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DEFRAGMENTING NEWS FRAMING RESEARCH

Reconciling Generic and Issue-Specific Frames

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Twenty-five years ago, Entman (1993) made a clarion call for communication scholars to use the framing concept to bring together “insights and theories that would otherwise remain scattered in other disciplines” (p. 51); “By bringing together ideas in one location, communication can aspire to become a master discipline that synthesizes related ideas and concepts and exposes them to the most rigorous, comprehensive statement and exploration” (p. 51). There is no doubt that framing has thrived in media studies. As Vliegthart and van Zoonen (2011) pointed out, the number of published studies on media framing, particularly work focusing on news, has not waned since Bryant and Miron (2004) showed that framing had become an ascendant concept in media research by the turn of the 20th century. Along the way, some observers have argued that framing has indeed become the integrative concept Entman envisioned would move the discipline forward (D’Angelo, 2002; Reese, 2001, 2007). Following Entman’s early diagnosis, however, the fractured or fragmented paradigm is still a master narrative of framing research, often percolating into the literature reviews of individual studies intent on repairing it.

Attempts to “defragment” news framing analysis inevitably confront a dilemma. As Shah, McLeod, Gotlieb, and Lee (2009) put it, “[Rather] than merely expressing dismay at the fractured nature of the framing paradigm, perhaps researchers should celebrate the diversity of knowledge provided by contrasting approaches” (p. 93). Still, they add, “attempts to standardize conceptual and operational definitions, and to enhance theoretical clarity and coherence, should be applauded” (p. 94). Navigating this dilemma sometimes leads to efforts to define “frame” or “framing” in rather exclusionary terms. For example, in searching for what de Vreese (2012) called a “golden, definitive standard definition of what a

frame is” (p. 367), some work advocates jettisoning any conceptual definition that appears to be too abstract to guide how textual features of frames are measured in media discourses. But such proposals to define frames and framing narrowly—say, in terms of Entman’s framing functions (Matthes & Kohring, 2008) or in terms of strict equivalencies (Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, 2016)—tend to stifle the research program, because they lose track of the point that the full media framing process has many moving parts, as Scheufele (1999) has shown. Thus, good conceptual definitions are supposed to orient empirical research toward facets of this process; they do not and cannot define the whole process (D’Angelo & Shaw, forthcoming).

In our view, the best way to defragment news framing analysis is to synthesize related ideas and framing concepts and theorize the relationships between these concepts rather than aim for a unified conceptual definition (or none at all) or a single set of measurements. We focus here on one particular distinction, between generic and issue-specific frames (de Vreese, 2005), and hold that they should not be viewed as two alternative conceptualizations of frames but as complementary layers of framing that are situated on different levels of abstraction. The thesis of our chapter is that both of these types of frames are useful, and that a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of public debates can be gained by combining the analysis of issue-specific and generic frames. This would be one important step toward defragmenting news framing analysis. We bolster this thesis by looking at a small but growing literature that examines what we call “hybrid frames” in news stories. We argue that frames in texts, more often than not, reflect both generic and issue-specific framing practices.

Identifying the hybrid nature of these frames is a challenge that is not sufficiently tackled by current research.¹ Notably, only about 6% of framing studies even attempt to integrate the analysis of both types of frames, according to Borah (2011). Our goal here is to extrapolate from this literature the definitions and procedures that serve to defragment the enterprise of news framing research.

The chapter’s next section reviews existing conceptual definitions of issue-specific and generic frames. Drawing on D’Angelo’s discussion in this volume’s Prologue, we also discuss some of the subtle connections between these frame types. In the third section, we discuss how researchers are already merging issue-specific frames and generic frames within “tiered” models designed to engender a more complete picture of how journalists cover—and contextualize—events and issues. Also, we offer another approach, which could potentially be applied in tiered designs, that ties values and core beliefs to issue frames. In the chapter’s fourth section, we discuss two related benefits of defragmenting issue-specific and generic frames, enabling researchers to (a) develop designs that yield a more complete picture of issue cultures, and (b) integrate field- and domain-specific lists of issue frames with journalistic practice. We end with a summary of our approach.

Defining, Distinguishing, and Deriving Issue-Specific and Generic Frames

The difference between issue-specific and generic frames rests on a fairly straightforward point. For issue-specific frames, which are also called topic-specific frames, content-related frames (Scheufele, 2004), and context-specific frames (Shah et al., 2009), communicators devise apparently unique ways to contextualize a topic, such as an event, person, issue, campaign, trend, or some other object. Alternatively, for a generic frame, the contextualizing discourse that a communicator uses in a particular instance has obvious or arguable relevance to a bigger set of topics within which the unique topic is located and with which it shares domain-specific characteristics.

Illustrating an issue-specific frame, Tucker (1998) examined how critics of a Calvin Klein advertising campaign used mainstream newspapers, magazines, and industry trade publications to purvey a “kiddie porn” frame. Her analysis showed how that frame rose to public visibility within specific social and political conditions. As this example shows, some issue-specific frames are tailored to a topic’s unique set of circumstances. However, as de Vreese and Lecheler (2012) suggested, issue-specific topics do not have to be unique or idiosyncratic. Rather, they can be cyclical and periodic (e.g., elections), emerging and developing, or ongoing and unresolved (e.g., labor disputes). In all of these cases, however, an issue-specific frame’s pertinence seems to be relegated to that topic.

