shipment.

It can be easily seen that the news reports of June 28 and 29 are very different. The former is about a seizure of a valuable dollar shipment and the latter about the involvement of several people in a "propaganda affair." But the third news item adds more interest to this analysis when it is found that it is so weak that it cannot possibly answer half of the questions, and the ones that are answered do not offer anything new. In other words, it is a no-news article.

Then, the question is, how is it possible that a newspaper opened a daily issue with an eighth-column no-news article? There must be another reason, but clearly it is not of a journalistic nature. As van Dijk (1986) indicates, "lead information pertains only to the macropropositions of the text, and hence to the main actors, main event, main location, and so on" (p. 162). Therefore, if there is no news in the lead, that is because there are no new events in the whole news item.

Nicaraguan News

As in the preceding news categories, a review of the headlines (topics) in this group allow us to identify the themes that never reached the front pages. In this category, there are so many news stories that only a sample of the topics (headlines) left off the front pages will be used. Some presentational characteristics are indicated:

- Front Page - FEAR FOR ARM ACTIONS IN THE NORTH June 5
1st Top Population in constant alert
- Front Page - Demand democracy June 8
1st Top FREEDOM FIGHTERS GIVE ULTIMATUM
- Front Page - Cease fire accord in jeopardy June 10
1st Top NEGOTIATIONS BROKEN IN NICARAGUA
- Front Page - HINTON TAKES THE FLOOR AND SPEAKS June 13
1st Top In his first interview
the American ambassador says:
Military action in Panama is not discarded
The peace plan has not given
more democracy to the isthmus
Costa Rica makes good use of the economic aid
- Front Page - SANDINISTAS ARE STUBBORN, SAYS ARIAS June 14
1st Top "The degree of freedom that still
rule in Nicaragua is restricted too much"
- Front Page - The burden of inflation June 16
1st Top HIGH DEVALUATION IN THE NICARAGUAN CURRENCY
Prices and wages were deregulated
- Front Page - Guatemala promotes a new summit June 17
2nd Top NICARAGUA REJECTS ARIAS AS DIALOGUE'S
GUARANTOR
- Front Page - ARIAS AFFIRMS THAT NICARAGUANS June 18
3rd Top WANT HIM SILENCED
- Front Page - Demand before The Hague Court June 22
5th Bottom NICARAGUA DEMANDS RESTITUTION FROM THE U.S.

<u>Front Page</u> - Devaluated in parallel market	<u>June 26</u>
<u>1st Top</u> NICARAGUAN CURRENCY STILL ON THE FALL	
<u>Front Page</u> - U.S. WORRIES ABOUT	<u>June 28</u>
<u>1st Top</u> NICARAGUAN ARMAMENTS	
<u>Front Page</u> - CUBAN SPIES WORK	<u>June 30</u>
<u>2nd Top</u> WITHIN COSTA RICA	

In the schematic analysis (see Table XII), two news reports were not included, the one published on June 5, which is related to the Nicaraguan conflict, and the interview with the American ambassador, published on June 13. The first news item refers to problems on Costa Rica's northern border, related specifically to operations of Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries who are involved in crimes and other violent actions within the Costa Rican territory. In some studies (e.g., Sobrado et al., 1988; and Zeledon, 1987) La Nacion and the press in general have been widely criticized for ignoring or down-playing news events in which the Contras committed crimes against the Costa Rican population. This news report probably represents, or is an effort to fill, this information gap and to close the door to possible criticism in the future, although the circumstances that caused the press silence in the past--large scale operations of the Contras--no longer exists and there is no visible reward for maintaining that disinformation.

TABLE XII
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES OF THE
NICARAGUAN NEWS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>30</u>	
<u>Schematic Categories</u>												
<u>Headline</u>		2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	
												<u>Total</u>
Lead		2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	14
Main Event(s)		2	9	6	10	7	5	7	3	6	4	59
Context		4	2	1	3	1	3		1	1		16
Previous Events		2		3	4	2	4	2	3			20
Events/Acts			1									1
Verbal Reactions		2	7									9
Expectations						1						1
Evaluations					1							1
No. of Paragraphs		12	20	11	19	13	14	11	8	8	5	121

NOTE: With the exception of Headline counts, all numbers refer to paragraphs.

The ambassador's interview already has been mentioned in a context that excludes it from the NDA; interviews (Q + A) do not have the story structure required for NDA. The first top position eight-column title published over the Monday opener, sports news reports, strongly suggests some kind of preference for this interview. Another detail that could show bias is the Monday publication date (the interview took place Friday), because the newspaper has the

largest circulation that day and, supposedly, a more attentive readership.

Two full inside pages dedicated to an interview certainly are a concession, a clear demonstration of the importance La Nacion is giving to the U.S. speaker. Combined with characteristics presented even in the local level, like lexical selections, the impression is given that they are presenting in the words of a CR newsman, the ". . .orders from a Roman proconsul saying how the province he is in charge of should be governed" (Blachman & Hellman, 1986, p. 170).

The interview structure follows La Nacion's model, which has been transformed into a script, to them given by the U.S. The U.S. is Costa Rica's best friend, and Costa Ricans should not criticize U.S. policies because Costa Rica can be punished by reduction of aid or other economic assistance. President Arias' softness with communist Sandinistas is annoying American leaders.

In Table XII, notice the absence of the schematic subcategory History and the prevalence of actual events reflected in 59 paragraphs classified under the category Main Event(s), 16 under Context, and 20 under Previous Events, which together constitute 78.5 percent of the total of 121 paragraphs. This could indicate that La Nacion's journalists and editors assume the existence of a great deal of social knowledge about these events or that they

prefer to decontextualize the events to facilitate the presentation of their dominant script.

Regarding the schematic category Comments, there is an Evaluation on the June 16 news report in which the journalist makes an evaluation based on what he says opposition leaders and economists believe. He reports that the latest economic measures by the Sandinista government are indications that "the state's intervention in the economy began to yield space to Western patterns." This is a rhetorical strategy to promote the script that the 'free' market is more efficient. In the case of the June 17 news item, the government has not established its position. But based on what President Arias has said in the past, La Nacion journalists indicate that he is willing to meet with his regional peers in a summit.

However, Dean Hinton affirms that President Arias' position has not affected the willingness of the American government to continue its aid to Costa Rica. This is contrary to what La Nacion is telling Costa Ricans in its editorials and through its news reports.

Hinton also stated clearly that the U.S. is not resigned to the latest developments in Nicaragua. He says the Sandinista regime is a danger for Central America and the free world, and does not represent the Nicaraguans. That is La Nacion's script.

Interestingly, Hinton denied the participation of the Contras in drug trafficking, although President Reagan, in his plea of June 24, 1986, to the House of Representatives to pass the 100 million dollar aid package to the Contras, admitted that "such abuses have occurred in the past and they are intolerable" (Burns, 1987; Kentworthy, 1987). A secret CIA analysis alleged that two top ARDE commanders used cocaine profits to buy arms (Los Angeles Times, 12/21/85, quoted by Burns, 1987). Even a bipartisan commission of the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly, whose report was discussed in Chapter Two, came to the same conclusion.

Of the 12 news reports published on the front page in this news category, ten present negative scripts towards Nicaragua, one can be considered neutral and only one positive but played-down. In the inside pages, 46 news articles were written and 24 of them are clearly negative toward the Sandinistas. In the others, although there are facts that can be considered positive, the negative script is also present.

In this news category there are so many more details of an ideological nature that it would take a separate thesis to conduct an analysis. Moreover, the evidence presented is not only of bias, but of a coverup, which is even worse for a newspaper that claims to offer its readership an independent assessment of the facts.

As revealed by the front page headlines, three topics are highlighted: the Nicaraguan economic problems; the negotiation process between the Sandinistas and the Contras; and the implicit and explicit position of the U.S. toward the conflict.

The underlying message of the news reports about Sandonista economic problems was that the revolution had failed to give Nicaraguans acceptable economic development. In the other news categories, the lack of background information (see Table XII) is the principal characteristic of these news items. This lack of background distorts the news reports' content: The economic problems are never related to the state of war or the U.S. economic embargo and other pressures. They are related instead to the state intervention in the economy.

Regarding the news coverage of the dialogue between the Sandinistas and the Contras, the script is "democrats vs. totalitarians." Interestingly, the Sandinistas appear in the international news coverage as avid searchers for peace while the Contras express their doubts about this interest alluding to different reasons, especially those related to the role they can play within Nicaragua if the Sandinistas reject any suggestion to dismantle the government.

The local coverage by La Nacion's journalists is designed to delegitimize the Sandinistas and to picture them as a menace to Costa Rica and the Western countries. As Reding (1986) observes about the magnitude of this coverup and manipulation of the events that dealt with Nicaragua:

Until recently, the best the right-wing business community could achieve through its control of media was to brake the speed of social reform. The picture changed rapidly, though, after the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979 and the April 1980 resignation of businessman Alfonso Robelo from Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction. In that month, executives from major broadcast and print media began meeting together to plan common editorial strategies for dealing with Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other areas of common concern. Then, following Ronald Reagan's 1980 electoral victory, representatives of the U.S.embassy began playing a more active role in these meetings-assign of the natural convergence between the Costa Rican private sector's desire to insulate itself from the possible influence of revolutionary ideas on labor and the landless peasantry, and the Reagan administration's desire to remove the Sandinistas from power. The outcome has been concerted propaganda and disinformation campaign. Now entering its seventh year, this campaign is designed to scare Costa Ricans into a hostile attitude toward Nicaragua, thereby increasing their receptivity to U.S. intervention Costa Rica rearmament, and persecution of real and supposed domestic leftist (p. 303).

EDITORIALS THEMES

The third research question of this thesis concerns the relationship between news reporting and editorial coverage (see Table XIII).

TABLE XIII
SCHEMATIC CATEGORIES FOR EDITORIALS

<u>Schematic Categories</u>	<u>Number of Editorials</u>
1. Legislative Matters	2
2. Economic Matters	1
3. Labor Matters	2
4. Agricultural Matters	6
5. Educational Matters	2
6. Presidential Matters	1
7. Drug Trafficking Matters	8
8. Nicaraguan Matters	<u>4</u>
	26

From a total of 37 editorials in the original sample, 31 of them were related directly to news reports. Five of these editorials are linked with international news. This news category is not going to be analyzed, since I have restricted the sample to media messages about close events (proximity value of the news). These messages are better understood, because they are based on readers' cognitive models that are more complete and more available, and since we know more about our country and other places familiar to us. Thus, the final number of editorials is 26, which were clustered using eight of the original 13 categories:

To summarize the editorials, this study uses the macrostructural concept. Macrostructures are derived from

meanings (propositions) of a text by a set of rules, such as selection, generalization and construction. These enable readers to derive the topic from a sequence of sentences (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). There is no schematic theory available about the structure of editorials.

This analysis uses the editorials' titles (the top macrostructure) and two other kinds of macrostructures, Arguments and Critique Target. The former classifies the argumentative part of them; the latter, which includes the macrostructures of praise or criticism, concerns the two principal functions of the editorial discourse as it is understood within the 'market' theory of the press (van Dijk, 1988a). Finally, a third kind of information has been collated under the heading Local Details. These data are important in some cases to make the necessary links with the relevant news reports.

In view of Research Question #3, editorial and news information must be viewed simultaneously. This will enable the readers to understand better the discussion of the results in the following chapter.

Only some of the top macrostructures (headlines) for each category will be used to identify the related news reports. In some cases the editorial content overlaps with more than one news item.

Date	News Type	Title
6/1	Legislative	OUR POSITION

Arguments

The 10% tax on advertisements affects the freedoms of speech and information as well as the economic independence of the news media.

Critique Target

Government. National Chamber of Radio Broadcasting.

Local Details

La Nacion favors tax exemption for radio stations.

News Headlines

- Imminent agreement between parties June 2
- NORM ABOUT ADVERTISEMENT WILL BE ELIMINATED
- More delays in Congress will endanger international loans, says Treasury Minister
- TREASURY COMMISSION ELIMINATED June 11
- NORM ABOUT ADVERTISEMENT
- PLN expects SENARA will be approved Mon

Date	News Type	Title
6/13	Legislative	CONSTITUTIONAL VIOLATION

Arguments

Treasury Commission approved extraordinary budget with additional rules that are unconstitutional. It is shameful that the Executive Power proposed such a violation with the

legislators' approval. The Supreme Court of Justice has ruled against this practice.

Critique Target

Executive Power. Most PLN legislators.

Local Details

Negative norms could be adopted. Easy way to negative legislation.

News Headlines

- Included in an extraordinary budget June 1
 PLN LEGISLATORS TALK AGAINST
 GENERAL NORMS TO THE BUDGET
- PROCESSING OF BUDGET'S NORMS June 3
 MAKES CONGRESS APPREHENSIVE

Date	News Type	Title
6/16	Presidential	"PARALLEL POWERS"

Arguments

According to the adviser and intimate friend of President Arias (John Biehl) the North Americans have built a parallel state in Costa Rica. Biehl's allegations are inconsistent with the signing this week of an agreement with USAID that unmistakably proved that conspiracy is in progress. And neither the President nor the Treasury Minister have been able to stop it.

Critique Target

Biehl's concept about the state of Costa Rica is in keeping with the descriptions made by the commandants from Nicaragua, those of some creole agents from the far left; and even those of some "leaders" of the farmers in Guacimo who complain about the "oppressive" policies of the IMF or USAID.

Local Details

Arias saved Costa Rica from the war. When he finishes his term he could probably eliminate the parallel state.

