Narrating economic crises in the media: an analysis of the media coverage, in Colombia and in the United States, of two crises, the Great Recession (2008) and the Colombian Crisis of the end of the century (1998)

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NARRATING ECONOMIC CRISES IN THE MEDIA.


By

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NARRATING ECONOMIC CRISES IN THE MEDIA.
AN ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE, IN COLOMBIA AND IN THE UNITED

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to examine how the public debate of two large scale economic crises is structured in the media, using semiotic and narrative analysis methods. The End-of-the-Century crisis (Colombia, 1998) and the Great Recession are explored through a 2x2 comparative design, which provides two cases of coverage (per country) for each crisis. Within a comparative design, economic crises, events that are part of the economic sphere, and countries that are part of the Global North and of the Global North are chosen to assess the scope conditions of key tenets of cultural sociology scholarship.

The first objective is to assess competing explanations coming from the cultural sociology literature about the types of institutional logics that guide meaning creation in the public debate: civic and/or economic logics. Cultural sociology literature suggests that civic logics might be prevalent as they are widely available and normatively desirable (Alexander and Smith). The understanding of economic crises as events that are part of the economic sphere suggests that institutional logics coming from this sphere might be dominant or at play as well. The second objective is to understand, through comparison, how these meaning making patterns about economic events in the media differ in the Global North and the Global South. Baiocchi’s work suggests the possible existence of alternative civic logics in Colombia, a country of the Global South. The third objective is to identify the relationships between institutional logics and the spheres they represent. These relationships are approached through Alexander’s model, which defines the possibilities of interaction between the civil and non-civil spheres.

The coverage of the two crises is examined through two media outlets per country, a mainstream and business public sphere. A main sampling window of two weeks following the occurrence of an anchor event, which are financial organization failures and the government
interventions prompted by them, was created for each crisis. A total of 471 articles were sampled: 295 (U.S. coverage) and 176 (Colombian coverage).

The dissertation contributes in two ways to the first objective of adjudicating between explanations of the existing types of logics in the debate about economic crises in the United States and Colombia. First, civic logics exist in all four cases, adding support to the universality of civic logics (second objective). Second, this dissertation finds that economic logics are as important as civic logics in the narration of economic crises for all cases, highlighting the importance of the type of event, and the nature of the media (fragmented vs. monolithic).

Economic logics are used dominantly to make sense of the crises, locating the events and their consequences primarily in the economic sphere and in the market, in the economic sections of mainstream newspapers and in business outlets. Economic logics are also used together with civic logics, in similar or slightly less proportion, to understand issues defined as important for the economy/market and society, such as those of public policy.

The existence of both institutional logics and their distribution suggest that the media, functioning as the communicative institution of the civil sphere, is more accurately categorized as an ideal type than an empirical reality of the coverage of the economic crises under examination (third objective). In the case of economic crises, the media is fragmented rather than monolithic. The dominant institutional logics are different by sections signaling distinct journalistic fields. These fields have different levels of autonomy. Civic logics are employed more within editorial and political news, typically written by fields different to the economic field. An opinion and a political journalistic field that are more autonomous vis-à-vis the economic sphere, than the economic journalistic field.
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FIRST CHAPTER: INTRODUCTION

What is the Problem at Hand?

Economic crises, which are events that occur in the economic sphere, have significant effects for society as a whole, as clearly demonstrated by the recent Global Recession. While economic crises undeniably impact the financial sector, they also deliver profound consequences in terms of jobs, homes and wealth lost.

Because economic crises are consequential events for society, citizens should be given opportunity to deliberate about them in a public forum. Public debate is critical in order for citizens to be able to voice their concerns, deliberate, and hold accountable those in power. Politicians take note of public debate as it occurs in the media and is crystalized in the ideas of public opinion to inform political solutions (Alexander 2006b). These political solutions are expected to be more democratic as more actors become involved in the deliberations and more voices are heard, particularly those representing the civil sphere or motivated by a public interest (Alexander 2006b; Croteau and Hoynes 2006).

As noted by many scholars, the media presently play a key role in creating a public sphere (Habermas 1991; Alexander 2006b). The media, that is to say, provide a space for public debate about key events.

Because the ways in which actors and events are given meaning shapes how actors understand the issues and make decisions about them, it is important to examine how these debates develop in the media. The actors called to act may in fact be politicians or citizens. Of equal relevance is the fact that the narration of these crises shapes how citizens understand the issues and influences whether or not they decide to get involved.
One approach to understanding how debates are structured in the media is that employed by cultural sociology. Cultural sociologists have focused attention on the connection between the civil sphere, the public sphere and the media. Alexander and Smith, for instance, theorize the discourse of liberty and repression as the institutional logics of the civil sphere (Alexander 2006b; Alexander and Smith 2003a). The institutional logics of the civil sphere are then invoked to argue in the public sphere (Alexander, Jacobs, and Smith 2012). This is because the media is conceptualized as an institution of the public sphere. Through these civic logics, as I will call them, actors, social relationships and institutions are identified as democratic or undemocratic in the public debate (Alexander 2006b).

Scholars have documented the preeminence in the Western World of civic logics in the public debate of the media concerning issues that have been construed to be of a more political or social nature (Alexander et al. 2012; Alexander and Smith 2010). Cultural sociology has less to offer, however, by way of exploration of how economic crises and key economic events are debated in the media. By examining economic crises, I thus expect to contribute to an expansion of the scope of cultural sociology and the cultural sociology of economics. To this end, I will follow in the steps of cultural sociologists and other scholars interested in meaning who have recently examined events of an economic nature (see de Santos 2009; Tognato 2008, 2012).

What is the Arena Studied?

Two economic crises were chosen for analysis in this dissertation: The End-of-the-Century Crisis (1998-1999) in Colombia and the Great Recession in the United States. These particular crises were chosen because they represent the two most recent large systemic economic crises having enormous implications for two countries: the United States and Colombia. The magnitude of the Colombian End-of-the-Century Crisis is greater than that of the
Great Recession. In the midst of the crises, the GDP of these countries fell significantly—4.2% for Colombia in 1999 and 2.5% for the U.S. in 2009 (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009a). Three to four years elapsed before either country recovered its prior economic dynamics. In the case of Colombia, the crisis studied represents one of the largest crises of the twentieth century. The effects of previous crises, such as the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s and the Mexican crisis of the mid-1990s, were not as profound in Colombia as in other Latin American countries (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006).

Both crises are examined through a (close to) 2x2 design, which provides two cases of coverage per country, for a total of four cases. The End-of-the-Century Crisis is analyzed through local (Colombian) coverage (case 1) and U.S. coverage (case 2). The second case will be presented here only in part. For reasons of scope, analysis of coverage of the emerging markets crisis abroad (e.g., the Russian crisis) will be left for the future. Thus, the focus with respect to U.S. coverage will be on the effect of the emerging markets crisis on the domestic economy. The Emerging Markets Crisis is a global crisis that started with the Asian Crisis in 1997, affected six countries, and, in 1998, expanded to other countries, including Brazil and Russia. The Great Recession is studied through its local coverage (case 3) and through Colombian coverage of the crisis (case 4).

I examine the coverage of these crises by establishing a window of two weeks following the occurrence of anchor events, i.e., one window for 1998 and a second window for 2008. The critical events studied are financial organization failures and the government interventions prompted by them. In the case of Colombia, the chosen event is the bankruptcy of Granahorrar, a savings and loans organization (or CAV, as abbreviated in Spanish), and its rescue by the government. In the case of the U.S., the chosen event is Lehman Brothers’ bankruptcy and its
Not surprisingly in light of the scale and complexity of these crises, the windows selected allow for the capture of other key events and issues, which are also described and analyzed. To generate a contrast and facilitate ready identification of events, another sampling window is defined to include one month prior to occurrence of the events in question.

What are the Research Questions?

The first objective of this dissertation is to understand broadly through the two cases examined how meaning about economic crises is created in the public sphere. This entails understanding the key ways in which events are made sense of through such narrative elements as characters, plot and genre. The construction of meaning about events implies tracing how a connection between past, present and future is established and what this means in terms of courses of actions that should be taken. Additionally, it means understanding how the arena where the events occur is defined and who is deemed fit to speak (i.e., suitable sources in addition to the actors).

The second objective is to assess explanations, or hypotheses, coming from the cultural sociology literature about the types of logics that might guide meaning creation in the public debate. The literature suggests that public discussion of economic crises, as organized through the media, would be shaped through two strong institutional logics widely available: civic and economic logics. Cultural sociology literature suggests that civic logics might be prevalent as they generally guide public debate in the media. The understanding of economic crises as events that are part of the economic sphere suggests that institutional logics coming from this sphere might be at play as well. To delineate these economic logics, I build on the work of scholars interested in meaning making within the economic sphere (Abolafia 2004; Boltanski and Thevenot 2006).
I incorporate as well Alexander’s (2006b) contribution regarding the relationship between civil and non-civil spheres (see “Introduction of Concepts” in this chapter for further information).

The third objective is to understand, through comparison, how these meaning making patterns about economic events in the media differ in the Global North and the Global South. To this end, I chose similar cases of the most recent large systemic crises in Colombia and the United States.

The fourth objective is to examine whether economic logics can be understood as capitalist ideology.

The fifth objective is to identify the relationships between institutional logics in the coverage and the spheres they represent. With this in mind, I will examine how different institutional logics are present, and in what proportions, within different spaces of the newspaper. One way this can be theorized is through the model developed by Alexander (2006b), which defines the possibilities of interaction between the logics grounded in the civil sphere and other spheres (pp. 205-209). This model conceptualizes three ideal-typical boundary relationships between civil and non-civil spheres, which are categorized as follows for the case of the economic sphere: one relationship where the economic sphere “intrudes destructively,” a second where the economic sphere “facilitates output” within the civil sphere, and a third where the civil sphere “civically repairs” the economic sphere.

The sixth objective is to examine how economic crises are constructed as such with respect to two interrelated elements. The first element asks whether the crises are narrated as part of the economic sphere or the civil sphere. Consequences vary accordingly. The second element
asks how these crises are constructed. In the latter case, I will examine how a crisis that is located in the economic sphere might move towards the civil sphere.

*What is the Analytical Approach?*

I make sense of how the crises are narrated through semiotic and narrative analysis. Using these methods of analysis, cultural sociologists have analyzed public debate, as articulated in the media, on multiple issues (Alexander 2006b; Alexander and Smith 2010; Jacobs 1996, 2000b; Smith 2005).

First, I identify the character, structure, plot and genre present in the corpus. Second, I organize these findings in a typology which allows me to define whether an article or theme is crafted through one of two available institutional logics: economic logics or civic logics. I construct the typology both theoretically and empirically. Third, I review the coding and the empirical material to examine whether economic logics can be understood as capitalist ideology. Fourth, I examine the nature of the relationship between institutional logics, the spaces they occupy in the newspaper and the journalistic fields behind them.

*Introduction to Concepts*

In this section I will further develop some of the previously mentioned key concepts guiding the dissertation.

_Society as composed by spheres, public sphere and the media._ In this dissertation, society is understood as a complex social system that can be analytically divided into spheres, such as
the economic and the political, among others. Alexander (2006b) argues that each particular (institutional) sphere has its own institutional logics.2

This understanding is compatible with Walzer’s (1983 Ch. 1) spheres of justice and with Boltanski’s and Thevenot’s worlds (2006). Equally, it is congruent with certain aspects of Bourdieu’s concepts of fields.3

The civil sphere. The civil sphere is particularly important for understanding public debate in the media. As conceptualized by Alexander (2006b), the civil sphere is an autonomous societal sphere. Actors, organizations and institutions within this sphere are oriented towards solidarity, seeking democratic inclusion and providing spaces for deliberation (Alexander

2 Alexander (2006b) argues, about functional differentiation: “[Societies] are enormously complex social systems whose institutions become increasingly specialized, separated from one another not only by the differentiation of their administrative organization and staff, and by material resources sources and exigencies, but by the normative understandings that inform and regulate them. The possibility of institutional and cultural differentiation into increasingly separate spheres lies, of course, at the very heart of the notion of civil society that I have put forward here” (p. 203).

3 There are important theoretical differences among these approaches. However, their contribution here is used in terms of defining the content of an economic (institutional) logic. In that sense, a functional differentiation approach is largely compatible with Bourdieu’s understanding, particularly with the perspective of Benson and Neveu (2008) taken as it deals directly with journalistic fields (p. 3, note 7).
For a more complete understanding of the civil sphere, a complementary definition proposed by Cohen and Arato (1992), referenced by Jacobs, (2000b), might be useful: “Civil society refers to the entire web of associational and public spaces in which citizens can have conversations with one another, discover common interests, act in concert, assert new rights, and try to influence public opinion and public policy” (p. 3).

Citizen deliberation about issues of collective interest, which constitute the public sphere, is currently organized through the media (Alexander 2006b; Habermas 1991; Jacobs 2000a). Furthermore, cultural sociologists have proposed that the media act as a key communicative institution which upholds the public sphere and provides the civil sphere with symbolic force (Alexander 2006b; Jacobs 2000b; Jacobs and Townsley 2011).

Institutional Logics: Civic and Economic

In this subsection, I will introduce the concepts of civic and economic institutional logics.

Civic Logics. Civic logics have been theorized by Alexander and Smith (2003a) in what they call the discourse of liberty and repression. Actors use this type of discourse to categorize themselves and others as either democratic or undemocratic: they pollute their enemies, deeming them undemocratic, and purify themselves and their friends, arguing they are democratic. The discourse is organized into three sets of binaries where actors, social relations and social institutions with a democratic orientation (sacred) are opposed to those perceived undemocratic in nature (profane). Democratic actors can establish only democratic social relations and democratic institutions, and congruently for undemocratic actors.

In the first binary, the sacred motivations of democratic actors are thus opposed to the profane motivations of undemocratic actors: active versus passive, autonomous versus dependent, rational versus irrational, reasonable versus hysterical, calm versus excitable,
controlled versus passionate, realistic versus unrealistic and sane versus mad. In the second binary, democratic social relationships are opposed to undemocratic relationships following the same pattern: open versus secret, trusting versus suspicious, critical versus deferential, truthful versus deceitful and straightforward versus calculating. Finally, democratic institutions are opposed to undemocratic institutions: regulated by law versus regulated by arbitrary criteria and power, hierarchical versus egalitarian, universalistic versus particularistic, contractual versus ascriptive, favoring the principles of the office versus being led by personality, and receptive to groups versus receptive to factions.

**Economic Logics.** Economic crises, as mentioned above, are key events within the economic sphere, which suggests that the institutional logics of the economic sphere (i.e., economic logics) would be present. The characteristics of these logics can be gleaned from the work of Waltzer (1983), Alexander (2006b), and Boltanski and Thevenot (2006).

The Market World is one of six “worlds” or spheres defined by Boltanski and Thevenot (2006). These authors argue that each of these “worlds” or spheres has distinct “regimes of justification” organized around a unique understanding of the common good. These regimes deem the worthy individual “a great person” and the less worthy “a little person.” Boltanski and Thevenot maintain that while people are not attached to a particular world, they must navigate
different situations, decide which regime or mode of justification applies and act accordingly.\footnote{This quick characterization of Boltanski’s and Thevenot’s (2006) work highlights the dimensions I found most relevant for this project. The fourteen categories used to define each of the worlds will be further addressed in the literature review and the Methods chapter.} Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) conceptualize two worlds, the industrial and market worlds, which together constitute the economic sphere. Of the two, the most relevant for this project is the market world.

In the market world, the higher common principle defining the common good is competition. Actors are essentially rivals defined by market relationships: buying and selling. In this regard, “do[ing] business with” and “negotiat[ing]” are key. The worthy is someone who embodies and guarantees the higher common principle. In the market world, a person of value is “salable” and has demonstrated the ability to win in competition. Wealth is a sign of success.

Boltanski’s and Thevenot’s (2006) framework defines “Human Dignity” as an attribute of people thus: “… a common capacity to rise to occasions in the service of the common good.” In the case of the market, the notion of the common good is paradoxical in the sense that it is focused on selfishness.

\textit{Findings and Contributions}

In this section I summarize the contributions made to cultural sociology by this dissertation. I highlight contributions to the emerging field of cultural sociology of economics and to the study of the media as a forum of public debate, where meaning making is central.
First, regarding the objective to understand how economic crises are made sense of in the media, this dissertation finds a wealth of meaning making patterns for the two crises explored.

Typifying the most prevalent pattern of economic logics is the highly standardized market article, which dominates the Business sections of the U.S. outlets. This type of article has features not unlike those of the economic news of the Great Depression whose patterns were uncovered by Suttles (2010). This suggests a historical continuity and institutionalization of this format in economic news. Elements of this robust market pattern are present in the Colombian coverage to a lesser degree.

Central elements of the market format include: (1) the market, or the economy, as the arena in which the news occurs; (2) newsworthy events chosen according to their potential or actual effects on the market. These events, for instance, might be the variation of stocks or indexes (or other statistics) within the market; (3) characters: actors or participants in the market, typically regular buyers and sellers (investors), traders and analysts. Participants also include animated entities, such as stocks and stock indexes; (4) authoritative sources used in the articles are predominantly market participants (e.g., market observers, i.e., often seasoned market analysts, expert participants and heads of financial firms).

Similarly, a common pattern in economic logics is identified, where executives and firms play the role of protagonists. A common plot unfolds as they embark on a quest, overcome obstacles and ultimately achieve an intended goal, such as profitability. This quest is commonly observed for animated entities as well.

Among the most prevalent patterns in civic logics, in 1998, is the mode of low or high mimetic narration within the establishment of genre, allowing for categorization of the events and their meaning as follows: should they be approached as ordinary such that a “business as
usual” approach is sufficient, or are they exceptional events that constitute a crisis and thus require extraordinary actions (e.g., Smith 2005)? This distinction has important implications for future required action. Narrative connections are made between the present and the future despite no identifiable plot in some instances.

In the case of the Great Recession, the main patterns identified are similar in the coverage represented by both countries. In economic logics, the market format is once again found to be prevalent within the U.S. coverage. In civic logics, the patterns identified are more robust than those seen in 1998 in Colombia. They involve character construction, plot development and genre, through the definition of romantic and tragic plots, and the distinction between low mimetic and high mimetic.

Second, the dissertation contributes two key findings regarding the objective of adjudicating between explanations of the types of logics that would be available to and dominant in narrating economic events in the United States and Colombia. First, civic logics similar to those conceptualized by Alexander and Smith (2003a) exist in all four cases. Second, economic logics are relevant in the coverage.