Issue-specific frames raise an analytical red flag to researchers. As de Vreese and Lecheler (2012) explain, “The high degree of issue-sensitivity makes analyses drawing on issue-specific frames difficult to generalize, compare and use as empirical evidence for theory building” (p. 295). Addressing the problem of generalizability has been the focus of quite a few research programs. For example, Chyi and McCombs (2004) noted that, “Since most researchers have adopted an object-specific approach when studying framing, cross-object comparisons are impossible” (p. 24). Working in the agenda-setting tradition of news framing research, they addressed the problem of cross-object generalizability by showing how news frames stem from orientations toward space and time that characterize how journalists think about news and construct stories. Whereas Chyi and McCombs examined one event, the 1999 Columbine school shooting, Muschert and Carr (2006) applied these frames in an analysis of nine US school shootings, which are unexpected yet all-too-frequent events, in an effort to show patterns in which frames changed over time across these cases.

Shah et al. (2009) argue that “context-transcendent” frames are more important than issue-specific frames in “generating theories of framing effects that are generalizable across multiple issues and various contexts” (p. 86). However, others suggest that holding on to this distinction may hamper the study of framing effects. “A frame in communication can be defined only in relation to a specific issue, event, or political actor,” stated Chong and Druckman (2007a, p. 106). Their work

investigates framing effects at a granular level, whereby specific considerations—or reasons for favoring one side of an issue over another (Zaller & Feldman, 1992)—are the basis of issue frames. Exposure to these considerations, say, in news stories, can affect an individual's attitude toward the issue, because (mediated) considerations have the potential to shift the weight(s) of the attitude's component beliefs, as measured via self-report of individuals' preferences. In this model of framing effects, which is based on expectancy value theory,² frames are explicitly linked to an issue and an evaluation, which “obviates the need to specify how a general frame must be in order to be classified as generic” (p. 107), according to Chong and Druckman (2007a).

In our view, an analytical debate based solely on the relative advantages and disadvantages of generalizable frames is unlikely to defragment news framing research or move it forward. Instead, following D'Angelo's explication of the four main frames in this volume's Prologue, when this distinction is viewed in the contexts of both academic theory and professional practice, it becomes clear that the differences between issue-specific frames and generic frames are “more subtle than stark.”

Specifically, as D'Angelo stated, the issue-specific frames that become news derive either directly or indirectly from the considerations—and hence, from the advocacy frames (Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009)—of news sources. Of course, news contains journalists' own considerations, too. Focusing on the US, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2010) remind us that the forms—not just the formats—of journalism continue to evolve. Thus, for example, in the “journalism of affirmation,” as opposed to the “journalism of verification,” news hosts who work for cable networks, more so than their correspondents and reporters, “create the impression that [they] are putting something in order, making sense of it ...” (p. 47). In giving answers rather than information, according to Kovach and Rosenstiel, sources' issue frames, which feed journalists' base of expertise, are manifested in news texts as open evaluations by news hosts of the topic being covered (Tenenboim-Weinblatt & Baden, 2016).

In calling topic-specific news frames the journalistic counterpart to sources' issue frames, D'Angelo preserves the analytical distinction derived from *who* is communicating the frame, but allows an integrative look at which discourse elements comprise an issue-based frame *regardless* of who is communicating it. As we will discuss later, one's values play an especially important role in elevating an argument into a frame, particularly when values complement the base-line contextualizing statements many framers use, such as defining and naming an event/issue, making causal assertions about it, and suggesting remedies for social problems it entails (see Entman, 1993). Journalists listen to—and learn from—sources' issue frames, internalizing the meaning of issues on that basis. But the news stories they produce do more than merely send those frames to audiences (Brüggemann, 2014). Rather, news stories are a site in which those frames have been translated (Tenenboim-Weinblatt & Baden, 2016). Analytically speaking,

therefore, generic frames cannot be viewed simply as topic bundles for issue frames. Rather, they are part of the translating process issue-specific frames go through in the course of becoming news. De Vreese (2005, 2012) makes this point, arguing that generic framing is entailed by journalistic practice—for example, by format-based news conventions, newsroom norms, and news values. As D'Angelo said in the Prologue, “[G]eneric frames contextualize issue frames by virtue of the information-processing mechanisms of journalist frames and the organizational procedures that generate newsroom frames.” Put simply, “[G]eneric frames are what journalists *do to* issue frames.”

Some generic frames are particularly close to routines of journalism, such as the often-cited generic frames including episodic–thematic (Iyengar, 1991) and strategy–issue (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). Other generic frames, however, cannot clearly be attributed to journalistic routines. As such, their use in news stories would be the result of how journalists interpret framing practices of their sources.

For example, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) compiled a well-known typology of news frames. They distinguish between the frames *human interest*, *conflict*, attribution of *responsibility*, *morality*, and *economic consequences*. While human interest and conflict are certainly close to journalistic routines, the morality and economic consequences frames may be related to the specific perspectives of certain sources. Here's an example (unrelated to the Semetko and Valkenburg study): if Pope Francis writes about climate change, he may be inclined to employ a morality frame. If a big insurance company releases a report on climate change, an economic consequences frame is more likely to be prevalent. Generic frames like these are related to the functional differentiation of society, which is mirrored in journalism, with reporters from the economic beat also being inclined to use an economic consequences frame.