News Headlines

- JOHN BIEHL CRITICIZES REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

June 11

- CRITICS OF JOHN BIEHL'S DECLARATION June 14
- BIEHL REFUSES TO WITHDRAW CRITICISM OF REAGAN June 15
- PRESIDENT BACKS UP BIEHL AFTER CRITICISM June 18

Date	News Type	Title
6/1	Drug	FOUR NEWS REPORTS

Arguments

Central America was a secondary theme during the Gorbachev-Reagan summit. Failures in negotiations between the U.S. and Noriega. Sandinistas rejected Contra's proposal to finish the war. International Institute of Strategic Studies concludes: narcotic trafficking--

terrorism represents together with Communism the principal menace against Latin America.

Critique Target

Ambiguity of American policy, internal division eroded by the Democrats' soft attitude toward Communism. Drug traffickers in alliance with Communism and terrorism.

Local Details

Sandinistas and Noriega toy with the U.S. Indifference is an impediment to solutions. Lack of democratic leaders and statesmen.

News Headlines

- HINTON TAKES THE FLOOR AND SPEAKS June 13
 In his first interview the American ambassador says:
 Military action in Panama is not discarded
 The peace plan has not given most democracy
 to the isthmus.
 Drug trafficking uses Costa Rica as a
 trans-shipment point
- Sanction for ties with Fionna June 14
 JUDICIAL POLICE'S CHIEF SUSPENDED BY SUPREME COURT
- Expatroller denounces June 1
 POLICEMEN ARE-ILL PREPARED
- Speech in the U.N. June 9
 ARIAS ASKS FOR SANCTIONS TO ARM PRODUCERS

Date	News Type	Title
6/3	Drug	JUDGES, JOURNALISTS AND DRUG SMUGGLERS

Arguments

In the tragic Latin American scenario, the judges and newsmen are the target of the narcotic traffickers and communist's guerrilla. Given this partnership, there is little free and secure space available in the region. The Marxist-Leninist guerrillas are the private guard of narcotic traffickers, and in exchange for these services they have unlimited financial resources.

Critique Target

Costa Rican judges and newsmen have resisted the action of drug traffickers.

Local Details

Unified action by the government and political parties needed. The Colombian state is an example of the drug smugglers power.

News Headlines

News stories about drug trafficking.

Date	News Type	Title
6/6	Drug	DRUG TRAFFICKERS AND POLITICIANS

Arguments

After three years of silence a public figure has neither the right to make unsustained charges nor to maintain silence.

Critique Target

Ex-President Oduber offered on June 22, 1985 to give the names of politicians involved with or related to drug smugglers.

Local Details

Security Minister Garron will ask him the names.

News Headlines

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Of persons involved in drug trafficking | <u>June 4</u> |
| GOVERNMENTAL MINISTER ASKS NAMES TO ODUBER | |
| - Two ministers will visit him today | <u>June 7</u> |
| ODUBER WILL BE ASKED NAMES INVOLVED
IN DRUG TRAFFICKING | |
| - ODUBER DID NOT GIVE NAMES | <u>June 8</u> |
| INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING | |
| - About drug trafficking | <u>June 14</u> |
| JUDICIAL COMPLAINT POSED FOR ODUBER ATTITUDE | |

Date	News Type	Title
6/6	Drug	REGULATIONS ON CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLITICIANS

Arguments

Legislator Fait (PLN) announced the presentation of a project to regulate donations from individuals and organizations to political parties.

Critique Target

Purposes of the project are legitimate, especially under the danger that drug smugglers and influential traffickers could acquire sufficient political power to control the nation.

Local Details

Prison terms and economic sanctions. Mandatory control of the parties' accounts.

News Headlines

- PUSC ASKS UNITY AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING June 10

Date	News Type	Title
6/9	Drug	A NECESSARY REVISION

Arguments

Ex-President Oduber accused La Nacion of bribing witnesses to use that information in reports about drug trafficking.

Critique Target

The Court should provide this statement; without it Oduber cannot be sued. The Supreme Court of Justice should review this kind of decree to benefit others.

Local Details

Basic reason: There is no norm to forbid providing a certification.

News Headlines

News stories about drug-traffickers and politicians.

Date	News Type	Title
6/14	Drug	LACK OF SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

Arguments

The Superior Penal Court of Liberia released three Columbians and one Mexican suspected of international drug trafficking, and bribing an official.

Critique Target

For lack of sufficient investigation, legal technicalities or some other circumstance, in two different cases before, people implicated in drug smuggling have been freed.

Local Details

They confessed to have transported 600 Kg of cocaine to Mexico.

News Headlines

- FOUR PERSONS WERE ACQUITTED June 8
 FROM CHARGES OF DRUG SMUGGLING
 Three Colombians and one Mexican

Date	News Type	Title
6/23	Drug	A BRAVE DECISION

Arguments

The decision to fire Ricardo Umana, a high official of the Judicial Power by the Supreme Court of Justice, is a triumph.

Critique Target

The Court's decision is a valuable step and a stimulus to the national campaign against this type of corruption.

Local Details

Umana had ties with a drug smuggler.

News Headlines

- COURT WILL RESOLVE FIONNA'S PLEA TODAY June 6
- FIONNA'S PLEA WAS DISMISSED June 11
- COURT GRANTED FIONNA'S EXTRADITION June 28
- Defense has time to make a plea until Friday
- Possibility is studied June 29
- FIONNA WILL GIVE HIMSELF UP TO FRENCH POLICE
- Sanction for ties with Fiona June 14
- JUDICIAL POLICE'S CHIEF SUSPENDED BY SUPREME COURT
- BITTER DISPUTE IN UMANA'S CASE June 15
- For one vote he was not fired
- Ties with Fiona June 17
- JUDGE SOLICITED A REASSESSMENT OF UMANA'S CASE
- LEGISLATORS WILL INVESTIGATE FIONNA'S June 18

TIES TO THE JUDICIAL POLICE

Supreme Court asked information about Umana

- Fionna-Umana investigation June 20

THE PROOFS OF A RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP

- Ties with Fionna June 21

SUPREME COURT FIRED UMANA

Date	News Type	Title
6/29	Drug	ACTION AGAINST DRUG-TRAFFICKING

Arguments

The spectacular capture of two individuals and a shipment \$760,467 should not distract attention from the drug trafficking in Costa Rica. Costa Rican drug smugglers' associates are located in strategic positions to put Costa Rica on the global drug map.

Critique Target

The Legislative Assembly stopped an inconclusive inquiry. The Executive Power has not elaborated the plan of action against drug trafficking requested by the Legislative Assembly.

Local Details

Rafael Caro Quintero and Jesus Diaz de Leon built a base in Costa Rica.

News Headlines

- SUBSTANTIAL DOLLARS SHIPMENT CONFISCATED June 28
- MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PROPAGANDA SEIZURE June 29

- Police expect to apprehend more people June 30

INQUIRIES ABOUT THE DOLLARS SHIPMENT WIDENED

Seizure of Allem's bank accounts was ordered last
February

Calderon asks for suspension of a Government
official

Date	News Type	Title
6/4	Nicaragua	DO NOT IGNORE THE FACTS

Arguments

The designation of Panama, together with Cuba in the Human Rights Commission of the U.N., and Noriega's relationships with the U.S.S.R. are not two isolated facts. The triangle of Panama, Cuba and Nicaragua, for its ideological weight as much as for the drug trafficking, is too dangerous.

Critique Target

We have been observing during the last months in Panama the same methodology applied in Cuba and Nicaragua: A division and lack of foresight among those in the democratic movement in L.A., in contrast with the strong unity of conception, planning and execution on the Soviet side. A Marxist-Leninist regime to the North has been consolidated thanks to the Arias' peace plan.

Local Details

Columbia is a country in the hands of drug smugglers. The building of a fearful and powerful enemy has begun to the South.

News Headlines

- HINTON TAKES THE FLOOR AND SPEAKS June 13

In his first interview the American ambassador says: Military action in Panama is not discarded; the peace plan has not given more democracy to the isthmus

- Expatroller denounces June 1

POLICEMEN ARE ILL-PREPARED

Date	News Type	Title
6/12	Nicaragua	REALITY CALLS FOR RECTIFICATIONS

Arguments

The failure of the dialogue between the "Nicaraguan Resistance" and the Sandinista regime was anticipated. Not only irreconcilable differences persisted, but without the military pressure, the Marxist dictatorship persisted in seeking the Contras' unconditional surrender. Military pressure could stop the advancement of the Sandinista's totalitarian project.

Critique Target

The American Congress, dominated by the Democrats, undermined the possibilities of attaining an opening to a

real democratization when it stopped the aid to the Contras. This situation was legitimized by the Esquipulas II peace plan, whose principal promoter is President Arias. He is obligated to denounce the deception by the Sandinistas.

Local Details

Nicaragua, like Afghanistan or Angola will never open its systems to pluralism.

News Headlines

- Demand democracy June 8
FREEDOM FIGHTERS GIVE ULTIMATUM
- Cease fire accord in jeopardy June 10
NEGOTIATIONS BROKEN IN NICARAGUA

Date	News Type	Title
6/21	Nicaragua	RETURN TO THE PRINCIPLES

Arguments

Once in a while it is important to have a good grasp of the principles, to prevent the losing sight of the real goal. The Central American crisis owes to a Marxist-Leninist government in Nicaragua. Although the objective of reconciliation and disarmament includes all the countries, the only illegitimate regime is that of the Sandinistas.

Critique Target

Why does President Arias, promoter of peace, and the other chiefs of state, pretend not to hear the tune that Ortega intoned with such force and clarity? The excuse is no longer valid that a dialogue is in process. The dialogue is not a goal by itself. If all the presidents know for sure that the counterpart is Leninism, the only way to make them fulfill their obligations is by backing up the Contras.

Local Details

The Central Americans are victims of a historic fraud.

News Headlines

- SANDINISTAS ARE STUBBORN, SAYS ARIAS June 14
 "The degree of freedom that still rule
 in Nicaragua is restricted to much"
- ARIAS AFFIRMS THAT NICARAGUANS June 18
 WANT HIM SILENCED

Date	News Type	Title
6/30	Nicaragua	ORTEGA IN CUBA

Arguments

Despite the negative press that his trip to Cuba could bring to the Nicaraguan regime, Ortega decided to visit Castro, probably because he knew that there would be no sanctions applied against him.

Critique Target

The people notice the facts and come to conclusions with goodwill and common sense. Politicians and rulers, however, frequently ignore the facts and produce a new reality and, in this way, its consequences are different.

Local Details

Facts have shown that democratization in Nicaragua is a utopia dream.

News Headlines

- U.S. WORRY ABOUT NICARAGUAN ARMAMENTS June 28
- CUBAN SPIES WORK WITHIN COSTA RICA June 30

Date	News Type	Title
6/7	Agricultural	THE TRAGEDY OF PITAHAYA

Arguments

It is not the first time that a tragic event has opened our eyes about how the law is broken. There is an imbalance between the laws and the mechanisms to control their enforcement.

Critique Target

It is important to outline state negligence in controlling individuals or corporations that infringe upon the norms for protecting the worker's health. There also are some irresponsible corporations, the Government itself, or some counties, that do not build ducts for water-courses

to protect the cities' populations from contamination.

Local Details

A 15 year-old worker died and 50 more had to be hospitalize.

News Headlines

- ONE DEATH AND 47 PERSONS AFFECTED BY June 3
A MASSIVE TOXIC CHEMICAL POISONING
Emergency with chemical substance in Puntarenas
- Judicial Police runs investigation June 4
NEGLIGENCE COULD BE THE CAUSE OF
A MASSIVE TOXIC CHEMICAL POISONING
Confusion among experts

Date	News Type	Title
6/8	Agricultural	NEW AGRICULTURAL PROTECTIONISM

Arguments

The protectionist state, whichever form it takes, is undesirable, especially if it is used as a permanent development strategy. In Costa Rica, some private businessmen have begun to be aware of this, although others continue to endorse the paternalistic state.

Critique Target

Neither the producers nor the state admit to these problems. They are not willing to change their policies. The state is inducing the farmers to produce certain crops,

and if something goes wrong in the future, then again the taxpayers will have to provide the subsidies.

Local Details

Some producers have to pay higher interest rates to subsidize lower interest rates for the farmers.

News Headlines

- Beginning tomorrow June 7
FARMERS ANNOUNCE PRESSURE MEASURES
- POLICE ON ALERT BEFORE FARMERS' STRIKE June 8
Agriculture Minister says there are
funds for agricultural production

Date	News Type	Title
6/11	Agricultural	POLITICS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Arguments

The problem lies, to some degree, in a real deficiency of some of the projects managed by the government, but this is not a reason to cast aside the real purpose by some groups to subvert the dialogue and to proceed with violence. Thus, the problem is provoked by either one of the two possibilities or a combination of both. It is healthy for the small farmers to organize themselves. What is not acceptable is their use as pawns by other groups.

Critique Target

The Government has to analyze the political and ideological dimensions that provoked the conflicts with the

farmers. The convenience, accuracy or economic efficiency of the governmental initiatives in the agricultural sector have been extensively debated. It is time to examine the other face of the problem. The weak attitude by the government has to be censured because it has done nothing to prevent the closing of public facilities.

Local Details

Since September, 1986, the farmers have periodically resorted to closing public roads, seizing public buildings or demonstrations on the streets of San Jose.

News Headlines

- GOVERNMENT DEMANDS TO LIFT BLOCKADES June 9
- Police opened the way in June 10
Parrita and Guanacaste
- MOBILIZATIONS AGAINST BLOCKADES
- Five people were kept hostages June 11
for many hours
- COUNTY BUILDING TAKEN IN SANTA CRUZ
- 48 hours term to lift blockades

Date	News Type	Title
6/15	Agricultural	CRISIS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Arguments

Agricultural producer have been suffering as a result of policies that act against them: distortions that affect costs of production and competition; political influences

setting product prices for goods bought or sold; insecurity about the rules of the game; state--paternalism; bureaucracy in the banks; and all the burdensome weight of the State.