Regarding the second key finding, this dissertation underscores the importance of economic logics in the narration of large economic crises in Colombia. Cultural sociologists have theorized and uncovered empirically the relevance of civil logics to the media debate of key social issues (e.g., Jacobs 2000b; Smith 2005). Focusing on a key economic event, this dissertation finds that economic logics are as important as civic logics in the narration of economic crises. Economic logics are used dominantly to make sense of the crises, locating the events and their consequences primarily in the economic sphere and in the market. The coverage shows that both economic journalism and the actors called to the debate use meaning making
patterns which highlight the economic nature of the phenomenon. The relevance of the economic sphere is shown through the use of its institutional logics. Economic logics are not only used dominantly; they are also used together with civic logics, in similar or slightly less proportion, to understand issues defined as important for the economy/market and society, such as those of public policy.

With respect to the **third** objective, the comparison of cases and adjudication among hypotheses, the conclusion is as follows. The four empirical cases analyzed here suggest that the media, functioning as the communicative institution of the civil sphere, is more accurately categorized as an ideal type than an empirical reality of the coverage of the economic crises under examination. The analysis in fact lends support to the hypothesis that the media is understood as differentiated by sections signaling distinct journalistic fields. For instance, where civic logics repair, this demonstrates that the sections and journalistic fields involved are regaining some of the autonomy they have been lacking. Certain differences must be noted, nevertheless, in the distribution of the logics, however, particularly in the cases and sections where not all signal lack of autonomy.

**Fourth**, regarding the objective to understand whether economic logics constitute capitalist ideology, I examined a) whether meaning patterns are constituent with reification, the market (or productive relationships) is described as relationships between objects, and the relationships between the actors that constitute them are obscured, and b) the source of these logics and whether these logics are benefiting capitalists. Regarding the first question, I found that some of the patterns included in economic logics highlight the relation between objects while hiding the relationship between actors. Thus, economic logics are congruent with a
capitalist ideology. As for the second question, about intentionality, the answer is less straightforward.

**Fifth**, pursuit of the objective to identify relationships between institutional logics in the coverage and spheres from which these logics emerge resulted in a key contribution, namely empirical evidence that the media is fragmented when examining a key economic event or economic crisis. This finding holds for both of the crises examined in the coverage of both countries.

In tandem with this contribution, the presence of economic logics in the coverage underscores the importance of revising the notion that because media is theorized as the communicative institution of the civil sphere, there are monolithic media outlets where the debate is constructed primarily through civil logics. The empirical examination of debate about economic crises indicates that meaning making patterns vary depending on the subject, in this case economic crises, and on the journalistic field or community writing about them. Economic journalism has developed enduring meaning making patterns that construct and make use of economic logics, particularly in the Business sections. Civic logics are employed more within editorial, political and international news, typically written by other fields, such as the Space of Opinion and a political journalistic field. This is especially evident, both in 1998 and 2008, in the *New York Times*, widely considered a liberal newspaper where civic logics are quite prevalent. Narration of the economic crises examined in The Business section of the NYT follows patterns very similar to those of the economic news printed in the WSJ, suggesting that they belong to the same journalistic field.

**Sixth**, the dissertation also provides evidence that economic crises may be simultaneously constructed as economic and social crises. Within the period of examination, one
can see how The Great Recession, an economic crisis, is constructed as a social crisis. The criteria of the civil sphere modify discussion of the issues. For instance, actors from the economic sphere, such as investment firms and investment bankers, are judged according to standards of the civil sphere.
SECOND CHAPTER: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I review the distinct literatures that provide guidance for outlining the theoretical expectations of the dissertation. First, I briefly discuss three key concepts for the study of media coverage: the civil sphere, the public sphere, and (their articulation in) the media. These concepts theoretically frame the discussion of the civic logics that will potentially be available for narration (cf. Jacobs 2000b). Second, I review two competing explanations that pose 1) The use of similar logics in both countries and, 2) The existence of multiple and contested civic logics in Colombia in contrast to the United States. After reviewing these explanations I briefly describe some features of Colombia’s institutional arrangements. Third, I explain why one can expect to be competing economic logics organizing the coverage in Colombia and the U.S. Fourth, I explain key concepts of journalistic fields in Bourdieuan theory, which would set the ground for the expectations that will be presented last. Fifth, I present a framework of expectations of content based on the boundary relationships between the economic sphere and the civil sphere.

First Section: Key Concepts. Civil Sphere, Public Sphere, and Media

I expect the coverage of the two/three crises to be shaped by civic logics because cultural sociologists have proposed that the media act as a key communicative institution that upholds the public sphere and provides the civil sphere with symbolic force (cf. Alexander 2006b; Jacobs 2000b; Jacobs and Townsley 2011). Alexander posits that civil society is “exhibited and sustained” by other elements as well, some of which are intertwined with the function of the media: “public opinion, deep cultural codes, distinctive organizations [and] interactional practices as civility, criticism and mutual respect” (Alexander 2006b:31). Contemporarily, the media provide the forum that articulates the public sphere where public opinion can crystallize,
which indicates how strong is a civil sphere, and if it exists (cf. Alexander 2006b:71–75; see also Calhoun 1993; Keane 1995). Public opinion expresses the subjective dimension of civil society.\(^5\)

It is relevant to understand what constitutes the civil sphere so one can make sense of how and why its logics are articulated in and through the media. Alexander (2006b) in his treatise on the civil sphere, or civil society, defines it as “a world of values and institutions that generates the capacity for social criticism and democratic integration at the same time” (4). This sphere is anchored in solidarity, and it is morally more universalistic than others such as the state or the market. The author argues that the civil society, both embodied and normative ideal, constitutes a unique sphere that functions with its own “normative and institutional logic,” and translates outputs from other spheres into inputs according with this logic (Alexander 2006b:53–54). The distinction between spheres holds up, through a “socially established consciousness” appertaining the civil sphere (Alexander 2006b:54).

It is pertinent to note that I use the notion of “the public sphere” as it has been approached in recent work as a public forum involving multiple public spheres, rather than as referring to a unique dominant public sphere (cf. Habermas 1991). Scholars engaging with the concepts of civil society, the public sphere and the media, since the 1990s have pointed both to

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\(^5\) Alexander (2006b).explains: “[t]o refer to public opinion is to indicate, to invoke, and to represent the pure and impure ideas, feelings, and evaluations that members of society hold about one another. Commenting upon the ongoing, unpredictable, and seemingly unstructured events and figures of social life, public opinion consists of factual accounts, emotional responses, and moral evaluations of their extent and effect” (p. 73-74).
the existence of multiple public spheres and to the lack of a historical trend towards integration into a broader public sphere, as Habermas argued (see Calhoun 1993; Jacobs 2000a)⁶

Contemporarily, also, scholars have proposed that it is more accurate to think about multiple and distinctly dimensioned public spheres as interconnected and sometimes overlapping in a global scale, even when they continue to be partial (Keane 1995). Keane argued that the model of a unique and dominant public sphere delimited by the territoriality of the state was by the mid-1990s outdated, giving way to more transnational and multiple public spheres. The author suggests that this has been brought by trends such as media concentration in conglomerates with global reach and the popularization of the internet. Nevertheless, a mainstream public sphere upheld by the mainstream media is vital to establish a national civil sphere and democratic life (see Jacobs 2000b; Jacobs and Townsley 2011; Smith 2005). Civic groups are not only seeking to engage in conversation within their partial public spheres but also as part of a broader national community (Alexander 2006b; Jacobs 2000b).

Thus, through the review of this literature I expect that both Colombia and the United States will have dominant mainstream public spheres that will anchor the discussion of issues of

[^6]: The establishment of public spheres that both contest the ideals embodied in dominant public spheres and aim for inclusion is important as well, but will be given less emphasis here as this empirical examination will deal with two mainstream public spheres, which would be the ones to be contested and two specialized business public spheres, which can be hardly think of as established by an excluded minority (For discussion of counter publics see Alexander, 2006b: Part III, and Fraser, 1992, regarding gender as an exclusionary principle in the public sphere.
public concern within the national communities. These dominant national mainstream public spheres may overlap and be articulated, both within the national community and internationally, among themselves and, also, with the smaller specialized business public spheres.

The claim that both countries have mainstream public spheres where national newspapers of record play a central role and the claim that business outlets are part of a specialized business public sphere in both countries will be examined in depth in one of the chapters of the dissertation that will trace the historical and institutional establishment of the public spheres that I engage here. I will, of course, build on the literature that is available.  

For each country, to reiterate, I would be exploring the coverage of the crises through one newspaper of record, which would index mainstream public spheres, and one leading newspaper or weekly, which indexes the specialized business public sphere. They are *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* for the United States, and *El Tiempo* and *Revista Dinero* for Colombia.

*Second Section: Competing Explanations of Civic Logics in the United States and in Colombia*

Having established the connections between the concepts of the civil sphere, the public sphere, and the media and how they explain the existence of civic logics within the media in two distinct public spheres in each country, I will present in this next section, in a more extended fashion,

7 For example, see Jacobs (2000b) for the development of the U.S. mainstream press and mainstream public spheres in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago up to the late 1990s (Ch. 2). Regarding the existence of an economic/business public sphere in the United States up to the 1980s see Parsons (1990).
how civic logics are expected to be 1) similarly, and 2) differently articulated in the coverage of the financial crises studied.

Second Section: What are Civic Logics?

The civil sphere, as argued above, is an autonomous social sphere. Thus, the culture of the civil sphere, an institutional logic, is structured by elaborated and unique cultural codes (cf. Alexander 2006b; Alexander and Smith 2003a). These cultural codes, or what has been referred to as the discourse of liberty and repression, provide a structure for discussion in public-political life. The discourse comprises three sets of attributes organized through relationships of similarity and opposition: democratic actors, social relations and social institutions are contrasted to undemocratic ones. Alexander and Smith posit that congruency is semiotically built within these dimensions. Democratic actors can only establish democratic relations and democratic institutions, and congruently for undemocratic actors.

The discourse of liberty constitutes the sacred side of the binary, which comprises an idealized model of actors’ motivations. Democratically inclined individuals are symbolically constructed as active, autonomous, rational, reasonable, calm, controlled, realistic, and sane. On the profane side of the binary, the discourse of repression construes undemocratically inclined people as passive, dependent, irrational, hysterical, excitable, passionate, unrealistic and mad. In terms of relationships, democratic actors maintain open, trusting, critical, truthful and straightforward relationships and are understood as citizens, that is, as bona fide members of a democracy. Undemocratic actors, in contrast, have secret, suspicious, deferential, deceitful, and calculating relations, and are regarded as enemies of democracy. Finally, law and rules regulate democratic institutions, instead of by arbitrary criteria and power, and equality is valued over hierarchy. They are inclusive, universalistic (impersonal) instead of particular (personal), and
contractual instead of ascriptive. These institutions favor the principles of the office, instead of being led by personality as undemocratic ones, and are receptive to groups but not to factions. Democratic actors can only establish democratic relations and democratic institutions, and congruently for undemocratic actors. For a visual representation of these attributes see: Table 3, Table 4 and Source: Alexander (2006b: 58)

Second Section. Explanation 1: Civic Logics are Globally Dominant

The first hypothesis that I will empirically explore is the following: The civic logics, just described above, which animate public debate in the media in the United States would be the same to those in Colombia. That is, the coverage in Colombia about the banking crisis’ events studied, and the systemic economic crises, would use the same discursive structure as that of the U.S.: the discourse of liberty and repression. The support for this hypothesis comes from different viewpoints: 1) Civic logics are universally available and desirable across distinct social issues and, 2) Mainstream and business public spheres may be overlapping and connected both in the United States and in Colombia

Cultural sociologists have argued that civic logics are not only globally available, but also that they are normatively desirable (Alexander 2006b; Jacobs and Smith 1997).

Regarding their availability, researchers have documented the use of these logics not only in the United States but also “throughout liberal democracies” in Europe-- the U.K., Spain and France (Alexander and Smith 2010:17; Smith 2005). Although recent works show why this argument can be subject to criticism in places outside of Europe and the United States, as will be examined below, I consider this is still a valid competing explanation, if only as an ideal that scholars and people in real civil societies reference (see Baiocchi 2006, 2012).
In terms of their normative desirability, cultural sociologists have argued that even when in real civil societies there is indeed exclusion based on a series of distinctions such as race and gender the normative ideal of the civil sphere, as an inclusive democratic arena, can be foundation for realizing the civil sphere’s potential for further solidarity and inclusion. Excluded groups have indeed fought for inclusion and have gain it (Alexander, 2006b: Ch. 9-14.) More specifically regarding the desirability of civic logics, Jacobs and Smith (1997:64) argue that a strong cultural approach to civil society, should indeed “put forward a prescriptive model of what political cultures should look like.” These political cultures, of course, are organized through semiotic codes, narratives and genres.

The potential dominance of these logics seems plausible for economic crisis as it has been documented in the discussion of a myriad of social issues, such as racial relationships, immigration, religion, science, and more (Alexander et al. 2012; Alexander and Smith 2010). Specifically, scholars working on a strong program cultural tradition have shown how narratives about national identity have been woven around economic issues. These narratives are central to understand how people in Germany conceive their Central Bank and their currency in reference to a soiled national identity and how Argentinians made sense of an obscure index that measured the country’s (investment) risk in the crisis of 2001, through their notion of Argentina as a European nation within Latin America (de Santos 2009; Tognato 2008, 2012).

Thus, I will expect that these logics will shape the coverage of the banking crisis’ events and the economic crises that will be examined. I also expect that democratic (civic) logics, such as those present in the U.S. may be available in Colombia, such as in other locales, throughout public spheres that are interconnected and overlapping worldwide, following the discussion above.
Second Section. Explanation 2: Different Civil Logics as Articulated in Colombian Coverage of the Economic Crises

The concept of the civil sphere and its civic logics, codified in the discourse of liberty and repression, is grounded on and emerges from a liberal tradition present in the United States (Alexander 2006b; Alexander and Smith 2003a). Postcolonial scholars and other researchers examining the experience of the Global South have argued (about a larger body of literature) that notions of democracy, which include the civil sphere and the public sphere, have privileged the experience of Europe and of the United States and have been theorized from a particular epistemic tradition and location from where the rest of the world is othered and thought of as lacking (referenced in Baiocchi 2006; e.g., Chakrabarty 2001; Mamdani 1996).

To engage this criticism, which is relevant when examining the case of Colombia, Baiocchi’s (2006, 2012) intervention is particularly useful. He reflects on cultural sociology’s work with the lens of postcolonial and subaltern studies and other scholarship about the Global South and suggests that cultural sociology’s underlying assumptions need further examination as expands and engages sites outside of the United States and Europe (Chakrabarty 2001; Mamdani 1996). However, he provides a productive middle ground by still capitalizing on the insights of cultural sociology and opening up space for empirical examination of countries in the Global South (Baiocchi 2006, 2012). Baiocchi proposes to problematize three assumptions: the configuration of the state, the civilizing process and “the political.”

Baiocchi (2006) analyzes public debate in Brazil and draws key insights about civic discourses that will guide the exploration of the debate in Colombia’s media outlets: There may be multiple and competing civic codes in public debate in contrast to the existence of a unique dominant code in the U.S.’ experience. First, they may be multiple because in the case of Brazil
there is a corporate code-or discourse- that is crafted in direct opposition to the discourse of liberty and repression. The corporate code is organized through a “logic of rights and entitlements.” The individual citizen is not a free standing bearer of rights but rather he or she accrues them through a location in a web of hierarchical relationships, as part of the corporate system. Rights are granted by those in power to those underneath. A worker is granted rights while a non-working person would not, turning her or him into second rate citizen. In this code is not the individual but the collective what matters.

Second, they may be competing for preeminence. The author finds that people debating in the Brazilian public sphere engage in symbolic struggle over the adequate way of narrating two national crises trying to establish either the liberal civic code (the discourse of liberty and repression) or the corporate code as dominant. Baiocchi defines, following Williams (1977), a dominant code “as one that is understood as the proper way for dialogue in civil society, while residual codes reflect past practices and emergent codes are prefigurative” (2006:291). This is different from how civic life is organized in the United States, through a discourse that is completely dominant, as in Brazil there is questioning over the appropriateness of the discourse of liberty and repression vis-à-vis the corporate code. Baiocchi argues that as Brazil transitioned to democracy the corporate code seemed to be left as residual. However, it is unclear with Colombia’s complex political make-up, which will be addressed below, which codes will exist and which will be dominant, so I leave this for empirical examination.
Second Section: Institutional Features in the Case of Colombia

In this section I will briefly present key institutional features of Colombia, which as will be evident are pertinent to see the potential of the competing explanations described above.  

The case of Colombia presents a paradox according to scholars studying its political system and development, both contemporarily and over the long run. Rodríguez-Garavito (2012) articulates clearly this paradox. Two sides of Colombia are at odds. There seem to be functioning institutions when one examines some areas of Colombian social, political and economic life in comparative fashion with other countries in Latin America. 

8 It is important to lead clarifying that while Colombia shares many features with other Latin American countries, its experience does differ from key elements that are highlighted in generalizations about the continent. Colombia is not a country that is transitioning to democracy or that has transitioned in the last couple of or few decades as the more well-known cases of Brazil and Argentina. It has had in its recent history only a dictatorship of a couple of years in the 1950s, which analysts do not find consequential in the long run.

9 There is some ambiguity around the notion of institutions in the literature about Colombia, specially coming from the perspective of different disciplines. This is not different from the case of political science and political sociology in the U.S. Even in different sociological strands. In the case of the study coordinated by Portes and Smith (2012) in Latin America, they define institutional quality as that which contributes to development in a particular institutional field. Their criteria seem to align well with some of the democratic attributes captured by the discourse of liberty and repression. They measure six attributes within the organizations studied:
Colombia has had, even going through the economic crisis here studied and two more in the XX century (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006), unusually good macroeconomic stability and its “economic management institutions” have been strong and effective (Rodríguez-Garavito 2012:97; see Urrutia 1991). It also has had a sturdy electoral system that has remained in place since independence through different political regimes (Deas 1993: 207 in Rodríguez-Garavito 2012:97)\(^{10}\).

However, this institutional quality seems to be weaker in other areas. It is puzzling how functioning institutions can co-exist with widespread violence stemming from an internal armed conflict, including a myriad of violent actors, which has lasted for about half a century (Rodríguez-Garavito 2012:97).

Scholars have advanced three explanations (Rodríguez-Garavito 2012:1). Colombia is a “failed state” set aside from others due to high levels of political instability; 2) Its institutions are meritocracy, immunity to corruption, no “islands of power,” proactivity, technological flexibility and external allies.

\(^{10}\) The author in the chapter refers to “democratic institutions” but the only clear reference is to the electoral system. This ambiguity seems to be prevalent in several academic studies, when it is claimed that Colombia has had one of the most stable democracies in the region. Considering the level of violence, and human rights violations, among others, that have been prevalent since the mid XX century, the definition of democracy has to be clearly spelled out. The effects of peace agreement signed in 2016 remain to be seen. The agreement was signed with one of the guerrilla groups, but there are still many active illegal armed groups.
overall in good shape, and 3) One that takes the middle-ground where one can understand the paradox through a “partial collapse of the state.” Institutions have “cracked” partially due to the influence of guerrilla warfare and drug-trafficking but there are still some sites where there is strength and stability.