On a methodological level, Semetko and Valkenburg also presented a straightforward way to measure generic frames: Coders observed news stories via a set of yes-or-no questions that were formulated deductively on the basis of discursive attributes of known frames. Subsequently, factor analysis was conducted to verify which attributes expressed the frames. Here, the economic consequences frame was identified by answering the following three questions: Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future? Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved? Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action? Dirikx and Gelders (2010) used the same set of frames for studying climate change coverage in four daily elite newspapers in France and the Netherlands. These approaches to observing generic (and generalizable) frames allow researchers to identify recurrent structures of media coverage, thus hinting at common journalistic practices across countries and media outlets.

A more comprehensive approach to news framing also considers how events and issues are framed within news texts. For example, if we as researchers are interested in what is at issue within a debate, where the substantial cleavages are, and who

advocates what and how, then identifying generic frames is less than sufficient. Consider the “economic frame” in the climate change debate. The occurrence of this frame does say something about a tendency to see the world through the lens of costs and economic gains. But it might still not grasp the important framing contests in specific debates, thus neglecting the political dimension of framing as a struggle between different actors and interests. For example, in a news item about climate change, the use of the “economic consequences frame” does not say whether someone argues that a binding agreement on limiting the emission of greenhouse gases is too expensive for our national economy or whether someone argues that climate change itself will be very costly to our economy. It is not enough to state that a frame may be used by both sides in a dispute (which is certainly the case) if we want to identify the differences in the framing by actors that promote different political aims, because here, the differences in framing occur below the abstract level of generic frames. Here is where an issue-specific framing analysis can complement the analysis of generic frames. In other words, the new approach calls for bundling journalists’ processing practices and strategies—for example, as found in news beats (Tuchman, 1978)—with sources’ statements, the raw material of most spot news.

Observing Hybrid Frames

Content analyses using a hybrid approach to observing issue-specific and generic frames typically employ a tiered approach: Tier 1 is for the analysis of issue frames, and Tier 2 is for the analysis of issue-specific frames in light of generic frames (e.g., Boydston & Glazier, 2013; Kozman, 2017). Complementing these content analyses are a few studies that turn the tiered approach toward journalists themselves in order to see how *their* frames consist of a layered structure of topic-specific and generic frames (e.g., Engesser & Brüggemann, 2016). Another possibility, not yet used to our knowledge but put forth here, specifies how sources connect values to considerations in the course of framing an issue.

Observing Issue-Specific and Generic Frames in Tiered Designs

Figure 5.1 illustrates how researchers integrate issue-specific and generic frames in content analyses using a tiered design. As noted, observing issue-specific frames is the first tier in this design, and observing these frames in light of generic frames is Tier 2.

Given the theoretical framework articulated earlier in this chapter, issue-specific frames stem from considerations, or reasons sources state for favoring one or the other side of an issue. Researchers observe these considerations in various ways, using inductive or deductive approaches or a combination of the two. An obvious formula is Entman’s (1993) four framing functions, whereby a communicator frames an event or issue by defining it as a social problem (sometimes

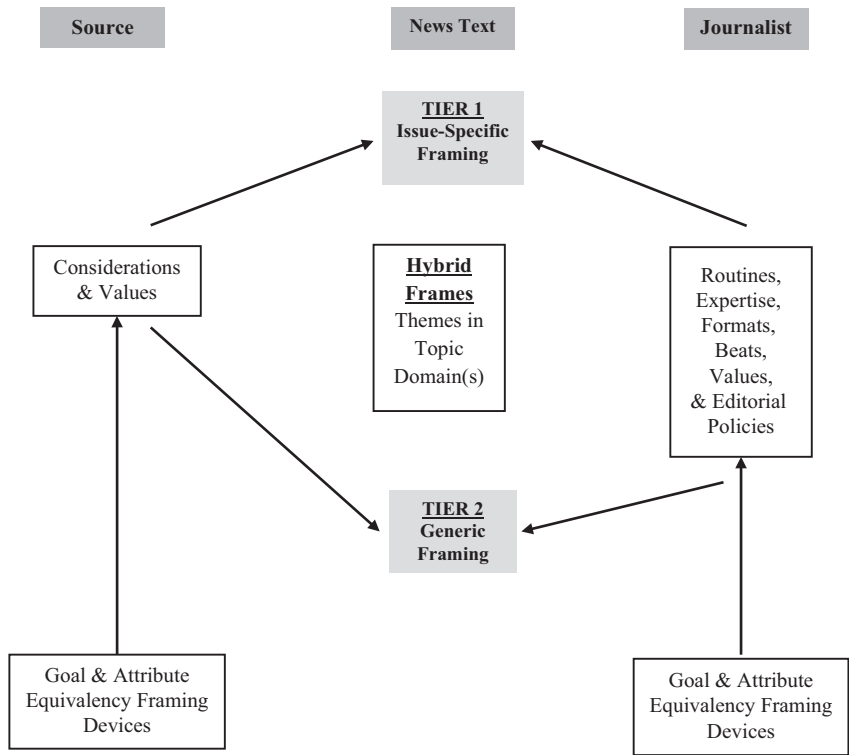


FIGURE 5.1 Hybrid frames

with a label or catchphrase), diagnosing its causes, evaluating viewpoints and proposals about it on moral grounds, and recommending remedies. This formula serves well for reconstructing public debates in content analysis, and researchers have used it in many media framing studies, as Matthes (2009) reported in a content analysis of the literature on media framing. Although not a hybrid study of issue-specific and generic frames, Matthes and Kohring's (2008) study should be mentioned in more detail, as it developed a rigorous operationalization for a standardized measurement of these four framing functions. Using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, they coded a sample of *New York Times* stories about biotechnology over two four-year periods during the 1990s and early 2000s. Using the four frame elements of problem definitions, causal attributions, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations allowed them to categorize topics according to pre-set categories. However, they also relied on the codebook from a previous analysis, which allowed them to place subtopics into these categories (e.g., 39 subtopics and nine topics for "problem definition"). Altogether, these deductive and inductive approaches guided the manual coding. After manual coding was finished, Matthes and Kohring used cluster