Critique Target

We protect freedom in general and the legal system. Therefore, we denounce all movements of force or pressure, no matter their rationale. We mentioned other purposes beyond those argued by the farmers, this does not imply in any sense that we do not acknowledge that they have reason, because their situation and the activity are pitiful.

Local Details

The official price policy is partly responsible for the actual crisis.

News Headlines

- Blockades maintained June 12
 AGREEMENT WITH FARMERS IS NOT YET POSSIBLE
 Santa Cruz county facilities evacuated
- Conflict with the farmers persists June 13
 PRICE RAISES DEMANDED FOR RICE, CORN, AND BEANS
- Farmers demand Arias' presence June 14
 DISAGREEMENT CONTINUES AS WELL AS THE BLOCKADES
- By the First Lady's mediation June 15
 BLOCKADES LIFTED IN THE ATLANTIC REGION
 Farmers will meet with Arias today

Date	News Type	Title
6/18	Agricultural	TO DEFY A CHALLENGE

Arguments

Neither the government nor the political parties could pretend ignorance about how violence is incubating in the small farmers' sector. The reaction of a group of illegal occupants of an Agrarian Development Institute (IDA) lot must not be considered as an isolated event, but as another instance of violent acts planned and executed during recent years.

Critique Target

The government, as much as the political parties, must proceed rapidly and responsibly, without electoral considerations. The fire that could ignite a social detonation must be extinguished. The flag and leadership must be taken from politicians who use them not to solve the problem but to stop a solution.

Local Details

The action by the IDA has been prudent but energetic. Thus, violence did not triumph.

News Headlines

- VIOLENT EVICTION OF LAND INVADERS

June 17

Two civil guards wounded

Police car burned

Date	News Type	Title
6/27	Agricultural	THE UPAGRA'S INTRANSIGENCE

Arguments

Although farmers' originally aired their economic grievances by petitions, their preference for violent acts showed a second strategy. It should have been clear to all concerned that this movement would have to be put down. In a few weeks, the farmers passed from disorganization to perfect organization, from the peaceful protest to violence.

Critique Target

The Government probably guessed at the ideological dimension of the first episodes, but until now it has acted inappropriately. It did not denounce the movement's abuse of the economic petition but tolerated them as a prelude to violent acts.

Local Details

In September, 1986, 500 farmers demonstrated in San Jose. They repeated the protest in 1987 and 1988.

. . . AND THE GOVERNMENT'S INDECISION

Arguments

The influence of ideological factors and the participation of radicals in the farmers' strike is not an excuse to forget the real problem. The farmers announced

they were having deep difficulties some years ago, but the Government did not listen to them and did not use their complaints to undertake a comprehensive diagnosis of the problems.

Critique Target

It is time to establish an objective mechanism for prices. The market and the scarcity must play an important role. It is imperative to abandon gradually the state-paternalism that has converted the farmers to ineffective, dependent and fearful producers. It would be most efficient to allow the system to adjust for itself, through market prices, without so much state interference.

News Headlines

- A settlement is expected this June 16
coming Wednesday
GOVERNMENT AND FARMERS BEGAN NEGOTIATIONS
- Neighbors from Guacimo integrate June 17
Civic Committee
IMMINENT RAISES IN PRICES OF RICE, BEANS, AND CORN
- Farmers and Government parley June 18
MINISTERS DO NOT REJECT PRICE RAISES
IN BASIC GRAINS
Changes in the Rice's Office analyzed
- FARMERS MAINTAIN STRIKE June 21
Uncertainty about rice stocks
- Official proposal will be answered today June 23

AGREEMENT WITH FARMERS IS UNCERTAIN

- FARMERS REJECT PROPOSAL June 24

New pressure measures announced

- Conflict with farmers June 25

GOVERNMENT SAYS IT WILL NOT GIVE IN

- PRODUCERS COULD NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE June 25

OF BANANA HIGHER PRICES

- MEASURES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT June 26

OF AGRICULTURAL SECTOR INITIATED

Government gives instructions

Date	News Type	Title
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6/20	Economic	THE PROCESSES OF PRIVATIZATION
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Arguments

The controversy about the plan to privatize a portion of the services of the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE) must be used to discuss in depth some aspects about the privatization process already started in Costa Rica. This process is justifiable if, in reality, there is a desire to restructure the Costa Rican economy to reach higher levels of efficiency, and stimulate production. There are economic reasons as well as fiscal and social reasons to accept the privatization.

Critique Target

We believe that the statement by the ICE about the partial privatization of some of its services is

well-aimed. The financial difficulties of this institution as well as the need to face fast technological changes, make the privatization of its services interesting. We do not agree, however, with the proposal to sell thousands of stock shares among Costa Ricans and to foreigners due to the possible effect of this action in our limited market. From this point of view, it would be more convenient to open the participation to international corporations, with capital and technological possibilities.

News Headlines

- Privatization project of the June 4
Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE)
ICE WOULD SELL 60% OF ITS ASSETS IN
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
- Government and USAID sign donation June 14
agreement for \$85 million
COUNTRY ACCEPTS TO STABILIZE AND
ADJUST STRUCTURE OF ITS ECONOMY

Date	News Type	Title
6/19	Labor	AT THE DOORS OF OTHER CRISIS

Arguments

The labor court resolution of a conflict within the Costa Rican social security system will jeopardize recent efforts to solve the economic problems of this institution. According to the court's judgment, the organization would

have to pay two-billion colones more annually to cover the new workers' rights.

Critique Target

It is surprising how the judges did not measure the consequences of their decisions as well as the economic possibilities of the system. From the judicial and economic points of view, the new rights given to the workers are indefensible. A rare mentality has possessed some social groups who believe that the economic capacity of the state is endless, and that there is no relationship between them and the production capacity. Therefore, the duty of a union is to demand the most in an exaggerated fashion.

News Headlines

- Collective conflict solved

June 18

JUICY BENEFITS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM EMPLOYEES

Date	News Type	Title
6/25	Labor	CONSEQUENCES OF A REFEREE SETTLEMENT

Arguments

The economic, legal and financial consequences of the social security settlement by a referee court are extremely serious. After reading the different benefits that were given to the system's workers, it is difficult to restrain indignation. While the patients of the system complain

about the unsatisfactory attention, lack of medicines, high fees, etc., the indignation increases.

Critique Target

Who is responsible? The referees? Did they have faculties to evaluate the economic and financial impact over the system? Are the members of the board of directors the ones who must admit their responsibility? During the last years the surplus of the system served to reduce the deficit of the Central Government to fulfill the IMF requirements. Thus, the country is facing of a new problem.

News Headlines

- DISCREPANCIES SPRING UP ABOUT June 19
SOCIAL SECURITY EMPLOYEES PRIVILEGES
- Workers press for better laboral conditions June 27
CONFLICTS INCREASE IN PUBLIC SECTOR
- Due to a collective conflict June 27
STATE CANNOT ASSUME SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM'S
EXPENSES

Date	News Type	Title
6/2	Educational	NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

Arguments

An alliance between teachers and students has challenged the Education Ministry, and thus, the government. Three aspects have to be outlined: the

agreement between educators and students to challenge the established procedures; the insecurity that both show about their knowledge; and the formulation of an ultimatum to the government.

Critique Target

This strike is another symptom of the recent spate of pressure politics by groups addicted to violence, and hostile to established order. The attitude of another educators' organization, the professors' collegium, is different. They have accepted the comprehensive tests and the promise by the MEP that they will be administered at the end of this year. We hope that this promise will be kept in spite of the pressures or other political concessions by the government.

News Headlines

- TENSION GROWS IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR June 1
- PARTIAL APPROVAL TO STUDENTS' STRIKE June 2

Date	News Type	Title
6/28	Educational	CLEAR NORMS NEEDED IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Arguments

Two criteria about which norms to follow in high schools are contradictory. On one side is the President of the Legislative Assembly, and on the other the Education Minister. It is obvious how the strike is a way to put pressure on the educational authorities: the adults have

converted the strike into an efficient pressure instrument without civil or penal consequences for them.

Critique Target

The arguments expressed by the Legislative Assembly's President about the high school students' freedom of speech and protest are fundamental if we believe that educational centers are the best places for our young population to learn about our political rights but not about discipline. These norms of discipline are repressive to the Congress' President, and more so, if they are applied to students.

Local Details

The decree about the use of a regular and standard uniform for all the high schools students has not been respected.

News Headlines

- Education Minister would accept conditions June 10
WAY TO HIGH SCHOOLS COMPREHENSIVE TESTS IS CLEARED
- APSE and MEP gave up June 11
STUDENTS WILL HAVE COMPREHENSIVE TESTS

To conclude this section, I cite former La Nacion editor Guido Fernandez. In an article already quoted (see Chapter I), he affirms that the imbalance has been accentuated during the last years. He refers to the balance that he always had sought between the newspaper's editorial content and LN's use of the adjacent Opinion Page. He states:

The writers from the conservative ideological sector and from the Unity Party (PUSC) appear most frequently and their reports are published faster than (those from) the liberals or from Liberation Party writers (LN, 6/4/88, p. 16A).

Fernandez even says that the conservative writers are allowed to discuss electoral topics with "an aggressive militant tone" which, during his time at La Nacion "was taboo."

Therefore, the polarization phenomenon that Costa Rica has gradually experienced in an increasing fashion since the Sandinistas took power in Nicaragua in July, 1979, also has shown itself in the editorial section. According to Fernandez, this includes not only the editorials but the articles that the newspaper used to publish from writers of different ideological sectors of the Costa Rican society, precisely to maintain their image as objective communicators of the Costa Rican reality.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to establish: (1) If there is a systematic bias in La Nacion news coverage, (2) the character of any possible bias, and (3), the relationship between the bias found in the news reporting and the editorial posture. With the purpose of answering these questions in this chapter, I first must indicate that they are intimately linked and the manner in which they are linked can best be revealed in topical fashion using the eight topic categories.

Finally, to answer the third research question, I will provide an analysis based on the similarities found in a study by Soto (1987) of 50 La Nacion editorials published in May 1985.

OVERVIEW: SYSTEMATIC BIAS

The first assumption of this study is that objectivity is impossible. In fact, a subjective element precedes the work of journalists and editors.

We have seen in the presentation of the results how journalists and editors favor some types of sources over

others, in ways that seem related to La Nacion's own socioeconomic and cultural values.

From the moment that La Nacion's journalists and editors present some viewpoints and fail or neglect to mention others of arguably equal relevance, they are showing their bias, which has proved to be systematic.

To begin with the results of the placement analysis, the reader might have noticed how the frequency and size of the news coverage are the first obvious signals of the magnification process involved. This relative importance, of course, was predefined by this study which focuses mainly on the front page news reports. Additionally, the study has considered which type of actors were given more relevance, as well as the size of the headlines, use of photographs and other semiotic signs to determine the level of importance among the 'prominent' news items on the front page.

Van Dijk (1988b) points out that the construction of 'a panic' as social meaning requires the playing up of news stories in five different levels: frequency and size of coverage; headlines and other signals of relative importance; repetition of some aspects of the news coverage; selection, construction and rhetorical emphasis of a few topics of the many thematic dimensions available; and the use of a style and rhetoric of description that further emphasize the seriousness and the urgency of the

problem, through the use of well-known metaphors, contrast, parallelisms, etc.

The study has found these characteristics in the following news categories: Nicaraguan, Agricultural, Drug Trafficking and Presidential (Biehl's case). The same characteristics also were found in the Legislative, Labor and Educational news categories with the exception of the level related to frequency, because the numbers of news items available is not enough to make an assertion in this direction. Thus, these last three categories cannot be mentioned as related to the creation of a panic or some sort of massive negative feelings about the groups negatively depicted in the news coverage. Van Dijk (1988b) indicates that "the construction of a panic requires that at all these levels of discourse the events be formulated at the same time as a threat or as a public danger" (p. 252).

Following the 'market' tendencies, in general, most of the news reports construct the main themes so that the topics that have negative implications are covered most frequently and more prominently.

The alternative definition of the problems by the non-elite are given in fragments, although frequency and textual organization of these interventions are framed primarily as reactions or protest against the primary speakers and actors of the political and social Costa Rican

stage. For example, in the cases of the farmers' and the faculty-students' strikes, La Nacion's news coverage was a kind of semi-autonomous and specific media product. That is, while there is some partial response to current events, news is mainly a construction of the newspaper. It is as van Dijk (1988b) states, "a reconstruction of the facts rather than a direct description or rendering of what happened" (p. 224).

In this news coverage, negativity is not the dominant criterion because only the negative actions by one group are reported and the negative actions by the police authorities, or the elite individuals or groups, are ignored or downplayed. Also, the counter-ideological positions are de-emphasized. In contrast, the positive acts by the elite groups ideologically attuned with the newspaper are selected and highlighted. As van Dijk (1988b) points out, this means that "the news stories have a clear polarizing effect and reconstruct the events as a drama with easily identifiable opponents" (p. 286).

In general, the headlines also provide top macrostructures that are inaccurate or present a false script when they are not highlighting a lower level macrostructure. This practice conforms to the tendencies in the readership toward skipping two out of every three prominent news stories which, according to Graber (1984,

p. 202), "are likely to affect the course of politics substantially." She adds that "the credit for this greater attentiveness to important stories is shared by newspeople. They use a series of prominence cues (e.g., story placement, headline size, story length, pictorial treatment, and frequent repetitions) to attract attention to news that political leaders and media gatekeepers deem significant."

This attitude by the readership further reduces the amount of information needed to be stored. Thus, the readers are incorporating into their thinking those partial or biased scripts or models constructed by La Nacion's journalists and editors with the headlines and leads. The process facilitates integration of news information into existing knowledge.