This paradox has been creatively tackled by a recent comparative study of institutions in five Latin American countries (Portes and Smith 2012). The investigators chose four organizations per country, representing their institutional fields. The chapter on Colombia puts forward a provocative explanation: “Asymmetry is the defining feature of the Colombian institutional field, which combines niches of excellence in the center and large areas of instability in the periphery” (Rodríguez-Garavito 2012:107). The mapping of the center and the periphery is not as straightforward as it may seem, as it does not reflect easy distinctions such as rural/urban or complete provinces and it is shaped by a myriad of factors.11

11 This heightened asymmetry in Colombia’s institutional field is shaped by five factors Rodríguez-Garavito (2012): A complex geography, crossed by three mountain chains, which has historically divided the country and that has not been tamed impeding the construction of a national community; 2) The inability of the Colombian State to maintain a full monopoly of the force, which has given way to entrenched threats to the State by guerrillas, paramilitary groups and drug trafficking; 3) The increased hold and embeddedness of the economic and cultural logic of drug-trafficking in Colombian society; 4) the persistence of patronage as the tool of power of political parties; and 5) The endurance of high levels of social and economic inequality: Colombia is, following Brazil, Latin America’s second most unequal country.
Rodríguez Garavito (2012) argues that patron-client ties which were thought to be only features of some fragile institutional arenas do not only structure political and social life in peripheral areas but are also the mechanism that connects central and peripheral areas of Colombian institutional life (Rodríguez-Garavito 2012:105). Though significant differences remain with other studies, the important theoretical element for this proposal is that clientelism is crucial for the way Colombian society functions contemporarily and how it has done it historically (e.g., Robinson, 2007 in Rodríguez-Garavito 2012). Rodríguez Garavito’s more nuanced explanation, in the framework of a comparative design, is congruent in this element with an earlier wave of studies in the 1990s that described Colombian political system as clientelistic (Deas, 1993; Duarte 2003; Leal and Davila 1990; Martz 1997 in Rodríguez-Garavito 2012). Its electoral system, particularly, has been found to be most clientelistic of Latin America (Carey and Shugart, 1995 in Rodríguez-Garavito 2012).

In the next section, I will examine how the journalistic fields in each country are configured differently, and how this may be translated into differences in coverage.

Third Section: Why Economic Logics and What are They?

Having examined how coverage of the economic crises may be structured according to distinct sets of civic logics in Colombia and in the United States, and how the distinct configuration of the journalistic fields may create differences in the coverage, I will layout, in this section, the expectations around a competing set of logics, which may be available: economic logics.

I anticipate that logics emerging from the economic sphere, which I call economic logics, may structure the narration of economic crisis and the banking crisis’ events studied: The autonomy of the civil sphere is ideal in the normative sense (Alexander, 2006b.) In real civil
societies there is interpenetration by other spheres, including the economic sphere (Alexander, 2006b).

Friedland and Alford (1991) make a compatible argument, positing that even when an institutional field has a dominant logic major institutional societal logics, such as the market, the family or religion, will be available (see Thornton and Ocasio 2008; Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012). For this project this argument suggests, as does Alexander’s (2006b), that actors may use economic logics, one of the major institutional logics.

Economic logics are the institutional logics of the economic sphere. I use this broad term because economic logics, which may be present in the case of economic crisis, might emerge from distinct sub arenas, or worlds, that configure the economic sphere and thus have distinct cultural structures (cf. Boltanski and Thevenot 2006; Friedland and Alford 1991). Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) explain how “…economic actions are based on at least two main forms of coordination, one by the marketplace, the other by an industrial order…. ” (p. 194). Several scholars similarly define these two worlds, or sub arenas, as part of the economic sphere. As such they have been studied by economic and industrial sociologists (see Fligstein and Dauter 2007 for a review of the sociology of markets; see Polyani, 1968 in Krippner 2001: 780)

The existence of economic logics in the narration of economic crises is probable even when the logics of the civil sphere (civic logics) may be expected to be dominant in public discussion about economic crises in the media, as the media is one of the institutions of the civil sphere,

I argue that economic logics may be salient within the institutional logics available because economic crises (and banking crisis’ events) are extremely consequential events occurring in the economy. On the one hand, economic and policy experts are the ones that
primarily generate the knowledge about crisis. For example, they produce the statistics that
gauge the health of the economy, including those determining when it is in a crisis. Thus,
specialized economic expertise play a substantial role in defining crisis in policy arenas, which
then translates into public discussion. These experts also play a crucial part in helping the
broader public make sense of crisis (See Suttles 2010). Suttles (2010) in his exploration of The
Chicago Tribune coverage of the Great Depression and the 1987 crash, finds that business
people were called upon when business functioned “as usual” or even during boom times, but
journalists started relying more on economists as experts once crisis hit. Both prior to the crisis
and in the midst of it, the opinions voiced come from actors whose main institutional home
regarding this issue is the economic sphere.

On the other hand, crises as events occurring in the economy are likely to be covered in a
significant proportion by financial/business/economic journalists. It is very likely that general
interest outlets will turn to their own economic journalists to cover economic crisis given the
type of expertise required to understand complex economic phenomena and the division of
knowledge that is already embedded in the structure of these outlets, split in sections and beats.
For example, in The New York Times, with a business section dating back to 1976, several of its
business journalists indeed played a crucial role in the coverage not only in the newspaper but in
wider journalistic field. Some of NYT journalists covering the crisis were then and afterwards
guests of shows within the space of opinion that attempted to make sense of the crisis.¹²

¹² For example, Andrew Ross Sorkin, a well-regarded mergers and acquisition journalist, wrote
(alone and with colleagues) some of the breaking news articles about the U.S Great Recession.
The relevance of business journalists continues, even if as the crisis acquires importance, the coverage broadens to address political issues, which are usually covered by other journalists (e.g., those covering the White House, and political campaigns.)

Given the overview above, it is reasonable to expect that economic logics may, in addition to civic logics, shape coverage of economic crises, and the events within banking crisis that will be studied here.

What are Economic Logics?

In this section I describe the potential characteristics of these logics sketched from the work of Waltzer (1983), Alexander (2006b), and Boltanski and Thevenot (2006). In the Methods and data chapter I will describe how economic logics might be expected to look like in the coverage, in comparison to civic logics.

Economic Logics: Alexander (2006). Alexander provides insights about the content of the meaning making about the economic sphere, some of which I will describe below. These insights are useful as a point of comparison to Boltanski’s and Thevenot's (2006) market and industrial world. In one of the most direct references, Alexander (2006b) argues: “The goal of the

He then proceeded with the book Too Big to Fail: How Wall Street and Washington Fought to Save the Financial System -and Themselves (Sorkin 2010). He has been a “frequent guest” on TV and radio, such as “NBC’s ‘Today Show,’ PBS’ ‘The Charlie Rose Show,’ PBS’ ‘The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer,’ NPR’s ‘Talk of the Nation’ and many others. He has also served as a guest host on CNN’s ‘American Morning’ and CNBC’s ‘Squawk B’ (see Times Topics-Sorkin, 2012.)
economic sphere is wealth, not justice in the civil sense; it is organized around efficiency, not solidarity, and depends more upon hierarchy than equality to meet its goals” (p. 203). Regarding what is valued in the economic sphere Alexander (2006b) expands on what wealth means: “Money is important not only because of its instrumental power but because its possession is typically taken to represent a distinctive and respected achievement in the world of economic life (p. 203).

I consider that Alexander’s (2006b) the main contribution for the analysis of economic logics that will be conducted here is the conceptualization of the relationship between civil and non-civil spheres. I will explore the connection between the economic and the civil sphere following this model. See the discussion below.

*Economic Logics: Boltanski and Thevenot (2006).* The contribution of Boltanski and Thevenot provides more guidance into the type of meaning making that one might expect regarding the logics stemming specifically from the economic sphere. Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) conceptualize some possibilities through two of the six “worlds” that these authors define: the industrial world and the market world. The last two, constitute the world of production, broadly construed, and of that of exchange. I extend here the discussion of the market world, which was found to be relevant in the empirical analysis. Patterns that are consistent with the industrial world are marginally present in the coverage.

Boltanski and Thevenot (2006), create a framework for analyzing the six distinct worlds (see Table 1, for a summary of the civic world and the market world). These authors argue people are not attached to a particular world, but they must navigate different situations, decide what regime or mode of justification applies and act accordingly. The categories that constitute
the framework are: higher common principle, state of worthiness, human dignity, list of subjects, list of objects and arrangements, investment formula, relation of worth, natural relations among beings, harmonious figures of the natural order, model tests, mode of expression of judgment, form of evidence and state of deficiency and decline of the policy (pp. 140-144).

Table 1 Market World and the Civic World (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market World Characteristic</th>
<th>Market World Short Description</th>
<th>Civic World Characteristic</th>
<th>Civic World Short Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition (Higher common principle)</td>
<td>Rivalry, Competitors</td>
<td>The preeminence of collectives (Higher common principle)</td>
<td>Collective, All, Will (general)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desirable (State of Worthiness)</td>
<td>Value (of), Salable, Millionaire, Winner.</td>
<td>Rule governed and representative (State of Worthiness)</td>
<td>Unitary, Legal, Rule governed, Official, Representative, Authorized, Confirmed, Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Unworthiness.</td>
<td>Unwanted. Hated.</td>
<td>The aspiration to civil rights (Dignity)</td>
<td>Civil rights, Political aspirations, Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest (Dignity)</td>
<td>Love (of things). Desire, Selfishness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitors (Subjects)</td>
<td>Businessman, Salesman, Client, Buyer,</td>
<td>Collective persons and their representatives (Subjects)</td>
<td>Public collectivities, Party, Federation, Chapter, Office, Committee, Elected official, Representative, Delegate, Secretary Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth (Objects)</td>
<td>Luxury (Item).</td>
<td>Legal forms (Objects)</td>
<td>Rights, Legislation, Decree, Order, Measure, Courts,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market World Characteristic</td>
<td>Market World Short Description</td>
<td>Civic World Characteristic</td>
<td>Civic World Short Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunism (Investment)</td>
<td>Liberty, Opening, Attention to others, Sympathy, Detachment, Distance (emotional), Perspective (getting some)</td>
<td>The renunciation of the particular (Investment)</td>
<td>Solidarity, Transcending (divisions), Renunciation (of immediate interest), Struggle (for a cause)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation of worth</td>
<td>Possess</td>
<td>Relations of delegation (Relation of Worth)</td>
<td>Membership, Representation, Delegation, Expression (of aspirations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest (to) (Relations)</td>
<td>Buy, Get (for oneself), Sell, Business (do business with), Negotiate, Benefit (from), Market, Pay, Compete</td>
<td>Gathering for collective action (Relationships)</td>
<td>Unify, Mobilize, Assemble, Exclude, Join, Support, Appeal, Debate (democratically), Speak out (take the floor), Inform, Codify, Legalize, Authorize, Refer (to a court)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market World Characteristic</td>
<td>Market World Short Description</td>
<td>Civic World Characteristic</td>
<td>Civic World Short Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market (Figures)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The democratic republic</td>
<td>Republic, State, Democracy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Figures)</td>
<td>Base, Electorate, Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Representative), Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual (Test)</td>
<td>Done deal, in the bag. All wrapped up</td>
<td>Demonstration for a just cause (Test)</td>
<td>Assembly, Congress, Council, Meeting, Session, Movement, Presence (manifest the presence of), Dispute, Recourse, Justice (demand).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price (Judgment)</td>
<td>Value (justified, reasonable, real)</td>
<td>The verdict of the vote (Judgment)</td>
<td>Voting Election, Consultation, Mobilization, Cause (support a) Awareness (achieving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money (Evidence)</td>
<td>Benefit, Result, Payback</td>
<td>The legal text (Evidence)</td>
<td>Law (the), Rules (legal), Statutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fall</td>
<td>Enslavement to money</td>
<td>Division (The Fall)</td>
<td>Divided, Minority (in the), Particular, Isolated, Cut off (from the electoral base), Individualism (self-serving), Deviation, Subgroup, Irregular, Arbitrary, Annulled, Removed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Constructed by the author based on Boltanski and Thevenot (2006:193-203)
Fourth Section: Media as a Field

In this section I will discuss how to understand media outlets and public spheres as anchored in journalistic fields. I first follow Bourdieu’s field theory’s to outline the media as a field and broadly map the differences between mainstream political journalism and economic journalism (Benson and Neveu 2008). Later on, I describe more in depth the differences in the journalistic fields in each country following the scholarship of Hallin and Mancini (2004).

In the first part of the section, I will explain how the fields in both countries can be understood as homologous. Competing notions could be used to describe the configuration of the media, but I employ this definition initially because it provides important conceptual and comparative tools to understand how these fields are organized. Moreover, within field theory there has been a solid recent strand that focuses on the media/journalism.

A Bourdieuan Look on Media

Broadly, one can understand the journalistic field, or the media industry, as populated by organizations: media outlets. This notion is one compatible with the idea of field within economic sociology and institutionalism in organizational analysis. The journalistic field can be also understood as populated by actors or players that as their organizations compete, either consciously or unconsciously, among each other ranking themselves better than other players (Benson and Neveu 2008).
Bourdieuian field theory posits that fields are structured by an opposition between different kinds of capitals. Benson and Neveu (2008), argue: “The ‘heteronomous pole’ representing forces eternal to the field (primarily economic) and the ‘autonomous’ pole representing the specific capital unique to that field, e.g., artistic or scientific skills (p. 4, note 14, referencing Benson, 1999, 2004; Neveu, 2000, 2001).

That is, each one of these fields is organized relationally, where competition, either with strategic intention or not, across different attributes define the field.

Benson’s and Neveu’s (2008) definition about the journalistic field is useful to start:

Inside the journalistic field, economic capital is expressed via circulation, or advertising revenues, or audience ratings, whereas the ‘specific’ cultural capital of the field takes the form of intelligent commentary, in-depth reporting, and the like –the kind of journalistic practices rewarded each year by the US Pulitzer Prizes (P. 4 note 14).

In the journalistic fields of Colombia and the United States the relational positions between mainstream newspapers and business newspapers, and other outlets, are analogous.

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I take the definition of a Bourdieuan field from Benson and Neveu (2008) as they engage the journalistic field. To expand, the definition advanced above, Benson and Neveu (2008) argue that at the most basic Bourdieu starts with an understanding of society as divided in societal spheres of action which he calls fields, such as politics, economics, religion, and cultural production (p. 3). Then, Benson and Neveu (2008) sum up Bourdieu’s theory through the definition of a field, and the dynamics within it: “Bourdieu emphasizes, adding that ‘in analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions’” (p. 3, note 7).
Flagship mainstream newspapers have high amounts of economic and cultural capital specific to the field. Relative to other outlets within each country’s journalistic field, *El Tiempo* and *The New York Times* have high levels of circulation and advertising revenues. They are considered to be excellent, having high quality reporting and commentary. Benson and Neveu (2008) cite *The New York Times* as an example. See the Methods chapter for more information on each of these outlets). This capital gives the newspapers prestige and power within the field and it may be translated outside the field. Thus, they may have autonomy versus outsider players, such as politicians, government officials and those in the private sector. As noted before, in the descriptions of the outlets, both newspapers are noted to have significant influence in the political sphere.

In terms of coverage the position of national newspapers translates in autonomy. The specific capital of the field wins out versus economic capital, which is a heteronomous principle. Thus, one would expect that compared to other outlets in the national field, journalists in *The New York Times* honor and excel at journalistic practices, such as quality reporting, balancing sources, and aim for neutrality and objectivity, which has been long held ideals of U.S. journalism (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Autonomous principles are similarly held by Colombian mainstream journalism (Rey 2007). Pulitzer Prizes won by *The New York Times*’ journalists and analogous Simón Bolivar prizes won by *El Tiempo*’s journalists are one indicator of these outlets quality and prestige in the field. The economic resources at their availability make a difference as well in meeting professional criteria. Hallin and Mancini (Hallin and Mancini 2004) present a different idea in their comparative research, which is indirectly debated by other scholars, cited above, and other journalists.
Thus, one can expect that even in economic coverage would be high quality within the NYT, and similarly in *El Tiempo*. The NYT had quality coverage during the U.S. Recession, including breaking news and other pieces by two award-winning journalists Gretchen Morgenson and Andrew Ross Sorkin.

Coverage of the economic crises might emerge from different journalistic fields. Coverage is expected to emerge primarily from the economic journalistic field. There is indeed specialization within the field and the bulk of coverage of the crises may be indeed written by economic journalists. Coverage is expected to emerge, in second place, from a political journalistic field. Coverage may be indeed in first page, and covered by political journalists and international correspondents (for example in the case of the aftermath of the Asian crisis or the Russian Crisis.)

*Fourth section: Economic journalism (Bourdieuian perspective)*

Meanwhile, from the perspective of core journalistic outlets and actors, which are often concentrated in politics, economic journalism may be conceived as not that important, located in the periphery. This categorization is, at this point, more speculative/hypothetical, as there are not too many rigorous examinations of economic journalism as a field. One of the few pieces, Duval (2008), examines economic journalism in France during the 1990s, defined as business/economic outlets and argues that the field lacks autonomy. It is too dependent on advertising, on a homogeneous readership stemming from the economic field (executives), and loses autonomy, as
they are part of media conglomerates. From this perspective, one could similarly categorize economic journalism in the U.S. and in Colombia, relationally to other outlets.\textsuperscript{14}

Croteau (1997), for example, provides evidence as well that economic journalism may be different from other types within the same outlets. He argues in a review of scholarship up to the mid-1990s that economic content in mainstream media—which includes print and broadcasting—there is divergence on what one would expect for democratic coverage. This is an ideal type, which may not be fulfilled in other subjects/beats but it is important to have it in mind. He argues that in the U.S., economic content both in print and broadcast has been limited, at least during a part of the 1990s in three distinct ways compared to the ideal model of economic coverage that he posits for a democracy (content diversity, source diversity, integration of economic news with other types of news.) This coverage is clearly geared towards their readers in the roles of investors or as part of a business elite, and not as citizens, union members or workers. Similarly, the people that have voice in economic coverage tend to be part of the business elite.

Economic journalists may be perceived as closer to the economy, the field that they cover. Some of this closeness emerges from the expertise that is needed to cover the economy, and their audience. Both in the U.S. and in Colombia, valued economic journalists are not often initially journalists by trade, but have come from economics as a discipline, or from business practice, including former brokers (Tambini 2009 for the US; Unimedios 2010 for Colombia). Their

\textsuperscript{14} Though there are indeed weaknesses in Duval’s approach, and more broadly of Bourdieu’s field theory, for the purposes of mapping the field at hand they are useful, and provide important background information to conceptualize the study.
audience is indeed expected to be business and wealthy people and investors (e.g., Pinkerton 2011). Some of the peripheral character of economic journalism comes from also from the value of external criteria of worth around their journalistic practice. Rather than other journalists judging their work, they want to be sure that specialized publics appreciate their coverage.\footnote{In Colombia, one of the coveted awards for economic journalists, ANIF award, is awarded by a business association and usually judged by economists. While this award is very prestigious, the general journalistic Simón Bolívar award does not have a specific category for economic journalism, which indicates somewhat the peripheral nature of economic journalism.}

The similarities in the broader configuration of the journalistic fields in each of the countries, as homologous fields may mask clear differences across them that shape coverage. I will describe these differences through the comparative work of Hallin and Mancini (2004).