analysis to reveal constellations or patterns of the four frame elements, which, in another inductive step, they identified as full-blown issue frames called “economic prospects,” “genetic identity,” and “research benefit.”

Finding a way to deal with myriad considerations is an important early step in tiered content analytic designs, for it facilitates the identification of issue frames, which is the goal of Tier 1. In turn, this step is vital to applying generic frames, the goal of Tier 2, which altogether enables research to identify hybrid frames in news. Similarly to Matthes and Kohring’s (2008) study, the preliminary stage in some studies involves identifying categories of considerations before using a quantitative data reduction technique to extract thematic issue frames. Typically, this preliminary stage relies on previous work or on another exploratory analysis of news content. For example, Boydston and Glazier (2013) identified 12 issue-specific frame dimensions from 315 particular considerations observed in US newspaper coverage of the War on Terror from 2001 to 2006. Suggesting a combination of inductive and deductive approaches, they stated, “Most of these dimensions were fairly obvious aggregate categorizations of the individual frames we identified, but only after we solidified the dimensions after extensive coding trials” (p. 714). These dimensions constituted the categories of considerations that were subsequently manually coded as being embedded within two sets of generic frames (gain vs. loss; self vs. other). In sum, considerations coded within the generic frames yielded four distinct thematic hybrid frames, called hope, fear, charity, and shame (see Boydston & Glazier, 2013, p. 716).

Kozman (2017) employed a cross between Boydston and Glazier’s (2013) design and that used by Matthes and Kohring (2008). In a study of cross-media coverage of the steroids issue in US baseball, they drew on Entman’s framing functions. Unlike Matthes and Kohring, however, they dispensed with using those functions directly and instead derived topic areas relevant to the issue under analysis (e.g., “medical,” “policy”) in order to indirectly observe those functions within small recording units (e.g., paragraphs) in news stories. Like Boydston and Glazier, they identified and then empirically examined hybrid frames based on pre-determined generic frames, only those generic frames were derived from news values (e.g., “economic prospects”). The presence and salience of each hybrid frame were determined via a factor analysis of considerations grouped into those pre-determined generic frame categories.

Despite the methodological differences evident in just these two studies, the Tier 1 phase is always dedicated to categorizing issue-specific considerations and uncovering full-blown issue frames. As noted above, these dual operational processes yield issue frames described as being thematic. However, this process raises a conundrum about exactly where an issue frame resides. As Entman et al. (2009) caution, it is not defensible to hold that issue frames are inherent in every argumentative claim about an issue. Rather, in describing issue frames in terms of strategic framing, they point out that “Frames are not understood as individual schema, but as collectively shared patterns of a social group” (p. 179). While

we agree with this point, what does this say about efforts to describe an issue frame as thematic, let alone, as the center box of Figure 5.1 shows, as latent discourse structures identified as themes related to topic domains (e.g., the “fear” and “charity” frames in Boydston and Glazier’s study)? Are issue frames simply conjured by an analytical step researchers must take in order to theorize and examine hybrid frames?

To address these questions, we contend that hybrid frames are in fact thematic in nature—and the reason they are is not just the result of analytical exercise but, rather, because of how they operate within the strategic realm of framing occupied by issue advocates. As many framing scholars who come from different paradigmatic perspectives have pointed out, issue frames have a cultural life, instantiated but not necessarily reified in proprietary and mediated texts (e.g., Entman et al., 2009; Reese, 2001, 2010; Van Gorp, 2010). Thus, to news sources, issue-specific frames are not merely considerations that they express piecemeal but themes they may consciously and strategically tap and employ within message campaigns. In many cases, these campaigns are designed to garner media coverage; this, in turn, assures the cultural status of the issue frames, whereby their ontological status supersedes individual expression.

Tier 1 analyses naturally push researchers to understand and examine the active role journalists play in shaping the issue culture. Thus, in the Tier 2 stage of a content analysis, the overarching goal is to understand how journalists process the information that subsequently becomes part of the reports, analysis stories, and opinion pieces of news publications. Using a constructionist perspective on news framing, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) theorized that journalists of all stripes reflect an issue culture by circulating sources’ issue frames and actively shape it by “contribut[ing] to their own frames and invent[ing] their own clever catchphrases, drawing on a popular culture that they share with their audience” (p. 3). In Van Gorp’s (2010) explication of this perspective, journalists are attuned not only to the myriad considerations from their sources but also to the culturally embedded themes, such as narratives, values, and archetypes, that infuse the myriad considerations on an issue that sources express. To him, these sorts of themes are the prime ingredients of journalist frames. Pan and Kosicki (1993) noted, too, that big themes of this sort are part of the cognitive repertoire journalists use to find proper angles for stories. These cognitive frames are rooted in the cultural repository of frames available to journalists (Brüggemann, 2014) and contain aspects of both generic and issue-specific, as traditionally conceived. In fact, Engesser and Brüggemann (2016) showed how journalist frames develop organically: By listening to—and covering—source considerations, journalist frames take the form of themes immersed in topic domains and issue cultures, which is much the same form as the hybrid news frames that journalists play an active role in shaping in the first place.