Information about backgrounds is minimal when presented and is ignored in most news stories. In relation to the lack of backgrounds, Graber (1984) outlines: "Since news sources usually present the news in isolated snippets, without sufficient background, schemas [models or scripts] allow the receivers to incorporate news into a meaningful context" (p. 202). The problem with this practice is probably that those meaningful contexts also were created by La Nacion's preceding news coverage (Parenti, 1986; van Dijk, 1988a,b).

La Nacion's journalists and editors seem to represent the view of the authorities if only by their selective use of sources and statements. Their lack of interest in the backgrounds of events, especially those that could explain the situation with a perspective favorable to those who are depicted negatively, obscures this for the public at large. As van Dijk (1988b) indicates, the focus on spectacular and dramatic events in news coverage, (e.g., the farmers' strike and John Biehl's critics to the Reagan administration), "reduces a social problem to the level of an incident" (p. 286). The socio-economic issue of the farmers' strike is thus redefined as a social problem of violence emanating from the farmers and the "social agitators" behind them, concealing a problem that is lasting and real. The ideological reasons behind the public prosecution of John Biehl by La Nacion also is obscured by the newspaper's news coverage of the issue as a diplomatic incident and not as a problem that involves Costa Rica's sovereignty.

With van Dijk (1988b), I say: "Unwittingly, but professionally and ideologically, [La Nacion's] journalists represent the view of the authorities, if only by their selective use of sources and statements" (p. 286).

The results of the Actor Analysis demonstrates that non-elite people appear less often as major agents in the news reports [40 news articles (22%), in contrast to 142

news items (78%) in which the quoted actors are elite individuals]. Additionally, in 65% of the news stories in which a non-elite actor was quoted, sources were pictured in a negative way, confirming that non-elite people must appear less often as major agents unless they are suspected or accused of negative acts.

In view of the aforementioned, I consider that Research Question #1 about the existence of systematic bias in La Nacion must be answered positively. However, it has to be acknowledge that this systematic bias is not only explained by the facts related in this overview. The links between the three research questions establish that the additional discussion of the evidence that will be provided to answer Research Questions #2 and #3--to prove the direction or character of this systematic bias and the relationship of the news reporting with the editorial posture--also serve the purpose of providing more proof to substantiate La Nacion's systematic bias.

Direction of Systematic Bias

Analyzing individually the eight news categories of this study, I determined the following trends in La Nacion's bias:

The Legislative News category includes four news reports whose aim is to convince the readership that the practice of political obstructionism by the PUSC was not "political blackmail." The conservative party stopped the

approval by the Legislative Assembly of some international loans and offered to give its consent to the ruling party, if the PLN agreed to eliminate a norm to authorize the broadcasting news media to reimburse 50% of the advertisement tax to the state, along with an equivalent value in air time or space available for state use. The qualitative analysis of the four news items established the presence of comments and other rhetorical resources as well as structural inconsistencies aimed to convince the readers that the PUSC was defending the constitutionality of the country's laws and not La Nacion's interests (see my Chapter III, p. 74).

Thus, the news coverage in this category is oriented to support the PUSC actions within the Congress. And, this party simultaneously is promoting La Nacion's viewpoint.

In the Economic News category the two news articles analyzed highlight the benefits of actions oriented toward the privatization of the Costa Rican economy. The underlying argument is that the State is the cause of all the country's problems, while private enterprise is picture as the solution to all those problems. The state is characterized as inefficient and as a squanderer of resources while the private sector is ordered and efficient. This economic news coverage was aimed to promote the privatization of the Costa Rican Institute of

Electricity's (ICE) assets and the stabilization and adjustment of the Costa Rican economy to the 'free' market.

The selection, construction, and rhetorical emphasis against the workers in La Nacion's news articles in the Labor News category is quite evident. The news coverage is a semi-autonomous construction by the newspaper's journalists and editors in which the workers are depicted as the creators of another crisis. The real issue is left obscure, even though two journalists wrote an "in depth" news report to provide additional information about the issue, not the events. In contrast, La Nacion highlighted the case of a civilian policeman fired from the police patrol corps. This non-elite individual was promoted to the level of an elite person and was interviewed at his home. In this case La Nacion is not promoting the workers' rights but its own ideologically dominant perspective, implicitly pointing to the need for a better and more professional police corps.

In the first case La Nacion disagrees with the Labor Court and criticizes its decision. The newspaper depicts the workers as unworthy of the benefits they received by the court's rule and shows the other Costa Rican workers as victims of discrimination. In the second case, the newspaper supports the fired policeman and implies that he is a victim of a system which offers inadequate training.

In the Agricultural News category, La Nacion's news coverage moves from highlighting the farmers' strike to criticizing the Government's inefficiency in delegitimizing the farmer's movement. Although the newspaper is a secondary definer of the situation, it constructs the events in a semi-autonomous way by selection and rhetorical emphasis on a few topics, leaving the real issue in obscurity. By contrast, the newspaper presents the case of a group of land invaders (squatters) evicted by the police as a legitimate case in which the police acted to defend law and order. The case of the massive toxic chemical poisoning clearly is designed to criticize the state apparatus whose efficiency is questioned again.

Obviously, in this strike La Nacion uses the movement to attack the ruling party economic policies, taking a position that it maintains throughout the conflict. Although the newspaper changed the strategy when the status quo was apparently in danger, thus suggesting the manipulation of the farmers by "social agitators," it maintained the criticism toward the Government. La Nacion clearly indicated to the Government which policy it welcomed when it applauded the action against the land invaders.

La Nacion clearly assumes an antagonistic position toward the faculty-students' strike in the Educational News category, and the news coverage was aimed to delegitimize

that movement. Again, the newspaper semi-autonomously constructs, selects and uses rhetorical emphasis of a few topics of the many thematic dimensions available, leaving obscure the real issue. Readers of La Nacion never know whether or not the Government respected students rights when it reinstated the national testing.

In the case of the Presidential News category, La Nacion shows absolute carelessness about the relevant news value of the presidency, using the President's positive image to promote corporate interest and playing down those events which reflected positively onto the image of the President himself, especially those events directly or indirectly related with the peace diplomacy policy of which Arias is a well known leader in Central America. Also, in the John Biehl case, the news coverage was aimed to promote La Nacion's script that Arias' antagonism to the U.S. policies in Central America is detrimental to the country.

In the Drug Trafficking News category, the five characteristics or levels that determine the existence or promotion of a panic, described by van Dijk (1988b), are present. The evidence presented in the report of the results of this study clearly shows La Nacion's active role in conjunction with the PUSC to depict an increase in drug trafficking activities in the country as a result of the involvement of the PLN politicians. By contrast, the newspaper has been covering up the participation of the

Contras in this illegal trade and the establishment of a network for drug smuggling in Costa Rica. La Nacion is, in effect, an accomplice of the drug smugglers as an advocate of the Nicaraguan counter-revolution. The paper itself and its owners, as well as some journalists, are involved in this coverup; therefore they have to feign ignorance. La Nacion's strategy seems to be the highlighting of some topics (the terrorism-communism-Sandinista-drug-traffickers, PLN politicians script) while downplaying or ignoring the real issue, the Contra involvement in drug trafficking (see my Chapter III, p. 146).

There is evidence enough in the Nicaraguan News category to assert that La Nacion's aim is to depict the Sandinista regime as a menace to Costa Rica (an example of the "panic" tactic already discussed) and to the Western Hemisphere. Through its news coverage the newspaper has also converted the Nicaraguan topic into a domestic issue within Costa Rica (see my Chapter III, p. 161).

In sum, La Nacion's news coverage is clearly oriented toward the advocacy of neo-conservative values and beliefs. This assertion will be complemented in the following section when the editorial posture is analyzed.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEWS COVERAGE AND EDITORIAL CONTENT

News reports tend to confirm the ideological posture of the newspaper manifested in the editorials, and vice versa. That is, the news content is not offered value-free to the readership and there is always an implicit or explicit persuasive purpose.

Usually the editorials are written after the news report was published, or in the case of continuing news, during the process. Although the editorials often refer to an event already covered by the newspaper, sometimes they refer to the possible future, too.

There is a systematic bias in La Nacion news coverage and this bias is oriented toward the public ideological stance of the newspaper. That is, the events are highlighted, downplayed or ignored according to the degree that they contribute to the advancement of the newspaper's ideology (neo-conservativism). This bias is also reflected in the editorials' content.

Editorial Themes

What follows is an analysis of La Nacion's editorial content based on work by Soto (1987), who made a content analysis of 50 of La Nacion editorials published in May, 1985. After that, the results of my analysis of the relationship between editorial posture and news coverage

will be discussed in each of the eight news categories used throughout the thesis.

La Nacion produces and reproduces the neo-conservative ideology--that is, the ideology of a pure capitalism (without state intervention), the ideology of the market as society's organizer. From this point of view the market is equivalent to social reality, and social reality is presented as a constant fight between those who search for the good--in other words, those who advocate the market--and those who fight to eliminate it or to create interferences--that is, those evil doers who fight against the market. These forces of evil are external: communism, terrorism, drug trafficking, and the liberation theology (the so-called popular church). These forces are driven by the most perverse and powerful force: communism.

These evil forces fool the people to gain followers and present themselves as the champions of social justice, peace, freedom, democracy and so on. But their actions introduce chaos into the social regulations of the market. The promoters of these evil forces consciously manipulate individuals to make them accept their projects.

The target of attack: "the forces of good." The actions of "the forces of evil" make sense if they are presented as a menace to the "forces of good": U.S. democracy and capitalism.

This scheme of social reality, that is, the fight between the two forces, constitutes the perspective from which all news events are portrayed. In other words, in news reports, both groups are presented in a constant fight.

As an example, Soto (1987) refers to the assault of the April 19 Movement (M-19) upon the Colombia's Court of Justice, in which the Colombian army and police destroyed the court building with tanks and machine guns without resorting to negotiation or dialogue, generating an armed confrontation in which the assaulters as well as the judges and other personnel died (in total: 100 individuals). Soto (1987) comments in La Nacion's editorial entitled: "INSTITUTIONALITY SAVED," showing the reductionism of the neo-conservative theory by characterizing the action as positive from the standpoint that the army and the police are "forces of good" as compared to the terrorist organizations of the left.

The same scheme is applied by La Nacion's editorialist, in the sense that the Colombian solution could be put to work in solving a similar problem with "the forces of evil": the Sandinista government (Soto, 1987).

The "forces of evil" within. Parallel to the external "forces of evil," (those that are outside the capitalist system), there is a trilogy of forces within the state that

breaks the balance: the state as interventionist, the scarcity of capital, and democracy.

The interventionist state, in the guise of welfare state and managerial state, absorbs all the credit sources that are needed by private enterprises, causing a lack of capital.

In the neo-conservative ideology the idea of democracy is limited to the right to vote. When the welfare state satisfies some demands, these demands are the origins of others. That is, the act of satisfying the original demand has a multiplier effect. When the state cannot satisfy a demand, an authority crisis arises in which different groups can paralyze the decision-making apparatus and then have access to power.

The promoter of the interventionist state in Costa Rica has been the PLN. Thus, it is understandable why negative connotations are given to the social democratic leaders and organizations like the International Socialists who are described as the "trip companions" of the communists.

According to this scheme, the principal targets of attack are everything that is considered communist (U.S.S.R., Cuba, Nicaragua, left parties, unions, etc.). Also in collaboration are the interventionist state and the social democratic agents, due to their potential capacity to lead society toward communism (see Kendrick, 1988).

The second La Nacion discursive strategy, according to Soto (1987), is to present the spiritual dimension as the first and most important dimension--more important than the material dimension. The liberation theology in this sense is considered as a "force of evil", because it cares about material things, is against the spiritual dimension (see Hufford, 1987, Chapter 4).

From this point of view Soto (1987) outlines that the news media attacks parties to the left, unions, the welfare-state, etc., and the attacks are supported by the rationale that "they work only for the daily bread and forget about the spiritual dimensions." This phenomenon, he points out, explains why the neo-conservative ideology concentrates in non-political values such as the family, religion, discipline, sacrifice, etc. The precise objective is to encourage non-elite individuals to distance themselves from the material things (do not ask for raise in wages, etc.), and seek refuge in the spiritual.

In the face of this road to hell (socialism) led by state interventionism and inspired in neo-conservative thinking, La Nacion casts itself as the prophet and points a finger towards the routes to salvation: the free market and private enterprises. La Nacion calls for a society without state controls, the so-called privatization of the Costa Rican economy.

Legislative News

Having read the two editorials classified in this news category, the first published on June 1 and the second on June 13, and having contrasted the results of the analysis of the four news reports (the first pair published on June 1 and 3, and the second pair on June 2 and 11, it is clear that La Nacion was building a rationale. Its script included political "blackmail" by the PUSC of the PLN. These events would not have otherwise been seen as blackmail by readers, but only as an understandable legislative resource used by a minority group which did not have another way to stop the unconstitutional behavior of the ruling party.

La Nacion did not appear to be both the judge and the prosecutor, because with this script it distanced itself from its oppositional stance against the ten percent tax on advertisements.

If the principal argument in this case is the unconstitutionality of the budget norms, judges or experts on constitutional law should have been interviewed, or more background information supplied. Certainly this is an angle that was not covered. The coverage was based on a face-value argument: If a specific norm or norms were found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, all of them are unconstitutional. The questionable validity of the face-value argument, however, is not the most relevant

matter. The important thing is that news reports, according to 'market' theory, are supposed to supply value-free facts, objectively, and not to promote a viewpoint to persuade the readers about it, which is clearly the intention of the analyzed news items and the explicit critique of the editorials.

Economic News

To understand the dominant perspective of the first news report in this category and its highlighting by La Nacion, a great deal of social, political, economic and historic knowledge about Costa Rica is needed. This will complement the additional perspective that is supplied by the editorial. In reading the corresponding editorial, we find that La Nacion favors the privatization of the Costa Rican economy (the 'free' market) and the influence of the transnational corporations. These, the newspaper believes, are essential to the country's development.