\textit{Fourth section: Differences in the mainstream and business/economic journalistic fields: Hallin and Colleagues}

Journalistic fields are indeed different in Colombia and in the United States. To map these differences, which will be the subject of further inquiry for the dissertation, I use the contribution of Hallin and Mancini (2004).

These authors undertake a large-scale comparative study that analyzes eighteen democracies in North America and Western Europe in historical perspective. They identify three models that categorize the media systems in three ideal types: Liberal Anglo-American model; Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model; and Northern European model. One of the key
features of Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) analysis is that they aim to capture the relationship between the media and the political system. The differences between U.S. and Colombia’s institutional features, then can point to very distinct journalistic fields.

To preview the conclusion, there are clear impediments to democracy in Colombia, such as clientelism, a break in the rule of law, and widespread violence, which do effect how the media system is configured. Then, one can expect that the democratic practices within the civil sphere, which are articulated in the media, will be stronger in the U.S. than in Colombia. The rule of law is key in these differences. Even when in Colombia there are vibrant communities, and journalists aim to fulfill their roles, there are threats to freedom, including freedom of expression, that hinder the possibility of civil society to blossom, and the public debate in the media to be unconstrained. Political clientelism, which permeates institutions in Colombia, also is expected to shape media systems.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) posit that the United States’ media system is captured in the Liberal Anglo-American model, and as will be explained below it can be argued that there some similarities between the Polarized Pluralistic Model, and the media systems in Latin America (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002; for criticism see de Albuquerque 2012).

To engage in the comparative description of the media systems of the United States and Colombia, I start by summarizing the Liberal Model, which Hallin and Mancini (2004) use to describe the U.S. system (up to the mid 2000s.) They describe the media system in the U.S. as one where there was an early development of a commercial press of large scope, which anchored the continued relevance of the press in the country, which as a medium level of circulation vis-à-vis the countries in the other models. The media is anchored in a neutral commercial press, where media organizations aim at internal pluralism: coverage is balanced within each media
organization. They argue that the media in the U.S. is organized through “an information-oriented journalism” and there is strong professionalization, which is reflected among other features in self-regulation. Journalists have their own organizations, which regulate practice. Finally, one of the key features in the U.S.’ model is that the system is mostly private, in contrast to other models, and Britain being the exception in the Liberal Model.

The Polarized Pluralistic model, which has similarities to the media systems in Latin America according to Hallin and Paphnassoupoulos (2002), is at the other end of the spectrum, with very different characteristics to that of the Liberal Model. A mass market for the press did not develop, which translates nowadays in low circulation. The media which follows an advocacy model, which is externally pluralistic and there is weak professionalization. The media has been subsidized by the State, and it deeply reflects the political cleavages in society.

More specifically, Hallin and Paphnassoupoulos (2002) in a piece that pre-dated Hallin and Macini’s (2004) framework, but that uses in a very similar way their categories, suggest that there are some features of media systems in Latin America that are similar to those in Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy). In broad strokes, the similarities are not surprising, as the authors note, given the legacy established during the colonial period by Spanish and Portuguese colonizers. They point as well to similar trajectories in political development within the countries examined in Latin America and those in Southern Europe, including tensions between authoritarian and liberal traditions.

16 The authors note that Britain is an exception here as its media system is organized through external pluralism.
Hallin and Papathnassoupoulos (2002) find five characteristics that are similar in Southern Europe and Latin America. Among them the most relevant for this discussion are: “low levels of newspaper circulation, a tradition of advocacy reporting, and limited development of journalism as an autonomous profession.”17 The authors argue that one key feature is common to all of these countries and which shape their media systems: Political clientelism. As argued in the section above “The Case of Colombia,” this is indeed a key institutional feature of Colombia, and one that may set Colombia’s and U.S.’s systems apart. The relevance of political clientelism is clearer in the authors’ argument about advocacy reporting showing a parallelism with political orientations within the media.

I consider that their contribution can be used to broadly categorize Colombian media system, however it should be approached with caution. Unfortunately the dearth of rigorous scholarship about Colombian media is notorious. This is fully evident in Hallin and Papathnassoupoulos (2002) and in the more recent contribution of Montoya-Londoño (2014), who has advanced a characterization of Colombian media system through this model. This author analysis also based on the existent literature, which is still scarce, thus it suffers from similar problems. The lack of scholarship makes it harder to debate some of the arguments that are not strongly or rigorously documented.

Hallin and Papathnassoupoulos (2002) advance a hasty comparison with Latin America, which is by far less carefully crafted than the ones which uphold their model. The one about

17 I leave aside the politicization of public broadcasting and broadcast regulation, because this project will focus on the press.
Brazil is criticized by De Albuquerque (2012) in a recent compilation that Hallin and Mancini (2012) put together with works that follow their theorization. To take advantage of their categorization, I review their arguments about the three characteristics of the Polarized Model that exist in Colombia, including some additional information that may help qualify their arguments.

Mass Media Market

First, the authors characterize Colombia as not having a well developed media market, particularly a mass circulation press, in comparison to the U.S., which is hardly debatable. Along with the other countries examined by Hallin and Papathnassoupoulos (2002), it has lower circulation that those in Southern Europe, which constitute the bottom rung of the model: Colombia has a rate of 40 per thousand, which is lower than those of Southern Europe (Greece is around 80.)

This means that the media fulfills less its role as anchor of the public sphere in Colombia than in the U.S. The newspapers in Colombia do seem to share with those in Southern Europe their orientation to a small, elite well-educated audience. Their influence as categorized by observers seem to be more in line with what Hallin and Mancini (2004) describe as a part of a “horizontal process of debate and negotiation” among, not necessarily elite factions but, members of the elite. There has been a recent process of publishing popular newspapers, but it was not underway in 1998, when the first case examined here started. This process was starting during 2008 (Q’hubo 2012). This means that the media, and specially the press, is restricted in its ability to organize a more inclusive public sphere.
Advocacy Reporting

The authors characterize Colombian journalism as following “advocacy reporting.” They define it as following a clear political orientation and privileging commentary over news, supporting their argument in the broader framework that Hallin and Mancini (2004) develop. Within this model, advocacy journalism has been a feature also of Southern Europe, and more broadly of continental Western Europe. This type of reporting, they argue, with the Anglo-American model, where there has been a tradition of “objectivity.” This may be a plausible characterization of Colombia, especially in comparative perspective.¹⁸

¹⁸ However, it may be problematized as well (see De Albuquerque, 2012 for criticism in the case of Brazil.) While in its origins Colombian press indeed reflected strong political orientations is less clear than today one can talk about a clear political parallelism. Similarly it might be hard to identify a tradition of politically oriented journalism vs. a neutrally oriented one. Both elements are present (see Rey, 2004.) Furthermore, it is difficult to align media orientations directly with party ones (even in a general fashion), in no small way, because parties have been fragmented. The characterization that De Albuquerque (2012) does about Brazil sheds some light about the Colombian case. This author argues that in Brazil “most leading news organizations seem to adopt a catch-all, market-driven attitude. This does not mean that they avoid taking explicitly political positions. They do take such positions, but their agenda and positions are not reducible to the agendas of political parties; the opposite is more likely to happen.” (94) I would not say that the attitude of Colombian outlets is necessarily market driven, but I agree with what the
Limited Development of Journalism as an Autonomous Profession

Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) argue that “journalism in Southern Europe and Latin America is not strongly developed as an autonomous institution, differentiated from other institutions – the family business, the political clique, the party – with a distinctive set of professional values and practices” (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002: 182.) This is where they find influence of political clientelism. The difficulty in finding rigorous scholarship about the media and its historical evolution in Colombia, and probably a real lack of scholarship, seems to prevent Hallin and Paphathanassopoulos (2002) to substantiate this claim. The role of political clientelism, in Colombian institutional life seems to be clear and strong, as argued before (cf. Rodríguez-Garavito 2012) but its influence in the press is hardly documented.

However, from the perspective of recent compilations (or sources) that reflect on Colombian and Latin American journalism written mostly by journalists, it is less clear that there is a lack of a distinctive set of professional values and practices\(^\text{19}\) and more that autonomy is

\(^\text{19}\) For example, there seems to be an orientation to public service, as a claim to professional autonomy, as in other countries. Rodrigo Pardo, who granted an interview in 2012 when he was the manager of one of the big TV channels, RCN, worked at *El Tiempo* in different capacities. His grandfather, Roberto García-Peña, was director (manager) of *El Tiempo*. Asked about what journalism is for, Rodrigo Pardo said: “so that citizens are more citizens, participate in
clearly threatened (e.g., Rey, 2004; Rincón 2010 on professional autonomy) Autonomy is threatened by many actors. Colombian journalists are not only the very direct and real threat of censorship coming from guerillas, paramilitaries and the State, but also the softer censorship of strong and concentrated economic power (Martínez Escallón 2010; Moreno 2007; Open Society Institute and La Asociación por los Derechos Civiles. 2008). Colombian economic journalism may be more autonomous in the coverage of the government or public agencies and less of those coming from the private sector (Informal conversation with a former editor of one of the large mainstream newspapers and of one of the business outlets20).

Fifth Section: A Framework for Economic and Civil Sphere Interaction

In this section I will integrate the theory of journalistic fields presented above, and the notions of autonomy and heteronomy, with the model of boundary relations among spheres. This integration will allow understanding how coverage might look like. In the Methods Chapter, I will develop the hypotheses that emerge from this analysis.

Economic logics and civic logics can present themselves in different ways in media coverage. These logics can be understood through the relationship between the civil sphere and the economic sphere. I will use Alexander (2006b), which is further explained below, to understand the relationship between the economic sphere and the civil sphere and to generate expectations about the press coverage of banking crisis events and economic crises. Alexander’s (2006b) model defines the possibilities of interaction between the logics that are grounded in the democracy, elect better governments, make better [political] opposition and are happier.” (Revista Diners 2012).

civil sphere and those grounded in other non-civil spheres (pp. 205-209). This model conceptualizes three ideal-typical boundary relationships between spheres.

There are two ways in which this assessment of the relationship between the two spheres can be conducted. As has been explained, one way is to consider the media, as a whole, as the communicative institution of the civil sphere, following Alexander’s (2006) theorization. The site of inquiry is the civil sphere, where media is located. In this way, the economic sphere would exert influence in the civil sphere. This is the dominant interpretation in this dissertation.

A second way to consider the media as fragmented and produced by different journalistic fields. Distinct sections of the newspaper or different outlets appertain to different journalistic fields closer to certain spheres. In this way the economic section of the NYT, and of El Tiempo, and the business outlets WSJ and Revista Dinero could be considered as produced by journalistic fields that are part of the economic sphere, or at least share its institutional logics, if they are not autonomous fields. As such the default site of inquiry would be the economic sphere, and the one exerting (outside) influence would be the civil sphere. When these two spheres work in tandem, the patterns would be similar to those that Alexander (2006) defines in “facilitating output.” Other sections such as Editorial, Op-Ed, and international could be considered as part of the civil sphere, in the case of the mainstream media, El Tiempo and NYT.

Below I further develop the expectations about coverage by explaining the three boundary relations between civil sphere and economic sphere for the two ways of conceptualizing which sphere is the site of inquiry that are explained above. According to Alexander, the relationships between spheres are categorized as follows: One where the non-civil sphere “intrudes destructively,” another one where a non-civil sphere “facilitates output” within the civil sphere, and a third one where the civil sphere “civically repairs” a non-civil one.
Fifth section: Economic sphere intrudes destructively in the civic sphere

Alexander (2006b) argues that when activities and products of other spheres negatively alter the civil sphere they “intrude destructively.”

For the coverage of economic crises, having the civil sphere as the site of inquiry, it would mean that economic logics will be pitted against or that they will predominate and mute civic logics. This could allow for violation of the distributive principle (Walzer 1983 Ch. 1): Undue transfer of dominance from other spheres to the civil sphere. In this case because media is a discursive environment, I expect that this dominance can be manifested as the prevalence of the moral standards of the economic sphere. Other social goods such as money, education or economic expertise would be valued above civic virtues and practices. In Walzer’s (1983) terms one could expect that the “worth” of actors could be adjudicated (by themselves or by other actors) not from their position as citizens, part of the civil sphere, but from their position in other (distributive) spheres (Ch. 1).

Destructive intrusion could happen, additionally, when public debate as covered in the media does not reflect imperatives of solidarity in social relations. For example, when there is no solidarity between the executives of banks and financial organizations and the citizens (taxpayers) that have bailed them out through government intervention. Their motives and relationships may be justified exclusively in profit-oriented terms or favoring economic stability with no discussion of how their actions may have impacted the well-being of other constituents.

As Alexander (2006b) argues, the intrusion can be seen also in a translation of a differentiation of worth emerging from the inequalities of economic life (p. 207). So, low-income people are understood as irrational, dependent and lazy, and this categorization gets translated into civil incompetence (Somers and Block, 2005 and Hays, 2003, referenced by Alexander
This may be the case in the financial crises for low-income borrowers and the questioning of the solidarity and protection they deserve as citizens. For high income and status groups, this categorization would be reversed and one would expect that elites would be understood as democratic actors: rational and autonomous, for instance. This could be the case for wealthy executives of the financial organizations that failed during the crises.

The relationship between the economic sphere and the civic sphere can be gleaned also from the criticism that from the civic world is addressed to the market world from the perspective of Boltanski and Thevenot (2006). They emphasize the opposition (in French society) "...between the civic form of coordination, supported by the general will, and the market form. As an example of the expression of an irreducible opposition between the public good and the private interests..." (pp. 259-260) These authors posit, as well, there has been a "conventional opposition between owners^m (characterized by selfishness) and workers^w" (p. 260). Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) equally argue that "self-serving individualism" is at the core of the market world and in opposition to democracy: ""Democracy cannot be improvised in this world shaped by individualism" (p. 260).

For the coverage of economic crises, having the economic sphere as the site of inquiry, it would mean that civic logics will enter and "civically repair" the economic sphere. This possibility will be described below.

*Fifth section: Economic sphere facilitates output in the civic sphere*

Alexander’s (2006b) model of the civil sphere specifies that if the economic sphere is able to facilitate the construction of or expand the civil life there will be no friction between their boundaries. The economic sphere, in this case, provides the civil sphere with resources and
capacities that are consistent with its ideals and help to form them. These resources or capacities come from participation in the production world or in the market world, such as independence, self-control, rationality, equality, self-realization and cooperation (Alexander 2006b: 206-207; see Fourcade and Healy 2007 on different theories about the role of markets).  

With the civil sphere as the site of inquiry, I would expect this interaction to be expressed in coverage when valued economic actors are presented as having qualities that are both valued in the civil sphere and in the economic sphere. Equally, in terms of social relationships where economic actions and are shown to be compatible with the imperatives of civil society.

Democratically inclined individuals, and those oriented by the market world, can simultaneously autonomous or independent, rational and self-controlled.

**Fifth section: Civil sphere repairs the economic sphere**

Alexander (2006b) argues that “civic repair” occurs when the civil sphere “repairs” another sphere by bringing in the criteria of civic life to judge actors, social relationships and institutions

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21 For instance, the production world can foster solidarity, while markets encourage independence, rationality and self-control. Mass production have provided citizens with goods that are affordable and accessible to most people, which allows them to convey and construct individuality, autonomy and equality (Alexander 2006b). These arguments, as Alexander (2006b) notes, were developed both by early thinkers including Marx and Adam Smith and contemporary theorists of postindustrialism (pp. 206-7).
(pp. 205-209). When it enters non-civil spheres, Alexander (2006b) posits, “…civil society can make repairs, via communication, regulation, restructuring and reform” (pp. 205-206).

Civic repair would occur in the coverage of economic crisis when one takes the economic sphere as the “local sphere”, the site of inquiry, and the civil sphere as the intervening sphere. This means considering the economic sections of the mainstream newspapers, and the business outlets as part of the economic sphere. That is, economic journalism would be a heteronomous journalistic field, without autonomy from the economic sphere. In support of the lack of autonomy of the journalistic field see the section “Media as a journalistic field.”

Alexander (2006b) explains how the criteria of the civil sphere might be employed in interpreting and treating problems in other spheres:

To the degree that there is some institutionalization of civil society, economic, political, and religious problems are not treated merely, or sometimes not even primarily, as function problems, that is, as problems that concern the institutional or cultural processes within a sphere, but rather as “problems of society”. They are treated, both by those making the claims and by those on the receiving, as deficits in civil society itself—forces that threaten social cohesiveness, integrity, morality, and liberty (P. 209)

Understanding the economic crisis as a social or civic crisis would mean interpreting it as a problem for all society and not only for the economic sphere. The consequences of problems would be explained according to Alexander (2006b) in terms of threats to “social cohesiveness, integrity, morality, and liberty” (p. 209). The expectations about the coverage of the economic crisis are that the motives of actors, social relations, and institutions occurring in the economic sphere start to be judged primarily by civic criteria instead of economic. The attributes that are highlighted in economic actions, relations and institutions are compatible with civil criteria.

Treating problems as societal implies, of course, solving them as such. Alexander (2006b) argues, specifically in relation to the economic sphere, that “efforts at repair” have been successful in the economic sphere in guaranteeing rights for workers (pp. 205-209).
Fifth section: Economic crisis as a social crisis (Civic repair)

Students of “crisis” as an event in cultural sociology provide insight into what to expect regarding narratives about the economic crises examined. Some of the questions that may be posed are: Would economic crisis, and the related banking crisis’ events, be narrated as, or as part of (broader), social crisis? What may be the contours of the narratives that will be available if the economic crisis is narrated as a (social) “crisis”? There is a possibility that the banking crisis’ events examined in this project, and the larger crises they are embedded in, will be narrated as (social) “crisis.” In terms of the boundaries between spheres, narrating the economic crisis as a social crisis happens when there is civic repair.

If economic crises are narrated as social crises, knowing some of the full-blown narratives that do so, which are clearer now that the crisis has ended, will help in make sense of prior understandings developed during and about the banking crisis’ events that are the focus here. Referring to these narratives one can judge if during the beginning of the banking crises there were moments where narrative seeds were planted, or these moments were understood through inchoate plots that did not run their course and were left as narrative openings (Barthes 1978).