As a practical matter, as Van Dijk (1988) said, for journalists to process information entails “some form of discourse processing”:

Hence, the construction of news is most of all a reconstruction of available discourses. The interpretation processes, the representation and retrieval from memory of these discourses—at various stages until their final form—make up one of the basic but ill-understood components of news production. (p. 28)

News framing researchers continue to make progress in understanding how news production relates to news framing.³ Yet, the Tier 2 phase can make two unique contributions to news framing analysis.

First, by stressing the active role generic frames play in shaping an issue culture, researchers can supplant the dominant but sterile definition which says that generic frames are generalizable across topics and, instead, see them as integral to theory-driven explanations for how news production is connected with news framing in coverage of particular issues. Sometimes, the rationale for Tier 2 is expressed in a somewhat clinical way, as when Boydston and Glazier (2013) note that generic framing can be investigated “in conjunction with” issue-specific frames (p. 710). We prefer the more active characterization of Tier 2, which conceives the generative role of journalism in terms of “packaging” information. For example, Kozman (2017) noted, “Whereas issue-specific frames reveal what aspects of an issue were selected and what we left out, generic frames tell us more about the way the media package any issue.” As such, generic frames “take more of an interpretive, packaging role that could work in tandem with any issue-specific frame” (p. 780).

The second way that Tier 2’s emphasis on generic framing has the potential to move news framing analysis forward is that it forces researchers to pay closer attention to a facet of newsgathering that consumes all working journalists: their sources. As Sigal (1973) noted, “The sources a newsman [sic] talks to largely shape what he reports” (p. 2). Our model depicts generic framing as an iterative process through which journalists learn about issues from their sources’ considerations; however, they also filter and inflect this information in line with their own expertise. But precisely *who* are journalists listening to? Kovach and Rosenstiel (2010) remind us that there are many different kinds of sources. In their view, dissecting precisely who these sources are is vital to judging the quality of information they provide. News can be sourceless, whereby a story is written or told from the audience’s perspective. At times, ordinary people often are tapped to provide firsthand accounts of an event, especially if they participated in it. Of course, a journalist can witness the event, too. And, for issues that require more background, context, and analysis, journalists regularly go to officials and credentialed experts. Because generic framing is iterative—that is, it happens within a newsroom’s beats and routines and in connection with the production and expression of issue frames—researchers need to consider from *where* issue frames come, and how generic framing is influenced by these sources. As Gamson and Modigliani (1989) demonstrated in a seminal news framing study, only after work is done on that level can the “central organizing idea” of an issue culture be fleshed out.

Observing Issue Frames in Conjunction with Values

Journalists, and in particular beat journalists, are exposed to many different kinds of considerations—and, as noted, their own expertise about an event or issue derives at least in part from what they learn from these considerations. Accordingly, one area from which research on tiered models of hybrid framing can benefit is framing research that advances our understanding of issue framing. Here, political science scholars who study framing have moved the needle forward, particularly in developing models of framing effects built on the audiences' cognitive sub-routines of accessibility and applicability, which some theories see as distinct processes (Scheufele, 2000) but in reality are integrated in a fully articulated news framing process (Chong & Druckman, 2007a, 2007b; Slothuus, 2008). Specifically, framing research in political science has done more to parse the components of issue frames than other areas of framing research. In linking issue frames to a communicator's values (e.g., Nelson & Willey, 2001), and in examining how strong and weak issue frames within competitive issue environments affect audiences (e.g., Sniderman & Theriault, 2004), this area of framing research is a great resource for a Tier 1 analysis. For example, consider what happens after a shooting spree at a school. Such a horrendous event quickly becomes a social problem. According to Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), who developed the public arenas model, social problems are (a) triggered by events, either ongoing events of continuing public concern or, more aptly, an unexpected and dramatic event that may not be unique but gets heavy news coverage, and (b) characterized by a competitive process of collective definition by many sources. Entman's four framing functions are solid guides to the frames sources express, even though, as noted, they are not the only way that the tiered designs operationalize issue frames. The left-hand column of Table 5.1 shows the categories derived by Lawrence and Birkland (2004), who content analyzed every problem definition claim in two major US newspapers from April to August 1999 (and in the Congressional record, too) about the shooting that occurred at the Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Note that, as with tiered designs, Lawrence and Birkland condensed the range of considerations into thematic categories in order to manage the sheer variation of potential frame elements in quotes and paraphrases. Also, in hinting at the connections among framing elements, Lawrence and Birkland point out that "problem definition" drives the other three framing functions, which is something Entman (1993) also noted. In the content analysis, according to Lawrence and Birkland (2004), "[T]he full text of these 135 articles was coded for every claim made about the causes of or solutions for school shootings (claims were usually made by the sources interviewed in news stories, but were also made by journalists and editorial writers)" (p. 1196). Whereas their table listed the "range of problem definitions," ours (Table 5.1, left-hand side) reflects the fact that these categories were generated by content analysis of both problem definitions and causes.