The second news report is also immersed in this context. The drive for privatization is not the Costa Rican oligarchy's invention but rather an international policy imposed on the country by the U.S. and other international lenders. Although this information is relatively well-known, I will provide additional details first and I will discuss the results of the analysis later (Feinberg, 1984).

Costa Ricans have come to be confronted with the following dilemma. According to Montealegre (1983):

. . . the choice between (1) accepting the 'solution' to the economic crisis proposed by the IMF and other international lending agencies at the cost of deepening Costa Rica's dependence on Western capital, endangering social peace, and possibly sacrificing some, if not all, democratic traditions; or (2) taking steps toward the development of an indigenous solution, involving thorough reorganization of the country's productive structure in favor of the vast majority of the population (p. 278).

The same author outlines the avoidance of challenging the power and privileges of the ruling elite by the successive governments that have led the country since the Civil War in 1948. Governments ignored badly needed changes, such as land and tax reforms, or attempted these changes in an ineffective, token manner, and instead have sought to raise the standard of living of a large percentage of the population through public spending and foreign borrowing.

Thus, on the right side of the spectrum there are La Nacion's owners and their followers. They advocate any movement toward the recuperation of power by the oligarchy, an association of the country's elites with those of the developed countries, and direct dependency on Western capital, especially American. They are a conservative group that welcomes the neo-conservative policies of the U.S., and of the international lenders. To the left of the center are the social democrats, the current group in

power, who have transformed Costa Rica with limited social reforms; they have had a tendency to compensate inequality with state distributed social welfare. This group advocates an indigenous solution through the Central American Common Market and a diversification of the capital sources (Booth, 1984; Del Aguila, 1982; Goertzel, 1984; and Tartter, 1983). Gudmundson (1987) provides a summary of the Costa Rican economic situation:

The economic stability that has been achieved in Costa Rica is based on increased dependence on non-traditional exports to the United States market, declining trade with Central America, massive injections of United States aid, and repeated re-negotiation of an external debt that is simply impossible for the nation to pay without provoking recession (p. 432).

The author points out that while challenging the Reagan line diplomatically, the Arias administration has actually been more economically orthodox and export-oriented than its immediate predecessor, Monge (1982-86). Arias has leaned slightly in the direction of neo-conservatism, reducing agricultural subsidies and extolling the virtues of export-led growth. This inclination has been accompanied by a significant shift in trade relations, away from regional trade and toward increasing dependence on U.S. markets and suppliers. Future conflicts related to economic development, Gudmundson (1987) adds, will continue to revolve around the question of the protectionist, welfare state versus the neo-conservative model focusing on export.

With the information above, it is now clear why La Nacion is highlighting the news items about the privatization project, even though the absence of news values like novelty and recency would normally make this news report a news item for the inside pages instead of the front page. It is interesting to note the absence of references to opposing sectors other than the workers, who are depicted as individuals driven by their worries about their labor status and not by the privatization project itself.

In the sample of this study there are some news reports, specifically those classified under the electoral news category, in which references are made to the wide discussion that this controversial project has generated. This substantiates the argument against La Nacion's fairness or objectivity. The newspaper is ignoring the opposition to the project and contextualizing that opposition in the sphere of a mere labor dispute. It is not in the political context in which the Costa Rican Electricity Institute's (ICE) privatization is a polemic between those who defend the social achievements of the Costa Rican society through state intervention and those who believe in the 'market' as the organizer of society.

Only two references were made in this news item about one of the problematic aspects of the project. One of

these references is an indirect quote from a union leader complaining that at the beginning only the non-strategic services were mentioned, but that now the project is selling all of the ICE's property. This detail was mentioned in the sixth paragraph; only in the final paragraph did the journalist indicate that the highest ranked ICE's official told La Nacion that the Institute's privatization plan would also include the selling of 40 percent of the energy sector.

The real news in this report was this detail about the selling of 40 percent of the energy sector. However, the headline topic is only about the selling of 60 percent of the ICE's assets in telecommunications. It appears that La Nacion, knowing the controversial nature of the project, did not want to add more fuel to the fire, so it downplayed this detail by hiding it in the last paragraph of the news report, a very intriguing place considering its recency and novelty values.

In contrast, the newspaper played up a no-news item in second top position, attributing to it characteristics that made it the most important news of the day, and at the same time ignoring President Arias' relevance. The Treasury Minister is identified by Gudmundson (1987) (see Agricultural News), as one of the high-ranking government officials strategically positioned in Arias' Cabinet, an official who favors the neo-conservative orientation of the

economy. Thus, because the minister agrees with La Nacion's ideology, the newspaper played up his words in the lead instead of President Arias'.

The signing of the USAID agreement also contradicts La Nacion's script in the sense that Arias' political opposition to U.S. policies in Central America would have jeopardized economic aid by the American government. It is understandable why, then, the newspaper ignored Arias and used the agreement to emphasize its other script-- privatization-- which means stabilizing and restructuring the Costa Rican economy according to the neo-conservative theories that Arias' administration has to comply with.

Nothing was said about the unusual delay in signing the agreement. That delay was attributed to the Reagan administration's economic pressures on Arias (see Presidential News). Ambassador Hinton had rejected the version in an interview published by La Nacion only the day before, explaining that the delay was the result of bureaucratic and lengthy governmental regular procedures. This could have been quoted in the news item about the agreement signing as a Previous Event. Instead, a tangential quote was used. This interview was made on Friday, June 10, and published in the Monday issue, the same day the agreement was signed.

It was published in first top position and was given exclusively to La Nacion. Therefore, journalists would see

no point in asking questions that had already been answered in that interview; that was controlled by La Nacion and probably by the ambassador (Reding, 1986). Timing of the article's appearance robbed the speaker's words of the recency news value. The interview was not published prior to the signing, but rather on the same day. By means of the interview the newspaper strategically covered itself against criticism, because it is supposed to make an effort to show some minimal response to current events to maintain its credibility. Thus, La Nacion was really the first of the news media who asked Hinton about this version of pressure by the Reagan administration, downplaying this newsworthy detail.

With the ambassador's interview, La Nacion promoted its dominant script and played down the importance of the event that might have elevated Arias' image and at the same time destroyed the newspaper's script. The absence of any background (Previous Events or Context) to this situation corroborates this.

Thus, the agreement signing was not covered as a triumph for the Arias administration and a defeat to La Nacion or to the Reagan administration, which were the most relevant political aspects of the event. In actuality, the signing was a blow to the script of La Nacion.

Labor News

In the group of news reports about the social security system, there is an implicit accusation against the workers that is difficult to understand without knowing some socio-economic background of the Costa Rican society. This accusation follows the principle of blaming the victims of a socio-economic system which is not egalitarian and punishing the weak to favor the elite. According to La Nacion, the economic crisis has its roots in the workers' demands for better wages and the state's protectionism, and is not a consequence of a system which produces wealth for a minority and poverty for the majority.

The workers went to Court, and used the legal procedures established to regulate the relationship between groups, but they were attacked because they won. This clearly shows in La Nacion's headlines (topics).

La Nacion also makes a contrast between the social security system's employees and the rest of the Costa Rican workers, a rhetorical strategy explicitly indicating that the former have received privileges which discriminate against the latter. The newspaper also blames the judges, who ruled according to law, but failed to produce any legal argumentation to support its view.

The newspaper offers to its readership the verbal reactions of a supposedly balanced group of people (June 19 news item): two government officials, a spokesman for the

private sector, and two union leaders. The lead of this news report indicates that the Government and the private sector object to the privileges that have been given to the social security system's employees. This procedure supposedly is objective, but is not. The two government officials have been identified as followers of neo-conservative policies by Gudmundson (1987) (see Agricultural News), so they are ideologically against this type of legal and economic benefits to the workers, they are pro-'free' market. We can assume that La Nacion interviewed them because its editors knew beforehand what their opinion would be. Two workers' leaders were interviewed to maintain the newspaper's image as an objective and fair news medium, and also to show at least a minimal response to current events. But two thirds of the space was given to the attackers, who were quoted in seven paragraphs, in contrast to the workers, who were quoted in five smaller paragraphs. In the first news item only two paragraphs out of 15 offered the workers' opinion and in the third one the workers were not even mentioned.

Most importantly, La Nacion drives home a pervasively negative script by its use of misleading lead-headlines in the four news reports, headlines which are the top macrostructures.

The dominant perspective of the news coverage is negative toward the workers and the Labor Court, and this

characteristic becomes more understandable after reading the two editorials detailed in Chapter III. La Nacion's editors are worried because this system, during the last few years, has had a surplus in its budget which has been used to reduce the deficit of the Central Government, thus fulfilling the IMF requirements. This newspaper endorses the policies of the IMF, the World Bank and other international lenders, who are its most powerful allies. Therefore, La Nacion is against any measure that might affect compliance with the policies of those lenders. Journalistically, in La Nacion's news coverage the workers are absent. There is no script for them. They are just the "bad guys" whose victory in court is played down and their hard-won rights highlighted as discriminatory privileges. The defeat of La Nacion's script in court was downplayed, and presented to readers as La Nacion attempted to win in the court of public opinion. The information in both editorials and news reports echoed its standard script related to the worker.

Agricultural News

Five editorials were published by La Nacion in this group of news, all of them referring to the farmers' strike. Interestingly, the first editorial is a sample of political opportunism in which the editorial staff of La Nacion takes advantage of the strike to advocate its political ideology and to criticize the policies of the

ruling party, pitting the virtues of the 'free' market against the economic protectionism of the state.

Curiously, or perhaps understandably as a political move, a second news report was published (6/8/88) the day after the farmers' strike announcement, the same day as the quoted editorial. In that report, the leader of the minority in the Legislative Assembly, legislator Federico Villalobos, from the PUSC, is quoted asking the Security Minister, Hernan Garron, "not to use violence against the farmers whose demands are just" (p. 8A). What the editorialist and the legislator fail to acknowledge is that the cause of the strike is precisely the result of applying the policy for which they both work: the "free' market ideology.

As the tone of the strike changed, the editorialist left his/her first position, and maintaining the criticism toward the Government in the second editorial, made use of the newspaper's public voice (the editorialist's own voice modeled as if it were the people's) (Hall, et al., 1981). This distanced the paper's position from that of the farmers who "have become victims of political manipulation by other interests", a subtle reference to groups of the left. Thus, La Nacion moved from a legitimation of the group, serving the political interests of its owners, to a non-legitimation of it.

In the three remaining editorials, the paper continued sustaining the same position, although in the fourth one it pointed out indirectly the need to restore the law and order to the government, using the voice of the public (that "reflected" on the news coverage of current events).

In the middle of this dispute lies the difference in beliefs about which economic system is better: the ruling party approach (Keynesian) or La Nacion's owners approach which advocates the privatization of the economy and the rules established by the free flow of commodities and prices.

Among the farmers are beneficiaries of the Government's policies on land distribution, technical assistance, and credit assistance, who seem not to be very efficient in the production process. There are large producers, too, who are very efficient and economically powerful, but are annoyed by the lack of clear policies by the Government.

The news coverage tends to neutralize the protest through its de-legitimization. It focuses on events and not on the issue. The information provided by semiotic means (e.g., photos, headlines, etc.) also is intentionally used to produce cognitive effects (blockades, violence, etc. That is, the readers might perceive the strike as a violent incident, therefore these semiotic signs have to be considered as macrostructural (van Dijk, 1988a, b).

As mentioned before, the ideology or nature of the news discourse is often defined by the unsaid. Information that could have been given or should have been given is selectively left out (Shoemaker, 1987):

Journalists make decisions which affect the story they write and, in this case, the political legitimacy of the story subjects. The result of presenting a political group as non-legitimate is that the group is unlikely to attain its goals (p. 160).

In La Nacion's news texts about the strike, the tacit supposition is that the origin of the crisis is the size of the national budget and the economic policies of the state, which does not live up to its responsibility of stabilizing the economy. This supposition is also supported by the topics and content of the editorials. These texts could suggest also the outlines of the news ideology with references to the separate spheres of politics and economics (Jensen, 1987b).

Considering the effect of these strategies upon public opinion, La Nacion's news coverage diminishes the ability of the common citizens to judge the political events and the issues. Citizens' inability to connect their private desires with public propositions constitute a stumbling block for them, especially for the use of their voting power to accomplish what they really want. In other words, this amplifies the control by some elite groups over the evolution and emphasis of public opinion (Entman & Paletz, 1980).

Another purpose that is hidden in the farmers' news coverage is the foment of discontent with the leaders of the most important state institutions, particularly the Government. This explains the action by the PUSC's legislator and the editorial content. However, the promotion of discontent has a limit and this secures the system's stability. The news media, as secondary definers, provide the reasons to legitimize the system, the institutional structure of the economy, the social order and political power. In this sense, they can only promote discontent to the extent that the stability of the system is jeopardized (Shoemaker, 1987). That would explain La Nacion's change of attitude in relationship to the strike.

The above characteristics of the press are precisely the reasons why many dissident or activist groups, working for varying causes, have learned the lesson of a news medium deaf to their causes. In response to this lesson they have chosen to defy the law: to deviate in such a way that the media cannot ignore the unusualness, the novelty or the conflictive characteristics of their behavior. Some groups, however, never reach the level necessary to be legitimized. In this sense, the code of objectivity, in a way, is a mechanism of social control, contributing to the rejection of any group which is portrayed as a menace to the social order (Altschull, 1984).

Editorially, La Nacion blames the paternalistic state for the situation, and does not refer to the ideas, the background or support among the groups that promote an egalitarian society as their principal goal, but to violent incidents. For example, La Nacion, in this news coverage, made no reference to the diminution in capital investment of about 73 percent in agriculture during the Monge administration from 1982-86, that occurred as a consequence of the policies imposed by the IMF (Burns, 1987). Thus, the farmers' strike has its roots in a structural problem of the Costa Rica economy and international policies imposed upon the country, an actual economic crisis that was never acknowledge in the news report.