Cultural and media sociologists argue that within a narrative analysis and tradition is important to focus our attention on events (Berezin 2012; Dayan and Katz, 1992 in Jacobs 2000b:9; Wagner-Pacifici 2010). As argued above, events are crucial in the narrative process. Some events “demand narration” (Turner, 1974:39 in Jacobs 2000b:8-9). As such, when they are narrated they have the potential to alter the way people think about the past, present and future, changing the dominant understandings that are in place (Jacobs 2000b).
Jacobs (2000b) argues that crisis is one of the most important types of events narrated in the media. Borrowing from Turner he argues that “crisis develops when a particular event gets narratively linked to a central cleavage in society and demands the attention of citizens as well as political elites (Turner, 1974:39 in Jacobs 2000b: 9).

I have discussed crisis so far, and will do in the next section, which describe the cases, mostly from the perspective of specialized economic knowledge. The definition of a systemic economic crisis, and of banking crisis occurs mainly in policy and academic circles. To be sure, meaning making does happen within these circles, as researchers have underscored recently. Abolafia (2004, 2010) provides examples of meaning making in the Federal Reserve. Meanwhile cultural sociologists, provide examples on how to analyze economic themes from a semiotic and narrative perspective (Alexander 2011; Alexander and Smith 2003b; Tognato 2012) Nevertheless, the way characters are conceived and narratives and genres are used to make sense of an economic crisis does not have to be similar to that used in the creation of a social “crisis” or a “cultural trauma” (Eyerman 2008; Jacobs 2000b). In other words, it should not be expected that each economic crisis would be constructed as a social crisis (within each public sphere.) For

22 Although I will be discussing the concept of crisis mostly from the definition above, Eyerman (2008) provides additional insight through his examination of cultural trauma, which is based on Turner’s (1980: 150) concept of a social breach. Eyerman argues that a social drama develops when there is a breach of widely held societal norms, and which threaten the identity of that society. When this breach is not adequately healed the social drama may become a cultural trauma (Turner 1980: 150 in Eyerman, 2008:16.)
example, Suttles (2010) finds that narratives surrounding the Great Depression and the 1987 crash in *The Chicago Tribune* do not anchor nor equate these crises in the economy to one or more occurring in the society as a whole. There is plenty of meaning making that is not involved in making these economic crises into social crises.

However, some of the narratives that have recently unfolded about the U.S. Great Recession indicate that it may be indeed narrated, for example in *The New York Times*, as “social crisis.” That is, the Great Recession would be made relevant for a broader national community in larger and more open public spheres by tying it to a central division in society (Eyerman 2008; Jacobs 2000b) This may also occur in other public spheres beside the mainstream sphere articulated by mainstream press, which is examined here.

Wagner-Pacifici’s (2012) work about the Occupy Wall Street Movement, and Alexander (2006a) about September 11, are insightful to map and understand one of the broader narratives that emerged from the crisis, which indeed ties the crisis with a central cleavage in American society: economic inequality. Occupy Wall Street emerged during the close of summer and fall 2011, when the economic crisis had almost completely unfolded (Wagner-Pacifici 2012). The narrative crafted by the movement changed the understanding of Wall Street firms and their employees within American society. This image had been previously transformed during September 11 (Alexander 2006b; Wagner-Pacifici 2012) In short, the movement polluted Wall Streeters and their firms as a group, which during September 11 were sacralized and embraced as representing the society overall (Alexander 2006a). The attack stopped criticism that was continuously voiced against the wealthy. Alexander argues that this sacralization repaired a long standing division in American society, one which was organized along the lines of material inequality: “Before 9/11, the merchants and traders of Wall Street often had been the objects of
envy and resentment, maligned as selfish and indulgent, as a new and unattractively yuppified social class (Alexander 2006a:105). Wagner-Pacifici (2012) then argues that Occupy Wall Street articulated a new narrative tying Wall Street to the inequality and failures coming from the Bush era and economic crisis, which was previously unthinkable given the sacred nature of September 11.

To conclude, the interpretation of recent events, particularly in the Occupy Wall Street movement, ruptures the sacralinity of Wall Streeters, as imbued in September 11, making it legitimate again to talk about a cleavage in American society between those that have and those that do not. In this way, economic crisis was indeed constructed as a social crisis or drama.

In the next chapter, I will explain the main features of the economic crises that will be examined. I will also briefly describe the journalistic fields.
THIRD CHAPTER: THE CASES AND JOURNALISTIC FIELDS IN DETAIL

In this section I present a brief overview of the large-scale crises occurring in Colombia and in the United States and of their journalistic fields.23

Crises Examined in Colombia and in the United States

The Colombian End-of-the-Century Crisis is part of the broader emerging market crisis occurring in the late 1990s in which several countries in Asia, and later on Brazil and Russia, were hit particularly hard. A certain amount of background information about the evolution of the broader emergent market crisis is provided here to facilitate a better understanding of the media coverage of the crisis as it affected in 1998 the U.S. and Colombia. To recap, the emergent market crisis is part of the coverage analyzed through its relationship to the two crises. The in depth comparative analysis of the coverage of the Russian and Brazilian crisis is left for future research.

The complexity of the emerging market crisis precludes the formulation of a comprehensive synopsis, particularly in the case of the Asian crisis, which involved six Asian countries at its core. Despite undeniable contagion, these countries are characterized by distinct economic structures with various approaches to crisis. I present the Asian crisis in a general

23 For the purposes of this section, I generally follow the definitions for specific types of crises introduced by Reinhart and Rogoff (2009a) while incorporating contributions made by other authors. Because my aim is not to engage in a theoretical discussion of how definitions may differ in the economic literature on crises but to provide a general context for the empirical analysis, these distinctions are not needed.
fashion, focusing on Thailand as an illustration. Also, I develop a brief explanation of the Russian crisis.

Each of the overviews is expanded, as needed, in the empirical chapters to support the analysis. Additional detail relevant to the Colombian crisis is presented here, however, as it is a core case in need of more context for a U.S. audience.

Asian Crisis (1997-1998)\textsuperscript{24}:

The multi-country or global financial crisis of the late 1990s started in South East Asia, peaked in 1997-1998, and subsequently jumped to Russia and Latin America. Referred to as “the Big Six,” the following countries in Asia are representative of the crisis: Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009a).

\textit{Thailand’s case}

The crisis started in Thailand on July 2nd, 1997 with an attack by speculators on the Thai Baht. The de facto exchange rate regime, pegged to the dollar, could not be sustained and a large devaluation of 25 percent ensued (Stiglitz 2002c; Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012).\textsuperscript{25} The crisis then spread to Indonesia and, by early December of the same year, to South Korea.

\textsuperscript{24} This section is based on Stiglitz (2010) and Urrutia and Llano (2012). Urrutia and Llano (2012) who offer perspective on which of these events was important for Colombian economic authorities, particularly the Central Bank.

\textsuperscript{25} Later, in September, the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank takes place and is attended by the finance ministers of a large number of countries. Worried about the influx of capital flows, particularly short-term flows, Asian finance ministers are eager to establish
By the end of 1997, the currency crisis had transmitted to distinct areas of Thailand’s economy. The breadth of the unfolding systemic crisis is reflected in the following: Thailand suffered a currency crisis in 1997, followed by a banking crisis which lasted from 1997 to 2001, and stock market crashes in 1997 and 1998 (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009a). The Thai crisis was most severe, however, in 1997. At this juncture, Thailand suffered three simultaneous crises. In Reinhart and Rogoff’s (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009a, 2012) a scale of four simultaneous crises indicates a systemic crisis. In the year 2000, Thailand was hit by another currency crisis and a stock market crash.

Ultimately, a contagion of the currency crisis that started in Thailand spread throughout Asia, resulting in devaluation in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Currency speculation and repercussions in Korea and Hong Kong later affected Brazil.

The impact of the currency crisis also showed in flow instability, which, by itself, contributed to slowed economic performance in the Asian countries. Just as policy leaders in these countries had feared prior to onset of the crisis, deregulation of capital influx, especially short-term flows, was an important factor in prompting or deepening the crises (Stiglitz 2002c). Once the turmoil started, capital left the countries in massive proportions (“a reversal of flows”).

controls. When the IMF presses for further liberalization, however, the countries represented do not resist, as to do so would produce negative consequences for securing funds and international investors’ appraisal of the investment opportunities available. There is little room for maneuvering after the meeting.

As a result of these and other contributing factors, a large systemic crisis occurred in the “Big Six” (Stiglitz 2002c), causing deep consequences. The economies of the affected countries crashed and GDPs fell catastrophically: “In 1998, GDP in Indonesia fell by 13.1 percent, in Korea by 6.7 percent, and in Thailand by 10.8 percent” (Stiglitz 2002c:97). Unemployment and urban poverty grew, with unemployment rates spiking “fourfold in Korea, threefold in Thailand, [and] tenfold in Indonesia” (Stiglitz 2002c:97).

Asian Crisis Expands: Russia and Brazil

The global repercussions of a crisis of this magnitude, occurring in one of the world’s fastest growing regions, prompted crises in other regions, as can be expected (Stiglitz 2002c). Commodity prices descended with the deterioration of economic growth in the region that supported demand in other parts of the world. Commodity producers, such as Russia, were then in trouble (Stiglitz 2002c). There was also the matter of elusive investor trust — investors judged countries in emerging markets across the globe in similar ways, pulling money out of many countries in cases where there was no basis for any direct effect. Such was the case of Brazil (Stiglitz 2002c).

Russian case

The severity of the systemic crisis in Russia (1998-1999) is reflected in the following: Russia suffered a banking crisis and stock market crashes in 1998, one inflation crisis in 1998, two currency crises in 1998 and an internal sovereign debt default and an external default and restructuring that lasted from 1998 to 2000 (Reinhart and Rogoff 2012). The Russian crisis was most severe in 1998 as reflected in a cluster of seven simultaneous crises in Reinhart and
Rogoff’s scale (2009a, 2012). In the year 1999, Russia was hit by another currency crisis and another inflation crisis, while the sovereign debt issues continued. Consequently the GDP fell catastrophically: In 1998, Russia’s output declined by 5.3 percent (Reinhart and Rogoff 2012). Russia was included as a memorandum item on IMF programs in 1999.

_Colombia’s End-of-the-Century Crisis_

Colombia’s End-of-the-Century crisis started in 1998. By 1999, the country had the highest output collapse of the century, a 4.2 percent GDP drop (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009a).

Not unlike Thailand, Colombia suffered three simultaneous crises: a banking crisis, a stock market crash and a currency crisis (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009a). Multiple factors precipitated a systemic crisis that has been understood as internal to the national economy but included external shocks as well. The crisis was incubated during the early 1990s by rapid changes in the structure of the financial system (Fogafin 2009:67–82); an economic and credit boom in the country (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006:123–28; Fogafin 2009:67–82); and management inadequacy within the financial system combined with regulatory weaknesses (Fogafin 2009:67–

26 For overviews of the crisis as a whole see: Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya (2006)

27 This boom included the stock market, where there was a hike of 49.9% in stock prices in Bogotá’s stock exchange (Banco de la República, 1999 in (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006) : 136 footnote 87).
The housing sector, which was prioritized by the State to pull the economy, was deeply affected (Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012).28

Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya (2006:123–28) also point to the importance of consequences stemming from the economic reforms of the 1990s, which broadly followed the guidelines of the Washington Consensus and entailed both financial and commercial liberalization. Moreover, mandates stipulated by the new constitution of 1991 created strong fiscal imbalances. Public expenditures, as a percentage of GDP, increased from 18 to 34 percent between 1993 and 2001 while the sovereign debt (deuda del gobierno central) climbed from 13 to 45 percent between 1996 and 2002 (Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012:4).

These factors were compounded by the external shock imposed by the Asian crisis and its repercussions in other countries, particularly Russia and Brazil (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006:132–35; Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012). The Asian crisis produced changes in the international investment environment that impacted Colombia. Similar to the phenomenon occurring in the countries of Asia, Colombia’s opening up to capital flows played a role in

28 Urrutia and Llano (2012) define the large economic crisis as three crises intertwined: a mortgage and building sector crisis, a financial crisis, and a currency crisis. The mortgage crisis, as commonly referred to in Colombia, is part of the banking crisis as defined by Reinhart and Rogoff (2009a). The health of the construction sector, of course, was closely tied to the mortgage financial organizations involved. I follow the more standardized definition of the types of crisis put forth by Reinhart and Rogoff (2009a) to facilitate comparison of the countries affected by the Asian Crisis with the U.S.
prompting the crisis (Fogafin 2009:67–82). The country experienced a loss of capital inflow beginning in 1997, net flows were negative by 1999, as more money left than entered the country (Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012).

*Zooming in on the Mortgage and Building Sector Crisis in Colombia: Partial Look at the Banking Crisis*

To illustrate, I will present a more detailed account of the crisis in Colombia, which emerged in the mortgage organizations and the building sector when the bubble in housing and other real estate burst.

A bubble in housing prices was created during the early 1990s by a disproportionate increase in credit availability (supply). An increase of 24.4 percent in credit availability, in real terms, was documented in 1993, together with a corresponding dramatic increase in housing prices – 45.2 percent for the year — at a time when the consumer price index was at 22.6 percent (Banco de la República, 1999 in (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006): 136).

In the building sector, mortgage organizations, and mortgage organizations that enjoyed special regulations (*corporaciones de ahorro y vivienda*, CAVs, by their initials in Spanish) hiked up interest rates for home owners and other commercial clients (Fogafin 2009:93). The Central Bank argues that “as [clients] were expecting to realize large gains through property price increases (valorization) while prices [were continually going up], they accepted credits at 18 and 20 percent plus price level restatement interest rates”. The interest rate escalated more than ten percentage points, reaching 43.7% in 1996 as compared with 33.5% in 1992 (Banco de la República, 1999 in (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006) : 136).
The mortgage and building sector crisis was triggered by the burst of the bubble in housing prices and other types of real estate. Real housing prices dropped, starting in 1995 and continuing into 2003 (Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012:4). High- and middle-end residential real estate prices began to drop in 1996 (IMF, 2001). As in the case of the subprime crisis in the U.S., homeowners were unable to meet mortgage payments with the decline of home prices, particularly when interest rates were high. Many lost their homes. From the perspective of the financial system, this was observed in an increase of non-performing loans (cartera vencida). For CAVs, mortgage organizations, non-performing loans increased from 5 percent in 1996 to more than 30 percent in 2002. (Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012:4)

Real estate deeds as percentage of total assets (of the financial system) more than doubled each year, increasing from 0.4 percent in December 1997 to 1.6 percent in December 1998, and then to 3.4 percent in December of 1999 (Fogafin 2009). As percentage of assets (patrimonio), the stock of real estate deeded to banks increased from 4.3 percent in 1996 to 23.75 percent in 1998. By December 1999, it jumped to 43.8 percent (Fogafin 2009). As borrowers deeded their property, the banking system experienced increasing liquidity problems inasmuch as these were assets that had to be sold in order to loan money again. The CAVs were thus in deep trouble (Fogafin, 2009: 94): return over assets (rentabilidad patrimonial) dropped to -39.2 percent in December 1999. It had been at a 27.7 percent level in January 1997. Non-performing loans

29 Contrary to the situation in the United States, borrowers in Colombia could deed real estate property to their creditors in order to fulfill their total obligations (14 article of the 2331 decree of 1998 for real state deeds).
(cartera vencida) were up fivefold from 5.6 in December 1996 to 21.6 percent in November 1999. One of the key indexes used to assess whether a financial organization requires capitalization or government intervention, the solvency index (indicador de solvencia) decreased to 6.8 percent in February 1999 from 9.7 percent two years earlier (December 1996).

Zooming in on the Banking Crisis

In this section I will provide a brief context for the Colombian financial system and its evolution since the 1990s. It was not only the mortgage organizations that were hit by the crisis — the entire financial system was affected. The government responded to the banking crisis of the late 1990s with a large scale intervention aimed at significant restructuring and capitalization. Mergers were brokered, institutions were nationalized (oficializadas), and private and publicly owned banks and other organizations were liquidated (Fogafin 2009). Much of this activity was channeled through the government agency Fogafin (Fondo de Garantías Financieras, Fogafin, by its abbreviation in Spanish).

The financial system comprised three sectors: a public financial sector, which emerged, in part, from the banking organizations rescued by the government during the crisis of the 1980s; a private financial sector; and a cooperative or Co-op financial sector (Fogafin 2009). Three types of organizations existed: banks, mortgage organizations that enjoyed special regulations (CAVs), and other financial organizations. In the latter type are included organizations such as leasing and commercial credit providers (Compañías de Financiamiento Comercial) and cooperatives, which are similar to mutual savings banks. Below I describe in further detail the cooperative sector, to which I have granted less attention above.

Cooperative Sector
The cooperative sector was relatively diverse in the 90s and it had to make many changes in order to deal with the difficulties it was experiencing. The sector was divided into two groups depending on the institutions’ controlling regulatory body: The Bank Superintendence or the National Department of Co-operatives (Dancoop). Those that were controlled by the Bank Superintendence were: “three cooperative banks, one upper tier organism, two financial cooperatives, and two commercial financing companies.” Those controlled by Dancoop, on the other hand, included, “…financial cooperatives, savings and credit cooperatives, and integral and multi-active cooperatives with a savings and loans units.” (Fogafin 2009): 95-100.

Before the crisis, the cooperative sector had grown consistently and broadly for almost a decade, and constituted a little over 10% of the financial sector at the end of 1997: “…in October 1997, it was estimated that the volume of assets of the cooperative credit establishments represented approximately 4.4% of the total assets of the financial sector, while that of the financial cooperatives was of more than 6%.” (Fogafin 2009): 95-100 (note 125).

The sector had three banks. Banco Uconal opened its doors in 1991 when a large cooperative organization (“upper tier cooperative”) transformed into a bank. Bancoop and Coopdesarrollo were opened in 1992 and 1994 respectively (Fogafin 2009): 95-100.)

The Crisis

The sector began to have problems at the end of the 90s and finally collapsed in 1998. The causes cited include the “uncertainty” caused by the international crisis and the economic “downturn” (Fogafin 1998, 2009): 95-100; 5). There was also a “liquidity problem,” “loss of public confidence,” and “the deterioration of the main financial indicators, in particular of the portfolio of non-performing loans” (Fogafin 2009): 95-100).
Lack of liquidity was one of the aspects that most affected the cooperative sector and the financial sector as a whole (Fogafin 1998): 5). Due to its effect on rising interest rates, the cooperatives’ cost of acquiring funds increased, as it did for most of the financial institutions.30

The cost of acquiring funds increased and with it the placement cost. When their debts increased in value, the debtors found it hard to pay them. This was reflected in the increase in the portfolio of non-performing loans and of the goods received in lieu of payment throughout the financial system. “This situation gave rise to a reduction of financial institutions’ solvency margins.” (Fogafin 1998): 5). As a result, “…by 1998 49 cooperatives had been liquidated, 9 had been intervened, 700 offices and branches had been closed down, the interests of 1,700,000 associates had been compromised, and 800 savers had been affected” (Fogafin 2009): 95-100).31

Around a year later, in June 1999, “…the institutions’ losses … rose to $336,228 million…[pesos]” (Fogafin 2009): 95-100). As an example of the impact of the crisis, the cooperative sector’s non-performing loans portfolio multiplied six times between 1996 and 1999: “…it fell from 5.35% in December of 1996 to 36.5% in November of 1999” (Fogafin 2009): 95-

30 Fogafin (1998) argues: “This lack of liquidity is evident in the growth of the monetary aggregates during the year [1998]. The monetary base decreased by 16.5% and M3+ Bonds grew by 7.8%” (p. 5).