These methodological notes intimate a couple of ways that news framing analysis can be defragmented vis-à-vis hybrid frames. First, according to Lawrence and Birkland (2004), they “purposely sampl[ed] only from the thematic news and editorial items that treated Columbine as a lens on trends or problems in society,” adding that “This allowed the capture of the full range of definitions of the school-shooting problem circulating at the time, while eliminating from the sample purely episodic stories that were less likely to contain problem defining discourse” (p. 1196). These procedural items show, albeit implicitly, the importance of the news media’s “packaging” role, which was discussed earlier vis-à-vis generic framing. Second, Entman reminds us that defining a problem entails being able to make claims that express “common cultural values” (p. 52). This links up with Nelson and Willey (2001), who articulated a theoretical model of issue frames and framing effects based squarely on what they call the “values connection.”

“Most issue frames can be summarized by a simple tagline, such as ‘reverse discrimination’ or ‘right to life,’” explain Nelson and Willey (2001), “but the best contain a medley of elements that fit together, gestalt-like to form a total interpretive package that makes sense of the issue and suggests a course of action” (p. 248). This conceptual definition intimates that the “medley of elements” are considerations expressed in terms of Entman’s framing functions. While political scientists still debate what holds these elements together, Nelson and Willey (2001), following in the footsteps of Phillip Converse’s (1964) seminal work, argue that, for many people, the considerations they use to express an opinion congeal around core political and social values rather than ideological orientation. Even one’s political attitudes are immersed in these values, which are “general claims about desirable social and personal conditions, or ‘end states,’ such as *equality*, *freedom*, and a *world of beauty*” (p. 249, emphasis in original). This means that values are intrinsically *evaluative*: they orient political attitudes and anchor an individual who pays attention to an issue culture, many of which are characterized by conflicting considerations and fraught with conflict. However, ambivalence inevitably leaks into an individual’s value structure, pulling people in different directions even on single issues and rendering one’s political views somewhat incoherent across issues.

According to Nelson and Willey (2001), issue frames (some of which are “toted” by the news media [p. 247]) represent efforts on the part of individuals and organizations “who care about molding public opinion” (p. 247) to shape people’s attitudes and sway their opinions. This happens when exposure to an issue frame is able to re-weight one’s existing considerations over time, often doing so by tapping into ambivalent views a person has about an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Pan & Kosicki, 2005; Sniderman & Theirault, 2004). It also happens by way of reinforcing one’s beliefs and considerations about an issue. Complementing an audience-based framing effects approach, we suggest here that it is important to consider how and why issue frames encode values. This will provide a clearer

TABLE 5.1 Frames in the Public Arena of the 1999 Columbine School Shooting

		<u>DEFINITION/CAUSE</u>	<u>SOLUTION/REMEDY</u>
F R A M E S	ISSUE ⇒	Popular culture (e.g., videogames)	More informal controls on games & music
		Divisive political culture	Bi-partisanship & civility
		Lax mental health system	Reform healthcare for mentally ill
		Availability of guns, inadequate laws ⇒	Fix gun control laws
		Lax school security	Tighten school security
		Media values and attention to other shootings	Media exercise more restraint & responsibility

picture of the power of issue framing, particularly if we consider that such strong frames may be what journalists listen for in composing good stories or producing good video or web-based news segments.

In listing the remedies for school shootings news sources could make (as no one would argue they should *not* be prevented), the left-hand side of Table 5.1 depicts how issues surrounding these events arise within the public arena. Every possible connection between a definition/cause and a remedy marks a potential issue, which, following framing’s agenda-setting predecessors, is “a conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of resources” (Cobb & Elder, 1972, p. 2). A *public issue*, therefore, is a social problem that has received media attention and in which media coverage becomes a platform for advocates’ considerations.

Table 5.2 shows how an issue culture linking guns to school shootings takes shape when values are linked to considerations. It illustrates thematic issue frames of varying strengths and valences when the issue itself is framed as “gun control.” Depicted on the left-hand side are frames of those people who, animated by the value personal or Constitutional freedom and its antithesis, the tyranny of federal control, oppose gun control.⁴ Critics of then President Obama’s call for strong gun controls in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook school shooting leveraged these complementary values when voicing considerations in frames of varying strengths, with stronger frames (e.g., *personal protection* frame) being closer to the value (Table 5.2).⁵ On the other side, those in favor of stricter gun controls used

TABLE 5.2 Valenced Issue-Specific Frames of Gun Control Linked to Values

	V A L U E	FREEDOM & TYRANNY	RESPONSIBILITY & DISORDER
		Americans have a Constitutional right to bear arms in order to...	The right to bear arms is not absolute; limited because...
STRONG FRAME		Protect themselves from criminals (<i>personal protection frame</i>)	Ordinary citizens ought not to be able to purchase weapons of war (<i>common sense frame</i>)
		Protect themselves from government agents (<i>same</i>)	Mentally ill people are able to get guns easily (<i>background checks frame</i>)
WEAK FRAME		Hunt for game (<i>survival frame</i>)	Ordinary people will use guns when they get upset (<i>mayhem frame</i>)
		CON	PRO

responsibility and social order (though not law and order) to voice their considerations, both strong and weak.

Fleshing out the values-based and valenced issue culture of gun control in circumstances like the Sandy Hook shooting requires procedures for granular coding on the level of sentence-level propositions within news stories. News framing researchers are accustomed to doing this manually (Matthes, 2009). Our prescription for news framing research is to integrate values and valence with considerations in order to see an issue culture in terms within which both practitioners and journalists already operate. By employing Tier 1 techniques to identify value-based issue-specific frames, and by conducting Tier 2 analyses that show how journalists internalize and articulate these frames within newsroom settings, researchers will continue to defragment the study of news framing.