Regarding the other five news items classified under this category, the two "in depth" news reports indicate La Nacion's unwillingness to provide the readers with sufficient background to enable them to arrive at their own conclusions. That is, if the newspaper published these news articles, it seems odd that, having covered for such a relatively long time the farmers' strike (which indicates its importance), an "in depth" news report was not offered to the readers. Instead, La Nacion ran five editorials, while the small alternative weekly newspaper, Universidad, published by the University of Costa Rica, offered to its readership an alternative perspective on the conflict, in which the farmers are given the opportunity to explain

their position and the role played by the IMF is analyzed (6/10/88, P. 12). La Nacion has never acknowledged the IMF role in the crisis except by editorial criticism of those who use this argument. This is proof of another coverup by the newspaper of the real roots of the problem.

In contrast, La Nacion highlighted the third news report which, apparently, is not related to the farmers. Only through the sixth editorial did the newspaper established the link. That is, the land invaders are social agitators, "communists" who also are behind the farmers; and communists have to be treated with a strong hand to make them respect the laws. La Nacion applauded the action taken against the land invaders by the police, who acted following the decision by the Institute for Agrarian Development's (IDA) board of directors. This sent a strong message to the Central Government, legitimating any action that might be taken by it to stop the farmers' disruptions. After all, the group represented by La Nacion has nothing to lose because the Government would lose popularity if it resorted to violent means (police actions). Politically, La Nacion backers are scoring points and also protecting the status quo.

The reason why the two last news items in this category were highlighted appears more clearly after reading the editorial published by La Nacion, "The Tragedy of Pitahaya," 6/7/88, about these events. Although the

editorialist did not mention a specific type of corporation, the only one involved in the incident is a cooperative, which in Costa Rica is a mixture of socialism and capitalism (see Reding, 1986). Coopevictoria, R.L., Costa Rica's first cooperative, was founded more than four decades ago and is still working with great success. La Nacion traditionally has covered the news about this sector of the Costa Rican economy following the same pattern as the news coverage within the 'market' approach; that is, the cooperatives are news if something negative about them comes out. In this case there is also an ideological factor that might have played a role in this news coverage; the cooperatives are promoted by the PLN.

Additionally, the editorial attacked the state's institutional effectiveness. Specifically, it refers to many laws and regulations that are not effectively enforced by the Health and Labor ministries as well as the National Insurance Institute (INS). This incident was a great opportunity for La Nacion to criticize the quality of the state's control over activities related to the life and health of human beings, and to a socio-economic type of organization that the conservative factor does not endorse. That system combines the efficiency and production capacity of the capitalist organizations with an egalitarian distribution of the profits among all the people involved (Reding, 1986).

Thus, highlighting these news reports, specifically the second one, seems to follow La Nacion's ideological perspective. It ends with a call for social change. Given the dominant and historical background of the newspaper, (it was created to fight against social reform; see Fonseca, 1977; Reding, 1986) and its compromise with Reagan's economic policy, that call must be interpreted as a call to eliminate state interference in the natural organization of society: the 'free' market.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this news article is a consequences/reactions news item; La Nacion is not interested in the significance of the event itself, but in finding somebody to blame. The newspaper did not offer background information, such as how many workers have been involved in the past in this kind of incident, or what regions of the country and what organizations have experienced this massive toxic chemical poisoning.

The newspaper relies on the verbal reaction of a neighbor but did not even use its own files to provide additional background to the readership. Obviously, this news report's lack of background allows the construction of the script La Nacion's journalists or editors are interested in projecting to readers.

In short, the news report was building a context over which to support criticism of the involved organizations, which is its script. An isolated incident could not be the

basis for a complaint such as the one expressed in the editorial, but if there is a background with which to prove a pattern, the newspaper, by presenting that background, would have had more than a face-value argument.

Educational News

La Nacion's dominant neo-conservative perspective, which emphasizes non-political issues like obedience and discipline appears clearly in the June 2 editorial related to this news category. Faculty and students are not supposed to behave as active and critical participants in their social community. On the contrary, they must passively accept the system as it is and obey the rules. Any action against this order is simple disobedience and a challenge to the authorities. No wonder the news coverage is an implicit condemnation from the beginning and not an objective report of the events, which are presented at the local and global level as an unjustified rebellion.

More explicitly, the second editorial, "Clear Norms Needed in High Schools," (June 28) reveals that this event created a controversy between the Legislative Assembly's President and the Education Minister, in which the legislator defended the freedom of speech and the right to protest by the teachers and students. La Nacion, as usual, alluded to the "evil forces" behind this kind of movement and the neo-conservative values of obedience and

discipline, applauding the Education Minister's decision to apply the laws.

La Nacion's role as secondary definer, which chooses what to emphasize and what to play down, is again present in this news coverage. Here, the newspaper does not offer to its readership a balanced narration of the events, but gives a one-sided description instead.

Content of La Nacion contains conflicting scripts, superimposing a worn script on a new, unique event. This is not only a case of local incoherence but also a structural inconsistency. La Nacion defined the problem from the beginning as disobedience and the news coverage was generated from this script. The journalists' mission then consisted of supplying the events, quotes, etc., that were in line with this script.

A fair journalistic coverage of the faculty-students' movement would have included the use of background information about the comprehensive tests, with information about the reasons why they were eliminated and the reasons why they were being reestablished. The readership also needed to know that the problem with the uniform had nothing to do with the opposition to the comprehensive tests.

All the actors deserved equal treatment in equal circumstances (market theory). Omitting some of the actors meant that the events were not covered objectively, but

rather followed La Nacion's editorial posture, which aimed to delegitimize the strike.

Presidential News

The editorial entitled "Parallel Powers", (June 16) which was written to delegitimize John Biehl's allegations about the U.S.'s creation in Costa Rica of a shadow state. It is in reality a de-legitimization of President Arias's peace diplomacy policy in Central America.

It attempts to discredit the President's opposition to use by the U.S. of Costa Rican territory as a military base to fight against both the Sandinistas and the PLN's socioeconomic policies, the latter of which are oriented toward the construction of a more egalitarian and participative society.

In one way or another, all the editorials written about Nicaragua and classified under this category also are related to President Arias' peace diplomacy policy.

The leaders of the Costa Rican opposition, the same group that own La Nacion opposed the neutrality bill favored by the Monge and Arias administrations on the grounds that Costa Rica should not attempt to be neutral while its survival depends on good relations with the U.S. For this reason the press has strongly criticized Arias for his diplomatic approach to the regional conflict (Kendrick, 1988).

"Parallel Powers," about Biehl's allegation that the U.S. has built a shadow state in Costa Rica, makes fun of the matter, and simultaneously de-legitimizes Biehl, who offered the criticism. The matters alluded to in the criticism itself are not answered because the disqualification of the author makes the answer unnecessary and the disinformation may continue.

Not only was this the strategy in the editorial; the news coverage also was centered on disqualifying Biehl as a critic. The contents of the criticism were never the topic of the news reports except as a basis upon which to declare Biehl a menace to the good relationships with the U.S.

Additionally, the news coverage was centered on President Arias. In the first news report of the series, only a tangential reference was made to Biehl. Most of the news item focused upon what Biehl said about Arias. Thus the main actor was not Biehl but the President.

The editorial under scrutiny above also follows the dominant La Nacion script that portrays the U.S. as the Costa Rica's best friend, which only does good for the country.

Drug Trafficking News

The eight editorials published in conjunction with the news reports in this category show exactly the same thematic tendency found in the news items.

La Nacion attacks the Sandinistas and Panamanian strongman Manuel A. Noriega as if they were partners. Indirectly, the newspaper accuses everybody but journalists and judges when referring to the only groups who have not surrendered to the drug traffickers. Colombia is used as an example of the power of drug traffickers when they use their network of corruption to get things done. The newspaper also constantly suggests a relationship between the drug smugglers and some high-ranking PLN figures.

It is interesting that La Nacion highlighted in an editorial PLN's legislator Alberto Fait's initiative. Fait presented a project to regulate contributions to politicians, but the respective news report was not published on the front page.

Finally, La Nacion repeatedly points out the role of well-known drug traffickers in the establishment of the infrastructure that allows drug smugglers actually to operate in Costa Rica. This is a direct allegation by the newspaper about who--according to them--are the principals in this illegal trade in Costa Rica. The newspaper claims that Rafael Caro Quintero and Miguel Diaz de Leon, both Mexican drug smugglers, came to the country under the protection of a relevant political figure, but La Nacion does not offer any proof.

In the same way that La Nacion covered up military operations of the Contras within Costa Rican territory

(Reding, 1986; Kendrick, 1988), circumstance obliged editors and journalists to feign ignorance when the Iran-Contra scandal broke in the U.S. (Gudmunson, 1987). The newspapers also covered up the involvement and responsibility of those who supported the Nicaraguan counterrevolution for the establishment within Costa Rican territory of a heroin and cocaine ring.

These illustrations show that La Nacion and all the Costa Rican mainstream news media are indirectly responsible for drug-trafficking, because they are really the group that misinformed Costa Ricans. This misinformation has had such an effect on Costa Rican public opinion that a recent poll published by La Nacion and reported by The Tico Times (8/4/1989) indicates that "the increase in drug trafficking here because of the Contras' supply network didn't receive a mention" (p. 10). A journalist from the same newspaper (Brennan) pointed out that the information about the aid to Nicaraguan Contras that "led to a buildup of drug trafficking in Costa Rica" aired previously in the U.S., but that for the first time, "these activities has been revealed to most Costa Ricans" (p. 8).

Naturally, Costa Ricans could not give any answer in a poll about the increase of drug trafficking in Costa Rica as a result of the Contra activities within the country since they knew nothing about it. Moreover, they had been

disinformed by La Nacion and other mainstream news media that had bombarded them with other versions about drug smuggling.

This coverup by La Nacion was proven in the sample offered in my Chapter II. This explains the logic followed by the newspaper, which was implanting a script in the minds of those Costa Ricans who do not have alternative sources of information with which to counter the pervasive La Nacion's script: terrorism-communism-drug trafficking-PLN's politicians.

A bipartisan commission of the Costa Rican Congress, the Legislative Assembly, has concluded that Manuel A. Noriega, following instructions from Lt. Col. Oliver North and associates, established a heroin-cocaine ring to help finance the Contra war. This involvement of the Contras in drug-trafficking has been well-documented. However, it is even more important that La Nacion has reproduced what supposedly was the document of the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly's Drug Commission report, suppressing all the points that were related to these conclusions by the commission.

These recent news reports go beyond the sample of this thesis. Not one of the news items analyzed in this thesis refers to the Contra involvement in drugs. To the contrary, all the news coverage and all editorials negate this involvement. Even American Ambassador Hinton, in an

interview already mentioned, depicted this allegation as "Sandinista propaganda", while in the U.S. news media the Contra involvement in drugs has been widely publicized and is accepted as a fact.

Hufford (1987) has provided evidence about how U.S. aid to police forces in Guatemala and El Salvador has been the seed that grew into the death squads. He also explains how under its narcotics program, as a continuation of the Office of Public Safety (OPS) whose operations were banned by the U.S. Congress in 1975), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) continues to provide equipment, training and advisers to the same police units it previously aided through OPS. There is no guarantee that the computer systems designed for intelligence networks cannot be used by the political police as well as by narcotics investigators. Hufford summarizes: ". . . in short, the U.S. began a program of organizing, training and supplying repression in Central America in 1962 and continues this program today, albeit, under different agencies" (p. 134).

Hufford's observation could explain why the threat of narcotics traffic has been overplayed in the Costa Rican press, which seeks to justify "remilitarization" through professionalization of the Civilian Police force. Especially after the failure of the "Sandinista Menace" script, the narcotic trade seems to be a promising avenue by which conservatives could gain the power to create

consensus, replacing the "evil empire" of the "communist" Sandinistas with the "evil empire" of drugs, or using some combination of the two topics.

Although drug smugglers seem to use Costa Rica as a place to invest their illegal revenues, and its territory is utilized for trans-shipment of drugs from one country to another, these activities must be isolated from the political and ideological interests of conservative groups which are trying to create consensus around an issue to distract the public attention from other pressing social ills and divergent opinion.

Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries and Americans who have helped them since the beginning of the 1980s were the people who "in reality" were in charge of the Northern part of the Costa Rican territory. There is no doubt that they were involved in drug smuggling. The Costa Rican press always denied these proven facts and they even had to feign shock when the Iran-Contra scandal broke. Those who backed the counter-revolution are responsible, too, for the spread of drug traffic.

With this brief background, the importance given by La Nacion's owners and editors to the drug-trafficking/terrorism/communism topic can be understood in the international context. Within the national context they add a fourth factor, the national politicians, implicitly involving the current Government and sometimes directly

accusing the social democrats (PLN). Meanwhile, the conservative group appears to be capitalizing upon discontent in a systematic way. And as in other news categories, La Nacion gives PUSC the appropriate news coverage at the appropriate time.

For example, in the 6/8/88 issue, La Nacion published two news reports related to drug trafficking. In one of them, former president Daniel Oduber, a social democrat is the subject of a news article in which he appeared unwilling to cooperate with the authorities about the disclosure of the names of some politicians involved in drug smuggling (during the presidential campaign of 1986 Oduber said he knew some names). The other report concerned the release by the court of four drug smugglers with implicit suggestions of venality by the authorities.

The following day, the conservative party offered a press conference in which it proposed the union of all the national forces to fight against the pervasiveness of this social disease. Clearly it was absolving itself and automatically blaming others. According to La Nacion's the only group capable of defending the country against this malaise is the PUSC.