31 Fogafin (1998) explains: “On the 16th of November [1998], the national government was obliged to declare an Economic Emergency to prevent the situation from worsening and leading to a systemic crisis” (p. 5).
In terms of the sector creditworthiness, “in December 1998, it recorded negative levels (-5.6%)” (Figure 16) (Fogafín 2009: 95-100).

The crisis of the sector, led to a number of regulatory changes. In 1997, the Government issued two decrees. The first, unified the Bank Superintendence as a supervising body for all cooperatives (Decree 1688 of June 1997) (Fogafín 2009: 95-100). This was complemented by Decree 1840, which established a “prudential regulation” to protect the interests of the savers. The second, “…Decree 798 of 1997” ordered the withdrawal of all State monies deposited in the cooperative financial sector.” According to Fogafín (2009): 95-100, this “…highlighted the problems associated with the cooperatives, affecting their availability of resources.”

**Colombian Banking crisis chronology**

Some authors posit that the banking crisis started in early 1998. Kaminski (2003) suggests that onset of the crisis occurred during the month of March, when the middle-sized bank from the Co-op sector, Banco Uconal, was “taken over” by Fogafín.³² Reinhart and Rogoff (2008), on the other hand, argue that the crisis began a month later, in April of 1998. They offer the following general picture: “Many banks and financial institutions failed; capitalization ratios and liquidity decreased dramatically. The total assets of the financial industry contracted by over 20%” (Reinhart 2002; Jácome 2008 in Reinhart and Rogoff 2008: Table A5-5).³³

³² Later, on August 31, 1999, the bank was merged with a large public bank, Banco del Estado (Fogafín 2009). (Fogafín 2009)documents that the bank which resulted from the merger was liquidated on June 21, 2005 (p. 135).

³³ Scholars pinpoint timing of the banking crisis differently.
Kaminski (2003) also points to a second wave in 1999, when “two large private banks were taken over by Fogafin; smaller banks that failed were closed. A number of public banks were closed.”

**The Great Recession**

The United States Great Recession began in 2007 when the mortgage and financial crisis hit. By 2009, the GDP had dropped 2.5 percent (Reinhart and Rogoff 2012). The country experienced a long-lasting banking crisis from 2007 to 2010 — when the most recent information was included in Reinhart’s and Rogoff’s categorization — and a stock market crash in 2008 (Reinhart and Rogoff 2012).

Stiglitz (2010) provides a stylized narrative of the crisis that is useful to explain it: The crisis started because the bubble in housing prices burst. As prices began to fall, homeowners could not pay their debts since the value of their homes was now inferior to that owed to their creditors. Many lost their homes and their life savings. This was a huge blow to the economy, as the country had fueled its economy through debt. A significant portion of its GDP was housing related (⅜ to ¾ of GDP). Although the problem started in the subprime mortgage sector, it expanded to prime (regular residential real estate). Later on, commercial real estate ran into 

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34 The financial institutions affected include Bancafé, Granahorrar, Banco Andino, Banco del Pacífico, Banco Selfín, Caja Agraria, BCH and Banco del Estado/Uconal (Kaminski, 2003; IMF, 2001: 27). Kaminski’s original source provides the names of the banks. See also Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya (2006) where government interventions affecting small private banks during the crisis are highlighted.
trouble too. When the bubble blew up, its repercussions were expanded to include the financial system through complex financial products designed to collect profits in an environment of low interest rates.

Afterwards, the crisis hit the banks. Two factors helped bring lending among banks to a near halt. Where lending did not stop, it was available at high interest, eroding the trust needed for the banking system to work: First, banks were highly leveraged, as were homeowners — they had a high proportion of debt in comparison to their assets. Second, the complexity of financial instruments did not allow the banks holding them to correctly assess their liabilities. Other banks were unable to make this assessment in order to lend. Eruption of a financial and economic crisis was thus inevitable.

The crisis had yet another component: lowering consumption. Due to the fall in housing and share prices, consumption collapsed. People were either increasingly unwilling or unable to borrow, which sank the economy even further.

Journalistic Fields and the Public Sphere

United States


The Times had a circulation of 927,851 in 2009, occupying third place in the country, even as the Recession hit (Duncan McIntosh Company 2010a, 2010b)
The Wall Street Journal, which was founded in 1889, is a staple of the business and financial press (Gale 2012). As of 2005, it had collected 31 Pulitzer Prizes, including two won that year by Joe Morgenstern and Amy Dockser Marcus (Gale 2012). A specialized business newspaper, The Wall Street Journal has one of the largest circulations in the United States, topping the charts along with The New York Times and USA Today (Gale 2009; Duncan McIntosh Company 2010a, 2010b). In 2009, The Journal ranked in first place, with a readership of over 2 million; two years earlier, it had over 1.7 million readers (Duncan McIntosh Company 2010a, 2010b; Gale 2012).35

The Journal changed ownership just as the U.S. Great Recession was unfolding (Gale 2009).36 In December 2007, News Corp, chaired by Rupert Murdoch, purchased its parent company (Jacques and Kepos 2010). Until that time, Dow Jones & Co had been The Journal’s parent, in various forms, since its inception (Gale 2009). News Corp, re-incorporated in the U.S.

35 The exact circulation figure is 2,011,999, for 2009 (Duncan McIntosh Company 2010a, 2010b).

36 Like other newspapers, The Journal suffered a hit with the recession. News Corp experienced sizable losses. Its newspapers “claimed operating incomes of only $7 million during the quarter, compared with $216 million the year before” (Jacques and Kepos 2010).
in 2004, is one of the country’s largest media companies, occupying fifth place by circulation in 2012 (Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism 2012b).³⁷

Colombia

*El Tiempo*, which was founded in 1911, is Colombia’s national newspaper of record. Only one other newspaper in the mainstream national public sphere, *El Espectador*, rivals it. Both newspapers have enjoyed a long historical tradition. Both were established and run for most of their existence by Colombian families — the Santos and the Cano, respectively - who have exerted a continuously significant influence over journalism and politics (Vallejo Mejia 2012).³⁸ Each of these newspapers was recently bought by a large conglomerate, in keeping with trends in the media industry. As of 1998 and 1999, *El Tiempo* was still owned and run by members of the Santos family. It was at about this time that the family began to capitalize on the success of the newspaper to create a national multimedia conglomerate, Casa Editorial El Tiempo, CEET (see Dinero 1999a, 2000; Revista Dinero 1999).

In 2007, CEET changed ownership to Spanish Conglomerate Editorial Planeta — the largest publisher worldwide in Spanish — who acquired 55%. It remained under this ownership until 2012 (Cambio 2007; Dinero 2007; EFE World News 2007). Similarly, *El Espectador* was acquired in 2008 by Grupo Santodomingo, a large diversified national conglomerate that owns a

³⁷ The five top companies in 2012 according to circulation are Gannett, Media News Group, News Corporation, McClatchy Company and Advance Publications (Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism 2012c)

significant fraction of Colombian radio and TV channels (The Economist [US] 2008). *El Tiempo* has the highest readership in the country. In 2009, its readership reached 1.18 million, while that of *El Espectador* was approximately 300,000 (Zuluaga and Martínez 2012:22). Even when criticism about *El Tiempo*’s quality was voiced after changes in ownership (and layout) in 2007, the newspaper continued to maintain its readership and reputation, at least until 2008-2009.40 In

39 Due to the lack of an auditing process, circulation figures in Colombia are not comparable to those of the U.S. Most of the statistics used in the industry and in media reporting are obtained by a General Readership Poll (Encuesta general de medios) that inquires about the outlet one read “yesterday” or in the last month without auditing the information of paid subscriptions. The information referenced here is from CNTV and ACIM, “Estudio General de Medios,” 2010, tercera ola (third wave) quoted in Zuluaga and Martínez (2012). I have not found equivalent or consistent statistics for 1998-1999, as I was unable to gain access to The Editor and Publisher International Data Book for these years. For 2012, certified circulation for *El Espectador* was approximately 50,000 and there are no figures for *El Tiempo* (Duncan McIntosh Company 2010a, 2010b).

40 *El Tiempo* changed ownership again in 2012, when it was bought by one of the largest national diversified conglomerates or business groups (grupos económicos). The head, Sarmiento Angulo, is a Forbes list billionaire. In 2007 and 2012, members of the journalistic community voiced concerns that the change of ownership from family controlled to conglomerate control would hinder the newspaper’s capacity to be independent and critical, and make it more
2012, El Tiempo’s online version had more traffic, doubling that of the news channel which occupied 2nd place. It had 4.5 million unique visitors (Zuluaga and Martínez 2012:22–23)

*El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* are considered required reading for political and business elites throughout the country. A 2009 representative poll of “opinion leaders” in 15 provinces found that 46 percent read *El Tiempo*, 20 percent read *Revista Semana* — the leading opinion magazine — and 17 percent read *El Espectador* to keep up to date in the print format. A similar breakdown occurred for their webpages: 27%, 24% and 13%, respectively (Cifras y Conceptos 2009). The opinion leaders were drawn from the field of politics, business associations, media and civil society (“social organizations” including foundations, unions and think-tanks).

To have a sense of the broader journalistic field, in 2000, out of the 45 newspapers in Colombia, ten belong to CEET (CAB, 2003: 196 in Phillips, 2011: 151). “Bogotá is home of nine of the 45 newspapers of highest circulation. Medellín is home to four, as well as Cali, and three more are based in Barranquilla. (CAB, 2003: 196 in Phillips, 2011: 151). “Fifteen of these papers (33%) also belong to families. (CAB, 2003: 196) (Phillips, 2011: 151)

The relevance of *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* in the journalistic field can be understood through readership, sales and advertising share. 41 *El Tiempo* continues to be the leader in

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vulnerable to market forces that would diminish the quality of the newspaper (e.g., Lara Salive, 2012 in *El Espectador*; Lewin’s (2011) blog in *La Silla Vacía*).

41 *El Tiempo*? “The majority of readers are between 25 and 54 years old. In 1999 average daily newspaper circulation was 1,224,000 (CAB, 2003: 198).” (Phillips, 2011: 151-52)

75
readership and one of the most successful in terms of revenues, amid the drastic changes which occurred from the late 1990s to the late 2000s as discussed above. *El Tiempo* had in 2002 close to 33% “habitual readers” (Phillips, 2011: 151-52). *El Espectador*, its main competitor in the press business has lower leadership (Weezel 2008: 128), which in 2002 was of 18% of readers (Phillips, 2011: 151-52). In third and fourth place were main regional newspapers from Medellin and Cali, respectively: *El Colombiano* 9% and *El Pais* 6%.” (Phillips, 2011: 151-52).

Regarding advertising, “[i]n 2000 advertising revenues [of the sector] were 103 million dollars … (CAB, 2003:194 quoted in Phillips, 2011: 151-152). The value of newspaper sales was 56 million [dollars] in 2000 (CAB, 2003: 196 quoted in Phillips, 2011: 151-152). “*El Tiempo* had 38.8% of total revenue in 2002” and *El Espectador* had 5.1%. Main regional newspapers such as *El Colombiano* (Medellin) 9.6% and *El Pais* (Cali), 8.6% occupied the second and third place in total revenues with 9.6 and 8.6% respectively. *El Nuevo Siglo*, based in Bogotá, had 1.4% of the share (Phillips, 2011: 151-52).

In the late 2000s, CEET was the leading Colombian media company. The outlet obtained the largest advertising revenues compared with any other media group in the country during 2007” (Weezel 2008, pg. 127). CEET has been able to capitalize the experience and reputation of its main newspaper, thus, “*El Tiempo* is still the main income source for CEET contributing about 70-75% of all revenues” (Weezel, 2008: 129-130).

*Development of the Public Sphere in Colombia*

In this section I will give a brief overview about how, in Colombia, citizens have come together, in different periods since the independence of the country, to create a (dominant) public sphere. The dominant public has been the one historically summoned to speak within the public forum of
the press.\textsuperscript{42} The debates in the public sphere, articulated in the press, have been central in the political development of the country.

This overview is fragmented as scholarship in the field is scattered.\textsuperscript{43} A more robust scholarship has been developed about the late colonial and independence period, and thus, allows a better analysis of the public sphere in New Granada and the Americas has began to emerge (see Uribe-Uran, 2000). This is harder to find in the scholar that covers other periods up to the present.

The development of the public sphere in Colombia, and its characteristics can be approached in two ways. On the one hand, the problems that plague Colombian democracy, its civil sphere and its public sphere are similar in nature to those that other civil spheres have had in Western democracies. There has been a dominant public sphere, articulated by the media, which has excluded groups based on their racial, gender and class (educational) standing. However, the

\begin{align*}
\text{42} & \text{ With the launch of webpages of the main newspapers, and the creation of new media outlets, such as } La \text{ Silla Vacia, there has been an opening for direct opinion and the creation of contents by readers. However, according to a handful of studies of this new field, the potential for these new outlets and new venues for established newspapers to foster deliberation among readers about common concerns is yet to be realized (see Acebedo, 2013, 2014; Acosta, 2012: 3, 25-26, in Acebedo, 2014).} \\
\text{43} & \text{ The scholarship has been also difficult to find. There are few articles in international journals. Some dissertations seem to remain unpublished. Other articles have been published in national journals that are not well known.}
\end{align*}
depth of the problems in Colombia is different, especially in comparison to the United States. The literate public has always been significantly small. One of the causes has been the significant inequality, which has been a feature of the country since independence.

Uribe-Uran (2000: 425) provides evidence that early on in “colonial Spanish America” (New Spain, New Granada, Río de la Plata and Perú) there is “at least incipient public sphere”, which complements and confronts what other scholars had researched about the emergence of the public sphere in this region, during independence and afterwards: “These findings dispute recent claims that Spanish America’s public sphere only came into being as a result of the emergence of competitive politics during the 1820s in some regions, or after a free press was established in others in the 1850s (note 3)” (Uribe-Uran, 2000:425-26). The author argues that, indeed, in the three decades following independence that ‘incipient’ public sphere flourished but not emerged (Uribe-Uran, 2000: 425). The people involved in this public sphere were, as in Europe part of a “cultural elite”: “noblemen and aristocrats, high bureaucrats, clergymen, professionals, professors, and students ([note] 35) These individuals were, incidentally, more likely than their countrymen to be acquainted with American and French revolutionary events, intellectual debates, enlightened ideas, and modern scientific doctrines.” (Uribe Uran, 2000: 437)

Early on, the creole elite launched a myriad of newspapers and spaces of debate that fostered the creation of a Latin American consciousness. The heated partisan debate of the years following independence was recorded and fueled by partisan outlets.

The public sphere in Colombia has been, of course, not as inclusive as its normative orientation would suggest (Nieto Olarte 2008)). The access to civil sphere has not been complete for many groups in the population. Starting with the public sphere during the independent period, which was to some extent organized by lettered Creoles in the late colonial period, access was closed
for “Indians” and “Negroes” who constituted most of the population in the New Granada, what
would later become Colombia (Nieto Olarte 2008). The white, male, propertied and educated
Creoles (Spanish-American) who constituted the elite public sphere in New Granada summoned
themselves to be the good citizens and the patriots who were in charge of the destiny of the
colonies. They were the only ones who could be equal to Spanish and Europeans overall. As
Nieto Olarte (2008) argues, they were less interested in considering themselves equal to other
Americans, such as Native Americans (Indians) and African slaves and their descendants born in
America. They were also not, pro-independence during all their political involvement.
Research about the journalistic field and the public sphere as such is difficult to locate in
Colombia (it is fragmented and there has been quite an interest in the independence period,
eglecting other key periods of Colombian history). Nevertheless, it suggests that although these
populations may not be completely disenfranchised, they continue to be excluded from many
circles in Colombia, including the dominant public sphere.

Research on the period of the National Front (1958-1974), suggests as well that El
Tiempo, continued as in its early days, being aligned with the liberal party. Based on the book by
Ayala Diago (2008), that analyses the period at the beginning of the 1960s, we can conclude, in a
more sustained fashion, that the position adopted by El Tiempo was one that favored the Liberal
campaigns for presidency and congress (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 253). The author identifies what
he refers to as the “campaign” which comprises two periods in which El Tiempo established a
position against Rojas Pinilla (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 253). Rojas Pinilla was the country’s dictator
in the 1953-1957 period and he subsequently ran for presidency in 1962. The first stage of the
“campaign” went from the beginning of January 1962 to the middle of March, when the elections
for congress were held (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 253). The second stage of the “campaign”… began “… on the 19th of March, the day after the parliamentary elections, and it intensified from the 25th of April when the official candidate Guillermo León Valencia began his presidential campaign” (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 254).

Ayala Diago (2008) concludes, based on his analysis of these two periods, that “El Tiempo, [is] epideictic, given that it ‘argues from a perspective of commendation and commendation for an us, and from a perspective of reproach and insult for a them; (note 8), to direct, guide, shape, and manage Colombian public opinion in the legislative and presidential elections of 1962” (Ayala Diago, 2008:X en Rueda Enciso, 2012: 252). The newspaper symbolically contaminates its adversaries and purifies its allies: “…[The] MRL\textsuperscript{44} and the ANAPO\textsuperscript{45} … were included in El Tiempo’s objective to attack and discredit Rojas, Jorge Leyva’s dissenting candidature, and the position of Laureanism against the National Front (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 253). Communism was another target,\textsuperscript{46} “[n]evertheless, given the newspaper’s interest in discrediting Rojas and consolidating the National Front, the Communist Party and its militantss remained external to the proselytism led by the newspaper” (Rueda

\textsuperscript{44}Liberal Revolutionary Movement.

\textsuperscript{45}The National Popular Alliance.

\textsuperscript{46}“Anti-communism, inspired (sic) by the Sovietization of Cuba and an open pro-US position linked in the defense of the Alliance for Progress (APP), which was official US policy” (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 253)
Enciso, 2012: 253). That is, *El Tiempo* uses the opposition strategies developed by semiology and cultural sociology.

Rueda Enciso (2012: 252), who reviews the book, describes the *El Tiempo* of that period as a “family-oriented newspaper, dedicated, by decision of its owner Eduardo Santos Montejo and his brother Enrique, ‘Calibán’, exclusively to written journalism, and [to] defending the official liberalism, which in time and especially during the National Front, became aligned with the government in power” (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 252). That is to say, that as from the implementation of the pact of the National Front, the newspaper’s position was both pro-party and pro-government (Rueda Enciso, 2012: 252).