Benefits of Defragmenting Issue-Specific and Generic Frames

News framing research will benefit in two ways when researchers continue to conduct tiered analyses of issue-specific and generic frames. We discuss these benefits next.

Complete Picture of an Issue Culture: Sources + Emphasis + Equivalency

Defragmenting framing research with hybrid frames will enable researchers to develop designs that generate a more complete picture of an issue culture. As Boydston and Glazier (2013) put it, “Understanding the framing of an issue at both large-grained and fine-grained levels should yield the most accurate insights into the issue itself” (p. 709). Specifically, tiered designs encourage researchers to integrate sources into a research design in a more accurate and meaningful way. These designs can also shed new light on ways that emphasis and equivalency, typically viewed as dichotomous conceptions of framing, can operate inclusively in news framing analysis.

Regarding sources, there is, of course, no law stating that researchers have to parse Entman’s (1993) list in order to characterize statements as elements of a frame. In fact, it seems just as prudent to observe these frame elements in conjunction with each other (e.g., Lawrence & Birkland, 2004) as it is to observe them separately (e.g., Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Still, it is important in our view not to conflate the actor who sponsors the frame in public discourse with the frame. The cluster analysis (or another more sophisticated methodology, such as an analysis of latent classes as suggested by Matthes and Kohring) should cluster only the frame elements in order to identify the frames. In a second step, the data analysis can reveal the connection between certain types of frames and the actors who sponsor those frames, but the actor is not a frame element.

Table 5.3 illustrates how issue-specific framing looks when sources are included. This is relevant, for the perceived credibility of a source plays a role in determining framing effects (Druckman, 2001). Table 5.3 also incorporates a vital political dimension of public issues: the attribution of responsibility for causing and/or solving a problem to specific groups or actors (Iyengar, 1990). These discursive elements integrate erstwhile audience perceptions, à la Iyengar’s seminal work (1990, 1991), into the framing repertoire of news sources, which we think is a good idea, because it allows coders and observers to generate a more substantial picture of an issue culture.

TABLE 5.3 Framing Functions, Sources, and Attribution

SOURCES {	Problem Definition
	Causal Attribution: Reasons & Responsibility
	Moral Evaluation
	Solution: Treatments & Responsibility

Altogether, a model that incorporates sources, framing functions, and attribution of responsibility points to ways to address and resolve an analytical distinction between emphasis framing and equivalency framing that bedevils news framing research. Issue-specific frames, along with generic frames (and certainly hybrid frames), are *frames of emphasis* (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; de Vreese & Lecheler, 2012). As D'Angelo (2017) noted, for frames of emphasis, "a communicator repeatedly associates certain pieces of information and intentionally omits potentially topic-relevant information in an effort to define the topic and purvey a set of judgments about it" (p. 635). For example, a practitioner or issue advocate might opt to frame climate change via propositions that stress its environmental impact versus its health risks (e.g., Myers, Nisbet, Maibach, & Leiserowitz, 2012). Also, according to D'Angelo (2017), "a communicator may invoke a value, theme, stereotype, or symbol that serves to organize and connect topic-relevant information" (p. 635). For example, a communicator could frame climate change solutions based on either of the two emphases, environmental or health, as being a moral imperative. A strategic focus on particular emphases therefore characterizes issue-specific framing (Pan & Kosicki, 2001).

Whether observed in sources' propositions themselves or as themes deduced from these propositions, frames of emphasis are by nature situational and topic-sensitive. Hardly ever do practitioners and advocates (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004) or journalists (e.g., de Vreese & Lecheler, 2012) operationalize or observe frames (or framing) in terms of choice-reversed, equivalent formulations of factually identical information, such as the risky choice frames Kahneman and Tversky (1984) analyzed based on prospect theory. Yet, following this singular conceptualization of equivalence framing, what has happened is that some researchers have argued that all media-based framing is only about how issues are presented and not about content. According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), "Operationalizations of framing are often confounded by content. Framing an issue in terms of financial risks versus social consequences, for example, has little to do with differences in the mode of presentation" (p. 13). But separating content and form is at odds with emphasis framing, which in models of framing effects necessarily borders on, and even incorporates, priming mechanisms and effects generated by persuasion (Chong & Druckman, 2007a, 2007b).

Fortunately, as Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth (1998) have shown, not all valence-based frames are created equal. As D'Angelo stated in this volume's Prologue, issue frames can encode valence in other ways: "[S]ome issue frames encode valence in terms of goals and attributes, which operate differently than choice-reversed options commonly studied in work based on prospect theory." The road ahead for integrative news framing analysis is to use Tier 1 and Tier 2 analyses of hybrid frames, replete with observations that capture source, attributions, values, and valence, as a means to investigate the interactive nature of both types of framing, issue-specific and generic. In turn, that work will enable more fine-grained tests of

framing effects once hybrid frames are taken into the laboratory of real-life situations via both survey and experimental designs.