Even the American ambassador in Costa Rica, Deane Hinton, in his first interview in La Nacion (6/13/88), assumes a position that could be taken as partisan, especially if it is considered that the beneficiary of his

words are the conservatives, who have always denounced the Sandinistas. Hinton, questioned about his knowledge of the use by drug smugglers of the Costa Rican territory, answered that "it is a valuable point of transit and also a center to invest the illegal revenues." Then, when questioned about his knowledge of the involvement of Costa Rican politicians or local authorities in this activity, he responded: "I am not going to answer that question" (p. 5A).

Understandably, the Costa Rican Foreign Affairs Vice-Minister sent Hinton a letter asking him to state clearly to the public if he knew names or not. Otherwise, the letter suggested the appearance was that he knew but that he would not tell, for whatever reasons. By contrast Hinton qualified the involvement of the Contras in drug trafficking as misinformation (about U.S. policies towards narcotics traffic during 1987-88, see Millett, 1988).

In another news report (6/18/88), published under the title LEGISLATOR WILL INVESTIGATE FIONNA'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH JUDICIAL POLICE, Luis M. Chacon, a legislator from the PUSC, whose political affiliation is not mentioned by the paper, appears to be capitalizing upon the situation in favor of his political group. He demanded that the Supreme Court of Justice give the Congress information about the chief of the Judicial Police, Ricardo Umana, who was sanctioned with suspension for what appeared to be a close

relationship with Roberto Fionna. Fionna, an Argentinian, is claimed by the French authorities to be connected with a plot to smuggle drugs into that country.

On the same day that the Court decided to fire Umana, La Nacion published some incriminating documents. The newspaper, the PUSC legislator, and the party itself, appeared as the champions of justice, whose role was to remind the judges--whose decisions some people cannot divorce from the ruling party--of their compromise with justice. In a first decision the Court, with the margin of only one vote, 9-8, had decided not to fire Umana but to suspend him.

Obviously, there is a permanent and continuous current between the reports and the editorial content in which La Nacion supports its rationale to persuade the public.

Nicaraguan News

In this news category I faced a dilemma: how to analyze the news reports, the messages, without providing the historical, cultural or socioeconomic context? News texts and context in this case are inextricably intertwined with the social cognitions of Costa Ricans and the ideological stance of La Nacion's owners, editors, and journalists. However, due to elites' control of the sources of information, the lack of alternative sources, and the control of news editors, different interpretations of the news are minimized. The models also are less

familiar because the news topics and the actors are out of the immediate environment, and even sources (wire services) are different.

La Nacion's sources are not individuals but news agencies and it cannot be established if a news report was reproduced as it was received or if the editing changed it in such a way that the newspapers constructed a different dominant perspective (Bell, 1984). The means to establish the strategies of processing and control which can be obtained through contrast with other sources are not available. Thus, with all these considerations in mind, I decided to limit the analysis of the news reports classified under this category to an ideological perspective which can be determined by observing: What are the aspects about Nicaragua that La Nacion emphasizes and what are those that are downplayed or ignored?

The editorials classified under this category are very important, too, because there is a commonality between them and the news coverage. That is, the newspaper's ideology is clearly anti-Sandinista and pro-Contra. It is therefore important to ask: How is this position reflected in the news coverage?

The answer revealed in the results is clear. La Nacion highlights everything that is negative toward the Nicaraguan regime and plays down or ignores everything even remotely positive to the Sandinistas, just by selecting

which news items to publish on the front page and which to publish in the inside pages. Naturally, the newspaper has to reflect current events somehow and that explains why news articles that seem to be neutral or positive to the Sandinistas are also published.

To widen the horizon of the readers it is necessary to provide additional information for a better understanding of the context models with which one can determine if La Nacion's news coverage reflects reality or not.

The Nicaraguan news group was left to be discussed at the end for several reasons. One of these reasons is stated by Kendrick (1988). By the end of 1979, when the Nicaraguan revolution was only months old, "the Costa Rican press, noted for its conservatism, began to attack the 'communist' Sandinistas almost daily" (p. 249).

Another reason concerns U.S. pressure on Costa Rica, through which this country has come to be considered a base for American efforts to destabilize the Sandinista government. As Kendrick (1988) outlines: "The problem now is that a policy of anticommunism with U.S. support also poses a grave challenge to the policy of non-military neutrality" (p. 249). Costa Rica has declared its neutrality in this conflict.

Millett's (1988) analysis of U.S. policies towards Central America (1987-88) is enlightening. It enables us to understand the situational model in which the Costa

Rican elites, unconditional supporters of the Reagan policies in the Central American isthmus, made the decision to publish the interview of ambassador Hinton. This author summarizes: "By virtually any standard, the period from October, 1987, thorough September, 1988, was a disaster for the Central American policies of the United States" (p. 401).

In more detail the author outlines how poll after poll showed a majority of Americans opposed to providing lethal assistance to the Contras, as well as the lingering effects of the Iran-Contra scandals upon administration efforts in the region. In addition, he points out, in the aftermath of these revelations, most of the ardent supporters of the Contras, including Oliver North, CIA director William Casey, and others, had left the administration.

Millett (1988) emphasizes the Central American Peace accord, popularly known as "Arias Plan" as being at the heart of U.S. problems in the region and an ongoing obstacle to the U.S. Administration's efforts:

Efforts to dismiss the plan as "fatally flawed" damaged administration credibility more than they affected support for the Arias plan, especially after its author . . . was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (p. 402).

The peace agreement called for establishing a lasting regional peace through democratization, national reconciliation, amnesty, a cease-fire, free elections, cessation of assistance to irregular forces, and the denial

of territory for aggression against one another's countries (see Current History, December, 1987, p. 430).

The Sandinista announcement of their willingness to enter negotiations with the Contras, first with the mediation of Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, and later directly, "also hampered Administration efforts to gain support for the Contras and isolate Sandinistas" (Millett, 1988, p. 402).

Other international and domestic developments related directly to Nicaragua also affected U.S. policies in Central America, according to Millett (1988). They included the thaw in U.S. relations with the U.S.S.R., culminating in the exchange of official visits; the signing of the treaty on intermediate-range nuclear missiles; and the Soviet agreement to withdraw from Afghanistan. All this "made it difficult to portray the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire'" (p. 402).

On the U.S. domestic front, the increasing focus on the 1988 elections diverted attention from Central American issues and reduced the ability of the Administration to set the foreign policy agenda. Consequently, the leaders of the region, unsure of American policy direction under the next administration, became increasingly cautious in their dealings with the U.S.

The House of Representatives defeated the aid proposal to the Contras on February 3, 1988 and with the current aid

package due to expire, the counterrevolution in Nicaragua faced the prospect of being left without official U.S. economic support. On March 3, by a vote of 216 to 208, the House rejected the plan.

In March, the Sandinistas destroyed the principal rebel base camp along the Honduran border.

All these setbacks, according to Moreno (1988), gave the Sandinistas the opportunity to end the war, and "the signing of the cease-fire at Sapoa was viewed as the end of the Contras as a military force" (p. 406). On March 23, 1988, the Nicaraguan government and the counter-revolutionaries signed a temporary cease-fire agreement at Sapoa, Nicaragua.

Meanwhile, neither George Bush nor Michael Dukakis showed any disposition to make Nicaragua a major campaign issue. Only Dukakis received President Arias and he declared himself to be in favor of a Central American dialogue with the U.S., in which the U.S. was not in a position of domination (La Nacion, 6/10/88, p. 4A).

The relatively united front of opposition to the Sandinistas taken by the other four nations began to show divisions after the signing of the Arias plan, with Guatemala and Costa Rica becoming increasingly critical of some aspects of U.S. policy in Central America (Millett, 1988; Moreno, 1988).

Millett (1988) outlines that, in an attempt to gain support for U.S. policies or at least to minimize opposition to them, the Reagan administration dispatched a series of high-level missions to the region. First, in January, 1988, Assistant Secretary Abrams and the national security adviser, General Colin Powell, toured the region. From June 29 through July 1, and again in early August, Secretary of State George Shultz traveled to Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica.

Former Costa Rican president, Luis A. Monge, and President Arias insisted on greater participation of the population in the process of adopting decisions under a basically democratic political and economic control system. The news media, on the contrary, and perhaps as a reflection of the Reagan and Bush administrations, encouraged a narrowing, not a broadening, of political and economic freedom.

The Central American crisis and recent and current U.S. policies are helping the Costa Rican oligarchy to recover the political power it has lost since the 1948 Civil War. This is in accord with the historical character of U.S. involvement in Latin America in the second half of this century (Hufford, 1987). Although a real democratic solution calls for more freedom that must be available to the fullest array of ideological persuasions, La Nacion's ideological discourse, in editorial and news reports attack

proponents of that solution because they think differently. According to the polls, pro-egalitarian are the majority, the silent majority. A non-elite group, these individuals do not appear as active subjects in the news reports. But La Nacion's editorial writers speak as though championing their causes.

The Costa Ricans are facing a situation in which, as Kendrick (1988) says, the populace is opposed to having an army, but it also seems ambivalent about accepting the best military force that ever existed in Costa Rica's history. Apparently, the perceived threat of a militarized Nicaragua has provided the rationale for the kind of "remilitarization" that the press calls "professionalization" of the Civilian Police. So far, however, the population has reacted negatively to reviving a permanent army.

Regarding the Costa Rican position toward the Central American conflict, Kendrick (1988) outlines "neutrality Costa Rican style." This postures permits ambivalence, too, based upon a distinction between political neutrality and ideological neutrality. Because of that distinction, Costa Rica can maintain an image of being separated from the crisis in Central America, "an image it desperately needs to attract foreign investment and foreign economic assistance and to improve trade relations with other nations" (P. 258). This can be done while still

demonstrating a hatred of communism and a strong anti-Sandinista position. The same author comments that as a state of mind, neutrality is also an effective (at least to those anti-Sandinistas who voted for Oscar Arias) way of maintaining good relations with both the U.S. and Nicaragua, "while at the same time feeling morally unique in the world" (p. 258).

SUMMARY

As the preceding discussions indicate, there is systematic bias in La Nacion's news coverage and this bias is oriented toward the public ideological stance of the newspaper. News events are highlighted, downplayed or ignored according to the degree that they enhance or frustrate the advancement of the newspaper's ideology. This is also reflected in the editorial content.

News reports tend to confirm the ideological posture of the newspaper manifested in the editorials and the news content is not offered value-free to the readership. There is always an implicitly or explicitly persuasive purpose. The evidence for these conclusions is amply provided in each of the study's eight categories. The significance of these findings remains to be discussed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

NDA as a technique

One of the first arguments expressed in this thesis has been the marginal attention given to the message as a central object of research in news media studies. Most of the studies known by this researcher, some of them quoted in this thesis, worked along the so-called superficial categories of traditional content analysis, normally with a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective.

We know more about the macro and micro-social and economic constraints within which journalists work than how news events or the many source texts that form the basis of news are processed into the final product that is read, heard or seen in printed or electronic media. We do not know the way media users select, read, understand, memorize or reproduce the information provided to them by the news media.

As we have seen in this study, the analysis has been conducted in two dimensions, textual and contextual. The textual component has been systematically analyzed in its various structures at different levels of news discourse.

The contextual component (Second Dimension) has been discussed in terms of its cognitive and social factors: conditions, constraints, or consequences of such textual structures and, by extension, their economic, cultural and historical embedding.

I have focused on the ways La Nacion's journalists and editors, and the readers, represent news events, write or read news texts, process various source texts, or participate in communicative events. That is the frequently ignored side of newsmaking. Most studies about journalists focus on them as social actors who deal with other social actors or with institutions. I have analyzed how newspeople from this paper understand their task and how the way that they do their jobs determines the news reports they produce. I have also considered the theoretical basis of their work, inferring their newsmaking values; NDA reformulates this in terms of the social cognitions of newsmakers and news users.

I have considered the possible transformation of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes by the news consumers, which, according to NDA, is substantially more complex than what "effects research" has implied. As Graber (1984) indicates:

When people fail to learn or create appropriate schemas for certain types of news, that news cannot be absorbed. Socialization of average Americans apparently leaves a number of gaps in the schema structure. These gaps then make it difficult to focus public attention on some

important problems. News about most foreign countries and news about sciences are examples. Even when such news is presented in simple ways much of the audience fails to make the effort to absorb it because appropriate schemas did not form part of socialization. (p. 206)

I pointed out that, according to van Dijk (1988a), what readers do is not so much remember news reports but construct news and update old models of the situation a news report describes. The generalization or decontextualization of such models, which feature both the personal and the group-based beliefs and opinion of the reader(s), determine the acquisition of more general knowledge or attitude changes. In other words, people remember and understand best what they already know.

Although I focused on understanding a representation of news, these findings also allow us to make assumptions about the processes of knowledge, belief and opinion transformation. These are the major components of the effects of the news media.

In sum, NDA has allowed me to analyze La Nacion's news messages by themselves, and through this analysis, to determine the existence of a systematic bias, its direction and its relationship with the newspaper's editorial posture. It also has allowed me to determine the possible effects that this disinformation of the Costa Rican public could have in the future of the country, taking into consideration that--according to 'market' news theory--only a well-informed public opinion can guarantee the prevalence

of the democratic system itself. People must make up their minds by themselves based on the information available.

The NDA approach has also allowed this researcher to bridge the gap between the microlevels and macrolevels of news analysis, and between media text and context. That is, through the analysis of the structures of news reports this researcher has been able to link these structures to the cognitive processes of newsmaking and to those of reader understanding. Simultaneously these structures allowed the researcher to link them to the social practices of La Nacion's newspeople, their group-ideologies, and the institutional constraints on this newspaper.

However, as van Dijk (1988a) states, NDA is still in its infancy and what has been provided so far is only an outline, "a macrostructure of a theory, its microstructural details still need much research, both theoretical and empirical" (p. 182).