Jumping to the first decade of the XXI century, the public sphere specially that around newspapers continues to be small and exclusive. More than half of the readers (55%) of newspapers were upper class, and 60% of them have graduated from university (CAB, 2003: 198 quoted in Phillips, 20011:151 and 152). This reflects the high inequality of the country where access to higher education is deeply restricted. 22% of the readers were lower class and, equally, 22% had completed primary education. Showing the gender stratification, as well, there are 17% more men, 38%, than women, 21%, who are “habitual readers” of the paper (CAB, 2003: 198 quoted in Phillips, 20011:151 and 152).

The relative scarcity of newspapers per capita in Colombia, in comparison with other Latin American countries is related as well to higher levels of poverty and illiteracy (CAB, 2003:
198 in Phillips, 2011: 151-52). In 2000, while other countries such as Argentina and Mexico had over a hundred newspapers per capita, Colombia ranks at 61 (over Brazil with 55).  

Colombian Business Magazines

Founded in 1993, Revista Dinero is Colombia’s leading business weekly magazine. Its creation was motivated by the change in the business environment in the 1990s associated with commercial and financial liberalization in Colombia (see Unimedios 2010) Revista Dinero has a small, predominantly paid subscription readership comparable to that of other business outlets; circulation figures are not publicly available. The magazine’s leadership is evident in the caliber of its interviewees highly ranked public and private sector officials, foreign officials among them and their role sponsoring high level specialized policy forums, as well as in the quality of its journalists. Within the relevant dates for this study, Dinero’s journalists were awarded the prize for economic journalism conferred by one of the business associations in 1999, 2001 and 2009 (Dinero 1999b, 2001, 2009). Although Revista Dinero did not make the charts for print media in the opinion leader poll of 2009, it occupied 7th place after Portafolio, with 6% for the web. Its readership is very similar to that of the other outlets following the three largest, i.e., the two

47 “In 2000 there were only 61 newspapers for 1000 Colombian citizens compared to 144 in Argentina, 116 in Mexico, 104 in Spain and 55 in Brazil” (CAB, 2003: 198 in Phillips, 2011).

48 Interview in 2010 with Rosario Córdoba, Chief Editor of Revista Dinero; Ricardo Ávila, Chief Editor Portafolio; Fernando Quijano, Chief Editor) Diario La República; and Silverio Gómez, Chief Editor of Magazine Poder. Broadcasted by Unimedios, TV channel of Universidad Nacional de Colombia (National University of Colombia).
general newspapers mentioned above and another political opinion magazine (Cifras y Conceptos 2009).

Regarding the industry of magazines, one can approach the field through two measures of importance are revenues and sales. “In 1992 magazines attracted 12 million dollars in revenues; in 2001, 22 million (CAB, 2003: 200 in Phillips, 2011:). Sales were 40 million in 1992 and 51 million in 2000.” Semana was the higher-ranking magazine in 2002, earning 17.8% of total revenue. The second place was occupied by another opinion magazine, Cambio, earned 9.2%. Cromos, a jet set and fashion magazine was in a close third place with 9.1%. In fourth place, was Dinero, with 4.9%/ The rest of the magazines by revenue were: Motor, 3.2%; and Vanidades, 3.1%. Semana maintains its place in terms of “habitual readers” in 2002 with 8.4%. However, Cambio earns the last place with 1.7% and other jet set and fashion magazines are positioned after Semana: “TV y novelas (6.6%), Cromos (5%), Shock (4.6%), Soho (4.1%), Diners (3.5%), [and] Alo (3.3%)…” (CAB, 2003: 200 in Phillips, 2011:).

49 “There are around 150 magazines and 450 editions in Colombia (CAB, 2003: 200). 61% are monthly and 11% are weekly” (CAB, 2003: 200 quoted in Phillips, 2011). “In 2002 around 23% of magazines were primarily for women or men, 18% were about science or art or family life, 7% were about economics or finance, 7% were for children, 4% were about sport and 4% about cars or other forms of transportation” (CAB, 2003: 200 quoted in Phillips, 2011).
FOURTH CHAPTER: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

In this chapter I present the methodological design of the dissertation, explaining the data and methods. The first section lays out the research questions, explaining what I would need to know to expand on existing literature. The second section lays out the research design, which defines the four cases to be studied, and explains the logic of comparing these cases. The third section describes the sample that will be used, and the events I focus on to answer the research questions. The fourth section describes the methods that will be used to analyze the articles. In the fifth section, I state how may the civic logic and the economic logics present themselves in the corpus, and how I explored the articles to answer the research questions. In the sixth section, I explain how I would examine if economic logics constitute a capitalistic ideology. In the seventh section, I present the hypotheses.

First Section: Research Questions and Contribution to the Literature

This project is guided by the following broad research question: How does the media in two distinct countries, Colombia and the United States, make sense of critical events within two large scale economic crises (Colombia 1998, U.S. 2008)? In my exploration of the events selected — one leading banking crisis event per country — I aim to systematically document and uncover the type of meaning making that occurs when these events and broader economic crises are discussed in the public sphere, anchored in the media.

In order to build on and contribute to existent literature, first, I would like to find out how narration of an economic crisis, a key event of the economic sphere, is different from narration of other events that have been examined by cultural sociologists and that have been anchored in the political and the civil sphere.
Second, I would like to find out as well if narration is different in Colombia, a country of the Global South vis-à-vis countries in the Global North, particularly the United States. This is something that cultural sociology of economics has not fully done.

Addressing these two related questions will contribute to assess the scope of cultural sociology in reference to the type of events that are narrated through the institutional logics of the civil sphere, and the prevalence of these institutional logics in the Global South.

The answer to these research questions entails evaluating competing explanations regarding which institutional logics might prevail in the cases examined. On the one hand, economic logics might be prevalent because economic crises are events of the economic sphere. On the other hand, Alexander (2006) and other cultural sociologists have theorized and empirically examined that (all) narration within the media, being a the communicative institution of the civil sphere, would be guided by the institutional logics of the civil sphere (i.e., civic logics). It entails, as well, evaluating if the institutional logics of the civil sphere, which guide narration in the Global North are equally prevalent in the Global South.

These competing explanations, regarding which institutional logics might prevail in each of the cases examined, emerge from cultural sociology and can be expanded as follows. The first explanation that emerges from the literature is that one can expect the U.S. and Colombia to have similar civic logics (as coded through the discourse of liberty and repression) given a globally available and normatively desirable liberal tradition (e.g., (Alexander 2006b). The second explanation that emerges is that one may expect Colombia to have a different set of civic logics, which might include competing ones, vis-à-vis the United States which has a dominant civic logic. This could be explained by Colombia’s more mixed democratic tradition resulting from a different political development shared with the Global South (e.g.,(Baiocchi 2006).
Economic issues may be narrated through logics other than those already thoroughly documented by cultural sociology (Alexander et al. 2012) There is scarce scholarship available discussing this notion, as most media issues examined by cultural sociology can be more squarely located within the core of politics. The cultural sociology of economics has been growing but is not still as robust as cultural sociology on other topics. However, recent scholarship about the Great Recession indicates that logics emerging from the economic sphere are the source of the observed patterns (Bandelj, Spillman, and Wherry 2015; Münnich 2015)

Narration of the economic crises will be typified across these different dimensions: the types of stories that make sense of the bank and other financial organization failures, the description of characters within these stories (Who are the protagonists? Who are the antagonists? What attributes do they have?), and the way through which distinct actors aim to make sense of the past and provide an outlook for the future. One of the ways in which this may be done is through the creation of a genre for the stories. A “genre guess” allows actors to predict where the story is going and assess the stakes in action or non-action (Jacobs and Smith 1997; Smith 2005, 2012). This is clearly important in the analysis of broader systemic crises, particularly with respect to government intervention in banking failures within a banking crisis: Do actors (sources) and journalist narratives or stories suggest that government intervention and saving banks and the economy will result in a happy outcome for all society? Will it reconcile opposing groups? Will it bring justice? Or will it end in tragedy by neglecting worthy groups, e.g., borrowers, in order to save unworthy groups, e.g., bankers, pushing these struggling groups into the abyss? This exploration also aims to uncover how actors (sources) and journalists make sense of the events that may configure an economic crisis and narratively transform them (or not) into a “crisis” (cf. Eyerman, 2008, Jacobs, 2000). As part of systemic crises, as will be explained
below in the discussion of the events analyzed, other related events occur. For example, there are
events in reference with currency or stock markets. These events will be analyzed as well.

Second Section: Cases and the Logic of Comparison

This second section describes the logic of comparing the cases and the sample that will be used.
First, I discuss the cases to be studied, and what I expect to be gained from the comparison. To
engage the outlined debates, I pursue a comparative examination of media coverage in Colombia
and the United States relevant to the largest and most recent economic crises in these countries:50

50 I use the term “economic crisis”, or “crisis” throughout the dissertation to encompass different
types of crises. The years indicated here are the first and second years of the crises studied,
guided primarily by Reinhart and Rogoff (2009b). Assessments vary as to when the crises ended.
Duration was not consistent across specific types of crises, such as the banking or currency
危机, for example (see details provided in the description of the cases that follows). The
consensus is that Colombia’s crisis was dwindling by 2001 and that of the U.S. by 2010.

51 The Colombian crisis was partially triggered by the larger Emerging market crisis that
included Asia. As the crisis spread in its second wave to other countries, Colombia’s country can
be considered also part of the same Emerging market crisis. Nevertheless, it can be analytically
approached as a separate crisis. For this reason, I speak of two or three crises throughout the
document. These crises include: Colombia (1998-1999), Emergent Markets crisis/Asian crisis
Two mirror cases, in which I examine coverage of each of the crises in the media of the other country and related general coverage at the relevant stage of the broader global crisis, will complete the research design. One mirror case (Colombian coverage) concerns itself with articles about specific events in the Great Recession, general articles published within the given time frame, and additional articles about the potential impact exerted by the crisis on the Colombian economy. These articles were published in the Colombian outlets studied.

The other mirror case explores articles printed in the U.S. about the Emerging market crisis at the time of the specific (Colombian banking crisis) event selected. The articles printed in the U.S. within the time delimited by the (banking crisis) event occurring in Colombia also include pieces about the Asian crisis and the larger Emerging markets crisis, of which Colombia was part.52 These articles about the larger crisis provide information about Asia, Russia and Latin America (particularly Brazil), as it was the crises in these regions that impacted the crisis in Colombia.53

52 Throughout the dissertation, I alternately refer to this crisis as the Emerging market crisis, the multi-country crisis, the global financial crisis of the late 1990s or the Asian crisis, as this was the crisis that triggered global turmoil.

53 The Colombian crisis had a strong national component. Excessive public and private debt compounded the negative effects of the external shock imposed by the Asian Crisis (Urrutia-Montoysa and Llano 2012:3–4). The mortgage lending and housing sectors crisis had its roots in credit policies that had been set up in the past for the building sector (Urrutia-Montoysa and Llano 2012:3–4). This notwithstanding, the external shock produced by the Asian Crisis played a
This mirror case was designed to include articles about the Colombian broader crisis or the banking crisis event if they were available, but they were not.

Due to time and space constraints in this dissertation I do not present the results of the examination of the Emerging market crisis as covered in both countries. The analysis that is presented includes the articles that are centered on the more immediate crises. They can reference the Emerging market crisis but it is not their focus. This side of the project will be left for future research.

In the case of the United States, the articles presented are centered on the domestic effects of the global crisis, or on public policy actions, or other actions, in the U.S. that were taken as a result of the international turmoil or crisis.

The four cases can be viewed as organized around the following question: How immediate is the crisis for each country? It is a 2x2 design of 1) a more immediate crisis characterized by strong effects across the economy and a large national (internal) component, significant role (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006; Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012). Russia’s and Brazil’s crises, also triggered by the Asian downturn, weighed heavily on the Colombian economy in 1998 and 1999, impacting the exchange rate and triggering a reduction and eventual reversal of capital flows into the country (Caballero Argáez and Urrutia Montoya 2006; Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012). The Asian countries, as well as Russia and Brazil, were part of the large multi-country crisis of emerging markets.
which economists call economy’s “fundamentals” and 2) a less immediate crisis for the country, with a global or regional/multi-country reach.

Table 2. Methodological Design: Four Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>More Immediate</th>
<th>Less Immediate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Context: Emergent Market Crisis: Asian Crisis (1997), plus Russia and Brazil</td>
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The Logic of Comparison

In this subsection I will further lay out the reasons for which this dissertation is designed as a comparative project, and what stands to be gained from distinct forms of comparison across the outlined cases.

Comparing Across Countries: Core Cases

To reiterate, this project is set up to contribute to recent efforts to delimit the scope of cultural sociology’s claim that public debate anchored in the media is structured by civic logics both in the United States and other societies, particularly those of the Global South, by examining the case of Colombia in comparative perspective. The project simultaneously aims to achieve this goal within a particular terrain/issue: the economy, joining the pioneering and
growing group of scholars within cultural sociology have devoted attention to events of an economic nature (see de Santos 2009; Tognato 2008, 2012).\textsuperscript{54}

A direct comparative design thus fulfills two goals. First, rather than engaging in an implicit comparison, vis-à-vis the American discourse of liberty and repression, about how a type or class of economic events — economic crises, and particularly bank failures and government intervention within banking crisis — is narrated in Colombia, I set the analysis to include two recent economic crises occurring in the U.S. and Colombia. This provides a design of analogous events.

This comparative approach contributes to dissipate doubts — more so than if comparative analysis was not employed — that patterns observed in Colombia are different not solely because the issue (banking crisis) is different from those issues more commonly analyzed by cultural sociology, but because there are indeed distinct ways of meaning making around an analogous event in Colombia. The design is not perfect here because the crises under examination do not occur simultaneously.

This design will nevertheless make clear which logics are used to understand similar events, i.e., those constituting a crisis (failure of banking and other financial institutions followed by government intervention) in Colombia, as compared with the logics one would expect from

\footnote{\textsuperscript{54}The following questions arise: Are these logics as prevalent in the discussion of economic events? Can events that are grounded in the economy be understood via other types of logics (e.g., economic)?}
engaging U.S. literature, where the discourse of liberty and repression organizes public debate around this issue.

Second, as ethnographers have argued, having a comparative design also helps to render familiar cultural structures strange so that they can be uncovered (see Saguy 2003 for an examplar of how studying a similar issue in two distinct countries can underscore cultural patterns). Thus, I expect that having a comparative case as a reference might provide analytical leverage to uncover not only whether similar logics (i.e., the discourse of liberty and repression) are employed, but whether different logics are used as well. In the case of economic crises in Colombia, for example, and particularly banking crises, this comparative design may bring to light the existence of civic (liberal) logics in a more straightforward manner. By identifying other rationales at odds with those coming from a civic logic perspective that acts in opposition, I may be able to identify which of them constitute alternative logics.

Third, the U.S. provides a case of a country where the discourse of liberty and repression structures public debate. Moreover, the U.S. is an exemplar and is regarded as such by other countries. As a nation, the U.S. has championed democracy as normatively desirable in the rest of the world (e.g., Smith 2005). The relationship between Colombia and the United States is one in which the U.S. is admired and simultaneously resented by virtue of its exercise of power, particularly in the context of the drug war (Ahumada 1996; see de Albuquerque 2012 for a formulation for Latin America).

Third Section: Events, Outlets and Sampling of Articles

In this third section I, first, describe how the events that I focus on where picked and how they help to answer the research questions. Second, I explain which outlets were chosen for study and how the sample was constructed.
Events

To facilitate fruitful comparison of the crises studied (four cases of country coverage-crisis), I begin by choosing one type of crisis, a banking crisis, within the broader systemic crises (i.e., Colombia’s End-of-the-Century Crisis and the U.S. Great Recession). A key event within each of the two banking crises is chosen to anchor the sampling windows, as will be explained below.

As stated by economists Reinhart and Rogoff (2009a), “In a typical major banking crisis, a nation finds that a significant part of its banking sector has become insolvent after heavy investment losses, banking panics or both” (p. xxvi). These economists define a banking crisis as severe when bank runs result in government brokered merging or takeover of one or more failing financial organization (banks and non-banks). A milder banking crisis does not involve bank runs. This milder version is characterized by the same actions described above, but may also involve closure or other types of significant government intervention. Government intervention in this milder type, Reinhart and Rogoff (2009a) argue of crisis would signal the beginning of similar occurrences through the financial system (p. 11).

These initial bank runs or failures of financial organizations and the government interventions executed to deal with them, which mark the beginning of a banking crisis, are interesting events for two reasons. First, they are similar events and can be selected for crises occurring in both developed and developing countries (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009a). Thus, they narrow the scope and allow a comparison of analogous events to be set up (Berezin 2012).

Second, these events allow understanding, which institutional logics may be prevalent: civil or economic. Government decisions to bailout, or help in other forms, private organizations need to be justified in terms of public interests. Private organizations are part of the economic
sphere and thus operate through logics appertaining to this sphere. Government intervention through bailouts, for example, often raises valid questions about prioritizing the stability of the financial sector and the broader economy versus social needs. Equally, there is an issue about the best way to spend public resources and the accountability of both government and financial institutions to citizens (see Stiglitz 2002c, 2010). Promoting debate about public and private interests they are likely to “demand narration” (Sewell 1992 in Jacobs 2000b:8).

Because economic crises are complex and long lasting events, it is necessary to delimit both the type of events and the period of the crisis analyzed according to the occurrence of these banking events. The larger systemic crises, which provide the context for the banking crisis events studied here, span about four years. They comprise different types of crises, which can be roughly understood as components (e.g., banking crisis, currency crisis or stock market crashes).

The key anchoring events are explained below. They are the Granahorrar’s bankruptcy for the End-of-the-Century Crisis and Lehman Brothers’ bankruptcy in the case of the Great Recession.

*Granahorrar’s Bankruptcy and Bailout.* The key event chosen for the Colombian crisis is the bankruptcy and government bailout on October 4th of the financial institution known as Granahorrar. Granahorrar’s bankruptcy and bailout is one of the events that marked the beginning of the banking crisis in Colombia. Prior to this October 1998 bankruptcy, another bankruptcy happened in April of that year: that of Banco Uconal. Banco Uconal was identified as Reinhard and Rogoff (2009a) as the event that began the banking crisis. However, I decided towards the event of Granahorrar’s bankruptcy and bailout to study and construct the sampling frame around for three reasons: 1) the sector of the CAVs, mutual-type organizations that lend for housing was more important within the financial sector than the co-operative sector. Its
impact in the amount of debtors who were affected by the crisis was expected to be larger. 2) The coverage of the Granahorrar event was larger in both *El Tiempo* and in *Revista Dinero*. Equally, the coverage of Banco Uconal was very scarce, particularly in *Revista Dinero*. 3) Granahorrar was also bailed-out by the government.