Domain-Specific Typologies of Issue Frames and Generic Frames

A full picture of an issue culture takes the form of a typology of topic- and domain-specific frames that link issue-specific and generic frames. Scholars have already begun to develop these typologies. For example, work by Nisbet (2010), Dahinden (2006), and others has already extracted the generic frames relevant to the topic domain of science communication.⁶ For the most part, however, that work lags behind in theorizing how the fuller issue culture can be observed when the frames are seen in conjunction with issue-specific frames. Still, drawing on that work, Table 5.4 focuses on the topic of climate change and shows how generic frames and issue-specific frames fit together when they are theorized as facets of hybrid frames.

The arguments/considerations reconstructed here come from a summary of the well-known Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, a report commissioned by the British government in 2006 that has been very influential in the climate debate. In this case, Stern would be coded as a frame sponsor. The costs of climate change represent the *problem* that the report deals with. The *causal analysis* identifies market failure as the reason and assigns responsibility for causing the problem to actors in the industrialized countries. The *evaluation* consists of stressing the urgency of prompt action. The concrete *treatment* recommended is a system of carbon emission trading. The governments of both industrialized and developing countries are held responsible for action.

As we have explained before, issue-specific frames share an affinity with discourse-based, thematic generic frames based upon the fact that issue-specific framing and generic framing converge in the processes by which news coverage of an issue is produced. This means that the way *both* types of frames operate can vary circumstantially, depending on the conditions of an issue debate. For example,

TABLE 5.4 Hybrid Frames within a Domain-Specific Setting

Generic Frames in the Domain of Science Communication	Issue-Specific Frames on Climate Change	
	Warner's framing	Skeptic's framing
	Issue-specific (sub-) frames	
Economic consequences	Climate change as a costly danger to our economy	Climate change mitigation as a danger to our economy
Uncertainty	Even the likely risk of climate change calls for urgent action	Scientists do not know for certain; therefore we should not act
Conflict/Strategy; Risk/Disaster; Progress; Morality; Responsibility; Human Interest

given the potential connection between climate change and storms, which is an area that has not been explored sufficiently, we might see that the considerations articulated by sources to argue in support of or against the hypothesis of anthropogenic climate change differ from those used in coverage of other events related to climate change, say, legislation or international treaties. Obviously, how valence is used in the issue framing of these events—for instance, how a solution is framed on the basis of obtaining a gain or suffering a loss, which Levin et al. (1998) call goal equivalency framing—would differ, too.

Just as issue framing takes on a particular shape vis-à-vis circumstances related to a topic, so does generic framing. As we have argued, the thematic hybrid frames contain traces of the information processing on the part of journalists. Thus, to fully comprehend the issue culture as articulated circumstantially, case by case, researchers must investigate, typically via survey techniques, journalists' thoughts and values related to the issue (e.g., Engesser & Brüggemann, 2016). Researchers also need to examine via ethnographic techniques how a newsroom in any medium—print, television, online—becomes motivated in the short term, or for ongoing stories, over time, to use its resources (e.g., news beats; interviewing strategies; editorial meetings) to cover—and frame—the issue.

Conclusion

Conceiving of frames as hybrids of issue-specific frames and generic frames represents a promising way to defragment news framing analysis. It provides a way to see issue framing and generic framing as part of a holistic process that ultimately becomes represented analytically in terms of a topic- or domain-specific typology with hybrid frames located at the center. The approach we advocate also helps fine-tune prospective research that may hold on to an analytically sterile conception of generic framing as being contextualizing discourses that are generalizable to any topic-related area. The downside of such a conception is that generic frames become used uncritically, without the required inductive analyses that could determine whether in fact they belong in the analysis.

The tiered analyses we recommend for news framing can help in ongoing efforts to uncover shifts in issue frames and generic frames over time. In fact, the generic frames listed in the left-hand column of Table 5.4 partially illustrate this: what looks like a pre-defined set of frames is actually accumulated from a series of content analyses, whereby three frames—technological/scientific progress, disaster (or Pandora's box/Frankenstein's monster/runaway science), and a scientific uncertainty frame—were added in later (for related research, see Durant, Bauer, & Gaskell, 1998; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Yet, back on the cautionary side, while these frames apply to a number of topics (such as nuclear energy, biotechnology, and climate change), they obviously do not apply to all kinds of topics. Of course, it is still a fruitful research endeavor to identify the important frames in a certain area of communication; however, it is crucial to remain open

to the specific articulations of generic frames (e.g., how the strategy frame differs in coverage of science topics and election settings). In all, *hybrid frames* need to be closely tracked in order to understand an issue culture at a particular point in time and over time, as well as across different media platforms, and, in more ambitious designs, cross-nationally.

Notes

- 1 Editor's Note: The chapter by Hatley Major (this volume) discusses the merits of combining issue-specific and generic frames in research on coverage of health issues.
- 2 Editor's Note: The chapter by Busby, Flynn, and Druckman (this volume) discusses the expectancy value model in news framing analysis.
- 3 Editor's Note: The chapter by Boesman and Van Gorp (this volume) deals with the latest ethnographic techniques of newsroom analysis that contribute to our understanding of frame building.
- 4 These values are focused on the US context.
- 5 The shootings at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, occurred on Friday, December 14, 2012. Subsequent events, such as the press conference of the National Rifle Association on December 21, and later, President Obama's speech on January 16, 2013 calling for stricter gun controls, garnered much press coverage, which upon empirical examination would likely support the proposition that advocates expressed their views (re: considerations) in terms of values.
- 6 Specific topics within these domains include biotechnology, nuclear energy, and nanotechnology.

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