Researcher's Points of View

As a journalist who worked for a decade in three Costa Rican newspapers, among them the object of this inquiry, and who spent eight additional years working in alternative news media, this researcher feels that finally--in NDA--there is a research tool with which studies like this could supply some answers to many critically important questions. NDA can address questions about the underlying assumptions of objectivity and fairness in the news media,

the effects that these assumptions by the readers could have in the way they understand their societies, and the process of knowledge acquisition.

Trained as a follower of 'market' news theory and as a college professor who taught his students the same perspective, this researcher was conscious of the immense gap there is between theory and practice, between the public notion of objectivity and the use of this notion by the news media.

Having lived almost ten years out of his country, this researcher was able to detach himself from the stereotypes and myths of his culture, and gain the ability to understand it in a reflective manner. My acquisition of this perspective was facilitated by a bicultural inheritance: Costa Rican-Chinese (Breen & Corcoran, 1986).

Provided with this attitude schema, a theory such as NDA has been a research tool whose prospects for researchers in general seem unlimited.

This tool allowed this researcher to determine insights that are not only precise, but tremendously helpful for seeing what is difficult to see with the naked eye.

Most important, NDA has allowed this researcher to complete his process of journalistic consciousness-raising, some aspects of which were hidden in the past, especially

those related with the cognitive dimension and knowledge acquisition through news discourse.

As a journalist, it amazes me how NDA can introduce laypersons and professionals alike to the intricacies of the profession, to interpret with more precision, as a physician reads an x-ray, but here an x-ray produced by NDA techniques.

One of the limitations of this study concerns the placement analysis, the report about the positions of the news items on the front page. Positioning is a critical part of the semiotic signals that indicate the degree of importance attributed to a specific news report by La Nacion's editors. Although there are some semiotic elements that would allow other researchers to come to the same conclusions in determining the first three positions, beyond that, researchers' decisions could vary according to the elements they considered of more or less importance (i.e., the top-down principle, the size of the news item, the size or number of headlines, the pictorial illustrations, etc.).

I have taken into consideration all these criteria to decide the placement of a news item with a set of standard rules. However, I have to accept that these are my criteria and other researchers could have other opinions.

In the case of this study, the limitation of language barrier has been especially important due to the

difficulties of translation and the problem of lack of common social knowledge that led to limiting the analysis mainly to structural characteristics.

The large size of the original sample has been another limitation, due to the tremendous task involved, which also led to limiting the depth of the analysis in each news category. Probably, for the scope of this thesis, it would have been preferable to select one or two topics. On the other hand, the sample is small if we consider that only one newspaper has been analyzed. A bigger sample, more than one newspaper and a topic limitation would probably have been the best combination.

Related to the number of topics is the problem of the social context. This researcher has been absent from Costa Rica since January 1986. I knew only fragments about some of the events covered by La Nacion and had no way of knowing the context of the events. This is another limitation of this study. Probably, more details would have been raised in the study if I had been in Costa Rica.

Finally, I would like to point out the broader horizon, the importance of the flow of information coming from the Third World countries and processed and controlled by First World news corporations whose ethnocentric viewpoints and ideology is imposed to the news consumers in the same way that La Nacion does that in Costa Rica. More specifically, the Central American conflict under the news coverage of

those information transnationals do not correspond to the current events as most Central American understand them (Day, 1987).

SIGNIFICANCE OF DISCOVERIES

Scholarly Importance

The fact that some types of information, topics, or themes are absent or underdeveloped affect democratic living just as strongly as the presence and full development of others.

News media studies in Costa Rica have followed two models: the effects model and the conspiracy model. Only a few have analyzed the messages themselves as the object of inquiry, and those few studies have used the traditional content analysis method. Obviously, the news media messages themselves affect the view Costa Ricans have about news. More subtly, the absence of enough scholarly analytical works deprives all of the information necessary to develop a critical viewpoint toward the work of newsmakers.

The only counterforce available is the informal resistance of those whose schema, attitudes and beliefs were acquired in an early socialization, "the overarching cultural values" that, as Graber (1984) points out, "appear to be internalized in early life." This early socialization, as it has been proved, leads people to adopt

party identifications and leanings towards liberalism or conservatism. However, as Graber indicates, even readers who come to La Nacion with fully formed oppositional opinions will be subconsciously influenced by the newspaper's political symbols. Early socialization towards liberalism or conservatism may often be modified by the influence of dramatic or significant public events as depicted in the major media sources.

Graber (1984) emphasizes "the nearly total lack of scenarios in people's schemas about the manner in which public institutions operate" (p. 208). That lack of models or scripts in matters that ought to be of public concern affects the capacity of people to consider information that might give them better insights into these matters. The problem is not only which type of information is actually provided, but that lack of information in the past prevents people from understanding that information when it is available in the present.

This problem is central to the acceptance of a study such as this by the broader public. Those who have schemas in which to fit the information provided by this study will probably accept its findings, but those who do not most probably will reject them.

There is, then, a difference between those theories that reject the effect of news media messages on people, and those theories that do not accept the premise of

effects and consider it no longer attainable. Theorists who reject the effects of the message on readers typically do so from one of two bases: either they recognize a lack of methodology capable of determining an effect or they have applied methodology unsuitable for the task (Fejes, 1985; Haslett, 1986; Jensen, 1987a; Mancini, 1988; McGuire, 1986). But, the power of a message upon the audience is illustrated every day by advertisers, political communicators, news people and politicians, using symbolic and verbal configurations to create favorable reactions and response.

NDA considers that the news media make major contributions to the formation of models or scripts in various domains of knowledge, by signaling the relative importance of stories. This information is strategically important in those areas of knowledge where people do not have other sources or have but few chances with which to acquire information through other channels (Connel & Miles, 1985; Davis, 1985).

Access to information can divide society into the media poor or media rich. Those individuals in society who have access to an array of different sources of information tend to be enriched because information is a major asset in gaining economic and political power. Social groups who lack information are likely to remain disenfranchised (Donohue, et al., 1987).

But this dichotomy is not really comprehensive. Most Costa Ricans are totally dependent on media information. There are no other sources available. The public may suspect major media sources, but in the end they form models or complete attitude schemas with the only information available. The minor news media, which could shape alternative models and schemas, cannot reach most Costa Ricans.

Another problem involves the dependency of most Costa Ricans on the electronic news media; this is related to the low circulation of newspapers. La Nacion, for example, claims a daily circulation of 90,000, and this newspaper sets the news agenda. Electronic media messages are generally so brief that they allow for little more than presentation of headlines. This means that the quality of learning declines and that messages are learned through the content of the top macrostructures, which, we have seen, generally reflect La Nacion's bias. Nevertheless these macrostructures are internalized by readers (Kozminsky, 1977).

Clearly, the scholarly role of NDA in Costa Rica is of tremendous importance to promote an attitude change in the study of news media discourse and to create consciousness about the manipulation of the news media messages.

Practical Implications

As van Dijk (1988b) points out, "journalists are like other middle class, dominant group members and express, enact, legitimate, and, hence, reproduce the dominant and consensual ideological framework of their class" (p. 211).

La Nacion and the rest of the Costa Rican mainstream news media's point of view is nearly exclusively that of the dominant conservative group. Consequently, those who work for these institutions inevitably reproduce this viewpoint. This dominant perspective is not part of the events that have to be reported but an autonomous result of news production. The same holds for the style of description, the quotation of news actors, and many other news characteristics (Real, 1977).

In the production conditions of news in Costa Rica, few journalists are found working in the scarce counter-ideological news media. Although there are organizations that would provide the mainstream news media with the necessary framework for routine newsgathering, they ignore them most of the time or just use them to show some response to current events (Sigelman, 1973). Also, news values of journalists tend to exclude sociocultural out-groups, both as topics and as reliable sources.

What would allow one to create an alternative channel that could lead to some change in this arrangement? One of the immediate answers to this problem is training, and the

best place to begin would be the University of Costa Rica's Mass Communication School. However, this training would include only journalists-to-be, who still have to face the strong socialization process within the media institutions, pressures felt more strongly by novices. Thus, simultaneously, it would be very important to establish additional training within the University: training for working journalists.

Another type of less formal training would be seminars, workshops or a national congress in which journalist would analyze and discuss the findings of NDA.

Particularly important is the possibility of establishing special courses in the Mass Communication School for those finishing their studies, but who still would be required to produce a thesis in order to graduate. This would allow the production of more research in this area. I will discuss this option in part three of this chapter.

A large step in the right direction would be the participation of the Costa Rican Journalists' Collegium in the promotion of research activity. The Collegium could start a journal with a scholarly editorial board that periodically would publish an analysis of the news coverage in different news media, doing so with the help of those organizations interested in determining the level of

disinformation or bias in the news coverage of vital public issues.

Finally, I have decided upon the necessity of publishing a book based on this study as a form of informing the general public of the results of this inquiry. The urgency of this step owes to the role that La Nación plays in Costa Rica as a political force, a force so effective that some authors compare it with a political party. Under the guise of the code of objectivity, La Nación has deflected criticism that it seeks to undermine the four main pillars of Costa Rica's social peace. Described by Reding (1986), these are: "the social democratic welfare state created by the PLN; the right of workers to organize in unions of their own choosing; the representation of leftists in the national legislature; and the absence of armed forces" (p. 302).

Having demonstrated that La Nación breaks the rules they use to legitimate its role as a carrier of the public voice, this researcher believes these findings must be communicated to most Costa Ricans through all available means.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I consider it essential that studies be begun about the news coverage in the other most important newspapers of Costa Rica. It would be valuable to make comparative

studies of all the major print media. Another study could be an analysis of the texts supplied in news releases by different institutions and contrast them with the news reports published based on these releases.

Also, an analysis of the news coverage of the political speeches of the candidates from the two majority parties could be enlightening.

On the international level, a comparative analysis should be conducted examining what the three most important Costa Rican newspapers receive from the international news agencies, which news stories they select, and how they are published.

By no means of lesser importance would be an analysis of the news discourse in the electronic media. Finally, it would be interesting to do research in news comprehension to determine how Costa Ricans deal with the flow of news discourse and the role this information play in their lives.

The technique of News Discourse Analysis is not a panacea, but it can make a fundamental contribution to the protection of liberties, equality, and social peace in Costa Rica.

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APPENDIX

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

INTERDISCIPLINARY BACKGROUND

Van Dijk (1988b) points out that although the history of the new cross-discipline of discourse studies can be traced back to ancient treatises of rhetoric and poetics of more than 2,000 years ago, its modern development dates from the mid-1960s. The present-day study of discourse has its roots in anthropology, structural and generative grammar, and ethnography, and in the relationship of these disciplines with poetics and semiotics.

There are six directions of research that can be identified. First is the movement known as French structuralism with the rebirth of semiotics (Morris, 1938) and the humanities (Barthes, 1964; Eco, 1976). Van Dijk outlines that as the general study of signs, it enables anthropologists, literary scholars, linguists, and sociologists alike to study meaning and signifying practices in a terminology that allows cross-disciplinary comparison and coherence. Structural anthropology also gave rise to systematic analysis of myths or folk tales. The mid-1960s also witnessed the emergence of the

ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1964; Gumperz & Hymes, 1972).

The second major source of current discourse analysis can be found in microsociology. Van Dijk indicates that sociologists as diverse as Goffman (1959, 1967), Garfinkel (1967), and Cicourel (1973), focused attention on everyday interactions and their underlying meaning and interpretations. "This framework soon led to special interest in one of the most mundane yet at the same time most fascinating types of everyday interaction: talk" (p. 4). This conversational analysis rapidly spread to other disciplines such as sociolinguistics and ethnography and is now one of the dominant paradigms in the wider field of discourse analysis.

The third direction of research provided the basic conceptual framework of the pragmatic account of language use, and thus enabled the construction of the necessary link between verbal utterances analyzed as linguistic objects and the accomplishment of social action. Here we find the study of speech acts (such as promises or threats) by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1967/1975).

The fourth influence on discourse analysis was the emerging discipline of sociolinguistics in the mid-1960s (Fishman, 1968). Instead of the more abstract and context-free study of language systems in terms of structural or generative grammars, sociolinguistics

proposed a more empirical study of actual language use in its social context (Giglioli, 1972; Dittman, 1976). It focused on the impact of social factors (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.) on linguistic variation and rejected the currently prevailing assumption of a homogenous speech community sharing the same grammar. As with the other disciplines mentioned, much contemporary sociolinguistics merges with social discourse analysis (Stubbs, 1983).

The study of text processing in Psychology and Artificial Intelligence is the fifth direction of research (van Dijk, 1988a,b). The late 1960s and early 1970s also produced a paradigm shift in psycho-linguistics, cognitive psychology, and artificial intelligence. After its too-close encounter with generative sentence grammars, psychology soon discovered the field of text processing, with its obvious applications in educational psychology (Freedle & Carroll, 1972; Kintsch, 1974). Comprehension, storage, memory representation, and reproduction of textual information were the major processes analyzed in this research orientation (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). The contribution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to this field also focused on stories and proved to be specially important in the computer simulation of the vast amount of knowledge (organized in scripts) necessary for the interpretation of discourse (Schank & Abelson, 1977).

The final influence of research was linguistics, itself. Partly influenced by work in the structural analysis of narrative, linguistics started to grow out of its self-imposed sentence boundary. It was found in text-linguistic studies that not only the linguistic properties of sequences and whole text fragments, but also the very phonological and syntactic structures, and semantic interpretation of sentences, depend on their position and function in discourse.

Not until the end of the 1970s did increased cross-fertilization and integration take place among several of these subfields. What first started as a more or less autonomous development in various disciplines increasingly appeared as different orientations of a newly emerging discipline, discourse studies (van Dijk, 1985c).