Having the sampling window in mind, other relevant events were picked in accordance with their presence in the coverage. These events in the case of the End-of-the-Century crisis are:

*Currency Episode.* As part of the large systemic crisis, Colombia went through a currency crisis. During the sampling window there is a discussion of monetary policy and exchange rate given the strong increase in the peso vs. the dollar. Specific levels of the exchange rate were questioned as well as the currency system in place. This brief period of turmoil in the exchange rate is part of what Urrutia and Fernández (2000) defined as a “currency episode” happening between 1998 and 1999.

*Workers’ Protests.* There were significant protests in the country between 1998 and 2002 as a result of both neoliberal policies and austerity measures being implemented in the late 1990s, and the measures enacted in response to the crisis. There were two nation-wide protests, led by peak union organizations that are captured in the window one at the end of September (September 22-23) and one in early October (October 8th). These strikes were picked as key events as well because they communicate the consequences of the crisis for the broader society.

The sampling window in the case of the Great Recession is organized around Lehman Brothers’ filing for bankruptcy. This is considered a banking failure event though technically it was not a bank but an investment firm. However, this does not change the analysis because investment firms were at the center of the financial crisis. Lehman Brothers had similar
trajectory and consequences to those of a banking crisis regarding their failure and the subsequent government intervention.

Other related events that fall within the sampling window are, of course, analyzed (see Table 15 for an overview of key events in the financial crisis in September 2008). These events were identified a priori as relevant given how the financial crisis unfolded (Federal Reserve Bank of New York n.d.). Their relevance was confirmed through the empirical analysis of the articles within the sample. Some of the most relevant, in addition to Lehman’s bankruptcy, are the following. On September 15th, the same day that Lehman Brothers collapsed, and as part of the same financial crisis, Merrill Lynch was rescued through Bank of America’s purchase. Simultaneously, AIG was close to collapse as three major rating agencies downgraded its debt (on September 15th). This triggered a need to post collateral for the insurance company debt. To avoid AIG collapse, the next day the Federal Reserve loans $85 billion to AIG (on September 16th). As part of the turmoil, money market funds were affected. Within two days of Lehman collapse, “RMC money market fund ‘breaks the buck,’ and other “money market funds come under pressure” (Federal Reserve Bank of New York n.d.).

Regarding actions related to broader macroeconomic management and to the response to the crisis, the Federal Reserve kept the rate at which federal funds are loaned at 2% (Anon 2008).

Outlets

I examine coverage of the crises using two outlets per country — a mainstream newspaper and a business newspaper or weekly magazine. For the United States, I examine The
New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. For Colombia, I examine El Tiempo and Portafolio and Revista Dinero (business weekly). Below are brief overviews of the journalistic fields, which support the choice of these outlets as representative of the general public sphere, and the specialized business public sphere.

Sample

The sampling window comprises two weeks after the selected government intervention in a failing bank or financial organization unfolds and one month prior to the event (comprising one week.)

55 Although two competing business outlets, Diario La República and Portafolio, could be selected for Colombia, I do not use them for reasons of access and ownership. Portafolio is part of the Casa Editorial El Tiempo, whose flagship newspaper is El Tiempo. Actually, during 1998, El Tiempo linked Portafolio in its webpage as its economic section, thus it is included in the analysis that is conducted for El Tiempo. Diario La República is a daily newspaper without online access to its articles, currently and historically. There is no database in Colombia comparable to Lexis Nexis or Proquest from which the articles can be downloaded. Revista Dinero has made all of its issues available online since its inception in 1993.
Within this sample window the target was to sample 600 articles: 75 articles per outlet in each of the “country’s coverage-crisis” cells (for reference see Table 2 above). The final result was 471 articles, divided as follows. For the Colombian Coverage, 176 articles were sampled. For El Tiempo-Portafolio, mainstream newspaper, there were 70 articles sampled and 22 for Revista Dinero, business magazine, in 1998. In 2008, there were 69 articles in El Tiempo-Portafolio and 15 in Revista Dinero. For the U.S. coverage 295 articles were sampled. In 1998, there were 70 articles sampled in the WSJ, and 75 articles in the NYT. In 2008, for the NYT and the WSJ, 75 articles were sampled per outlet.

For the NYT and the WSJ 50 articles were sampled for the two weeks after the chosen event, and 25 articles were sampled one month prior to the event (comprising one week.)

*Fourth Section: Analytical Approach*

This fourth section presents the methodological approach that will be used to analyze the articles. First, I describe how I conducted the analysis through a series of steps. Second, I explain the key categories of the analytical approach: plot, genre, and character analysis. Third, I clarify how the articles are expected to answer the proposed research questions. Fourth, I address the issue of the relationship between economic logics and capitalistic ideology. Fifth, I describe how economic and civic logics are expected to be found in the texts. Sixth, I discuss the hypotheses.

I make sense of how the crises are narrated through semiotic and narrative analysis. Cultural sociologists have analyzed public debate as it is articulated in the media, about multiple issues, through these methods (Alexander 2006b; Alexander and Smith 2010; Jacobs 1996, 2000b; Smith 2005)

In a first step, I identified the most prevalent characters and narrative elements that are present as part of the planned analytical strategy that will be further explained below. In a second
step, I constructed a typology consisting on two sets of categories that allow defining an article or a theme as crafted through two institutional logics: economic logics or civic logics. This typology was constructed by grouping the meaning-making patterns theoretically and empirically. New categories included in the typology are the arena where the events take place and the sources that are quoted. In a third step, the coding and the empirical material was reviewed to examine whether economic logics could be understood as capitalistic ideology.

The discussion of the methods may be skewed towards the U.S.’ case because cultural sociologists have anchored their semiotic and narrative analyses in the existence of the discourse of liberty and repression. However, the broad guidelines that narrative and semiotic analyses provide aided in the exploration of other logics, as will be evident below.

I anticipated employing the following elements of a narrative analysis: plot, genre and characters, as other cultural sociologists have done (e.g., Jacobs 2000b; Smith 2005, 2012).

Analytical Approach: Plot
First, I examine how plot is constructed. The plot is the core of the narrative, which organizes and connects events in a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Barthes (1978) argues that some events are part of the fabric of the story, advancing it, while others are included to fill in or to plant the seed of other potential narrative directions (93).

In the case of articles talking about the economy most of them do not follow a traditional story line.

Plot deals, then, with how events are chosen, evaluated and distinctly appraised in narration (Steinmetz 1992, pp. 497-99 in (Jacobs 1996:1244). Events are not self-explained and those that I will target need to be made sense of in the public sphere, and narrated in conjunction to other events both in the past and in the present (Berezin 2012; Jacobs 2000b)
Events, may be differently interpreted, inserted into distinct narratives about the past and the present in the public sphere (Eyerman 2008; Jacobs 2000b). The importance allocated by economists and other constituencies in public policy and academic work to government interventions in failing organizations, which I will call sometimes banking crisis’ events, will not translate from these specific arenas. Actors still need to make their case in the public sphere. Both of these kinds of narratives will point to possible outcomes as actors guess what will happen if a course of action is taken (Smith 2005, 2012) As multiple narratives are potentially available in distinct spheres (Berezin 2012; Jacobs 2000b). I expected that banks and other financial organizations’ failure and consequent government action may be articulated in different ways to existent narratives in the mainstream and the business public spheres.

**Analytical Approach: Genre**

Second, I explore the type of genre used by actors for narration. As Jacobs (1996: 1245) succinctly defines it, genre “provides a temporal and spatial link between the characters and events of a narrative, and also influences the relationship between a story's characters, audience, and narrator.” Jacobs and Smith borrowing from and adapting Frye (2000) and others propose the types of genres available in discussion in the public sphere, as comedy, romance, tragedy and irony (Jacobs 2000b; Jacobs and Smith 1997; Smith 2005). Smith includes in his recent work low mimetic and apocalyptic (Smith 2005, 2012: 747).

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56 Smith (2012) summarizes the low mimetic/high mimetic dimension as referring to “the powers of action of the players” (large or small). Though, obviously it has been adapted for it to serve for the analysis of narratives in social life, Frye’s extended definition is useful to understand the
Actors aim to define the type of narrative and genre of a given crisis, and in which an event may be inscribed, engaging in a symbolic struggle. Smith (2012: 747) argues that each genre defines the possible outcomes in terms of four key dimensions. These are: “power of action of players (large or small); likely social outcomes (solidaristic or divisive); appropriate yardsticks for motivation and policy evaluation (pragmatic, business as usual, or utopian and heroic); and the issues at stake (local and ordinary or global and epochal)”

In the case of articles talking about the economy I confirmed my expectations. Most of them are not constructed in a way that includes all elements of genre, or that they can be readily identified (cf. Smith 2005, 2012: 747). There are two elements that are present, somewhat modified: criteria for measure motivation and policy evaluation: pragmatic, business as usual, or utopian and heroic. Another element that I expected to be present is the assessment of the issues at stake: Are they local and ordinary or global and epochal? This assessment was less evident in the Colombian case as it will be discussed in the empirical chapters.

These dimensions were suggestive for this project as they emerge from Smith’s empirical analysis of public debates about war, and now shape his work about global warming (“narrative genre model of risk evaluation”) which include a public policy component (e.g., Smith 2005, 2012). Frye (2000) defines high mimetic as “[a] mode of literature in which, as in most epics and tragedies, the central characters are above our own level of power and authority, though within the order of nature and subject to social criticism.” The author defines low mimetic as “[a] mode of literature in which the characters exhibit a power of action which is roughly on our own level, as in most comedy or realistic fiction” (p. 336)
This is a crucial aspect that the discussion about government intervention in failing banks or financial organizations is likely to have.

The potential of a genre analysis may be underscored by examining, again, Suttles’ recent work that looked at The Great Depression and The 1987 crisis in the U.S. as they were covered in *The Chicago Tribune*, in comparative fashion to *The New York Times* (Suttles 2010). One of Suttles’ key conclusions is that newspapers have systematically tone down the crisis, through the use of familiar narrative devices (tropes, personae setting and actions, following (Burke 1950) He contrasts this approach with a sensationalizing one, which he anticipated from the criticism that is usually voiced about the nature of the press. M. Jacobs (2010:) in a cursory look into the U.S. Great Recession as part of the foreword of the book, argues that the distinction between seriousness and sensationalizing may be traced to the type of outlet. Cable television news fuel the euphoria of the boom while serious newspapers such as *The New York Times*, do their homework and assess the severity of threats. This broad distinction, nevertheless, does not take into account the symbolic struggle that was going on within “serious newspapers” as *The New York Times*, as previous works by cultural sociologists have shown. In this case one can expect this in discussions of the crisis in connection to political event such as the presidential campaign, as will be explored.

To reiterate, a key element that is absent from Suttles’ method and analysis is attention to symbolic struggle. He does not account for the struggle among distinct actors who aim to interpret the events, locate them in a narrative and a genre that will suggest (and exert pressure on actors to commit to) potential courses of action and outcomes (see for example, Smith, 2012: 747, 5th core claim.) Smith (2005) argues that the definition of an event as “business as usual,”
within a low mimetic mode, will maintain the stakes low while the definition of an event as part of a crisis will raise the stakes pushing for different policy responses.

Some accounts about the U.S. Great Recession suggests that there was indeed struggle (Stiglitz 2010). The perspective of citizens, everyday women or men, was constructed by them and others, in some instances as opposing that of the bankers or policy makers which prioritized the financial system and the overall economy’s stability in Stiglitz (2010) reconstruction. To be sure, the latter argument was geared towards the well-being of citizens but in two-steps: saving the economy by ensuring that the financial system did not collapse was key to the well-being of every citizen. The motives of bankers, and those of the government, for bailing out organizations in the financial system whose leaders had engaged in risky practices were constructed as democratic or undemocratic from the perspective of distinct actors. So were their actions, and the financial system overall. One of the key counter narratives was articulated by the Occupy Wall Street Movement (Wagner-Pacifici 2012).

*Analytical Approach: Character Analysis*

Finally, I explore how characters are developed in the narratives of the crises through a semiotic analysis that analyzes how relations of similarity and difference are organized within public discourse about the actors, their social relationships and their institutions (Alexander and Smith 2003b) Actors in social life seek to locate themselves in heroic positions within the narratives and cast themselves as democratic actors, while they cast others as enemies, villains, or inconsequential figures. This is a dynamic of purifying oneself and polluting others (Alexander and Smith 2003b; Jacobs 2000b: Ch. 1)

For the excavation of other codes I will do a semiotic analysis that will be more inductive. I will look at the attributes or characteristics that are used to value actors and how
these attributes are grouped in contradistinction to those used to devalue them (Barthes 1968, 1977, 1978)

Following this exploration, I will continue to examine how these actors social relationships and the institutions that they are part of are described, following the same relations of similarity and difference (Alexander and Smith 2003b) I anticipate this approach to work both for alternative civic discourses and for economic logics (see Baiocchi, 2006 for an excavation of an alternative civic code.)

How are these texts useful to answering the proposed research questions?

This dissertation asks how meaning is created in news dealing with economic crises, and about the institutional logics that are available in the debate about these key economic events. The corpus helped answer these questions through four moments of analysis occurring in a step-wise fashion. In the first moment of analysis I identified the key meaning making patterns using the semiotic and narrative tools developed and adapted by cultural sociologists. This first moment was designed to inductively identify meaning making patterns. These meaning making patterns might be or not aligned with the proposed hypothesis about institutional logics. In this moment was identified that no alternative civic logics existed in Colombia when narrating both economic crises (1998 and 2008).

In the second moment of analysis, I organized these findings in a typology. This typology was created deductively and inductively, capitalizing on cultural sociologists work on other social issues. Also, bringing in the work of scholars interested in meaning making about the economy (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006; Suttles 2010). The typology, as presented above, includes the categories (1) arena, (2) newsworthy events, (3) character structures, (4) narrative
elements (plot and genre), and (5) sources. This typology allows distinguishing the articles
crafted through civic logics and those are oriented towards economic logics. It is an ideal type.

In the third moment of analysis, with the two inputs of the analyses aforementioned, the
prevalence of civic or economic logics was assessed for each of the cases, outlets and sections.

Are economic logics a capitalistic ideology? How do we examine this in the articles?

In a fourth moment of analysis, I examine if the patterns that constitute economic logics are
compatible with capitalistic ideology. There are two distinct analytical elements to consider. I
follow primarily Lukács (1971) analysis of Marx’s contributions.

First, it is necessary to determine if entities, such as markets, are presented as abstracted
from the social relationships that create them. This analysis should include as well identifying
reified entities such as stocks and stock indexes. These financial objects are equivalent to
commodities in Marx’s discussion. Stocks are reified, abstracted from their producers. Suttles
(2010), and the first moment of analysis of this dissertation, indicate that a compatible pattern of
reification is that these entities are anthropomorphized. Second, it is necessary to distinguish if
these patterns are tools used to legitimize the action of capitalists or elites. In the case of
economic crisis, one of the key groups that would benefit is financial elites.

In the examination of the empirical material this means, in a fourth moment of analysis,
determining if there are instances of both these theoretical elements.

Fifth Section: What Do Economic and Civic Logics Look Like?

In this fifth section I describe how economic and civic logics may look like within the
articles. A discussion of these logics is found in the literature review. First, I will describe the
content of economic logics. Second, I will briefly discuss, first, the content of civic logics. Third,
I will discuss how civic logics and economic logics contrast using the contributions of Boltanski and Thevenot (2006).

**Economic Logics**

I will layout, in this section, the expectations around economic logics, through a typology that incorporates the work of Alexander (2006b), Boltanski and Thevenot (2006), Suttles (2010) and Waltzer (1983).

**Economic Logics: Typology**

For meaning-making patterns anchored in a “market” or an economic logic the ideal-type constellation of categories will look as follows:

*Arena.* The first category is the arena is which the news occurs. In the case of economic logics the news is identified to occur often in the market, and in some cases in the economy. This is evident from the way in which writers dive directly into reporting market information. This precision may seem obvious but provides some of the key markers for the logic used in the type of articles that are “focused on the market.”

The definition of the market as the arena of exploration a priori constrains the types of events considered worthy of reporting. Market fluctuations, or their causes, are often deemed worthy events. The stability of examination of these events is analogous to that of certain events occurring within government or political parties. Some events, such as Election Day or campaign milestones, including debates, are constructed as continuously crucial, defined a priori, in the coverage of the political field. Events that constitute a democratic tradition and civic life, such as protests and demonstrations by social movements, are default events for the civic sphere, and are defined as such in press coverage.
Suttles (2010) in his research of economic news coverage in *The Tribune* during The Great Depression and, later, in 1987’s stock market crash points out that the economic news focus is quite narrow, to the exclusion of other spheres. Suttles (2010) describes the narrative, “High Adventure on the Stock Market,” as follows: “The action is ...narrowly focused … the main character, business or the economy, moves through time and space without much regard for what lies around them” (p. 60). Suttles (2010) is speaking throughout the book more generally of business or the economy, but makes explicit mention of “the markets” for some types of narratives. Clearly, the definition of the market in these articles is quite restricted (it is not the definition of economic sociologists, where markets include social relationships). These are markets populated largely by animated objects such as stock indexes and regulated by the invisible hand of the market. The role of the government and other actors is relatively neglected in an account focused on the market or on a narrow view of the economy.

*Newsworthy events.* Newsworthy events, in the market, are those, which are connected with consequences in the market, and actors are acknowledged as important provided their actions can explain market changes. Simultaneously, what type of events is singled-out for narration contributes to define the arena.

Events constructed as meaningful within the market include relatively tangible events which are, in a sense, exogenous to the market, such as a rate cut executed by the Fed or Colombian Central Bank. Thought to create market fluctuations, these exogenous events also include expectations or uncertainty about the events themselves. I call them “somewhat endogenous” because they arise from market variation rather than internal mechanisms of the
market, such as corrections.\textsuperscript{57} These events (whether exogenous or endogenous) can refer to other economic objects or variables, such as the currency rate. Causes and consequences of events are explored for both types—whether exogenous or somewhat endogenous to the market.

Likewise, the narrative includes events constructed from the variation of stocks and indexes, colloquially referred to as the ups and downs of the market. Quantitative thresholds flagging a significant decline or increase (e.g., the 20% decline sustained over a period of time which identifies a bear market) are defined as events. These markers are used to create a memory, a history of the markets often recalled and mentioned. It can prompt such questions as: Is this consecutive 10-day drop similar to that which occurred during the 1987 crash? Such a history aids in the interpretation of events and exploration of alternative meanings, and what they may suggest for both the present and the future.

Interpreting these markers—events based on quantified variations—and the stage of the market, entails a genre guess about the past, the present and the future, and the way to get there: Where does the road that we are traveling lead? Is it headed upward or downward? This link to the future sometimes involves defining the type of market at present (bear or bull), and whether declines or increases in stock prices and indexes are temporary or in place for the long haul, judging by previous experiences. Additionally, what does the present stage or what do current

\textsuperscript{57} Suttles (2010) defines one category of reasons for changes in the stock market as including exogenous events. The “Trouble Makers” category comprises changes “in interest rates, money supply, precious metals, and uncertainties about the actions of the Federal Reserve or other federal departments” (p. 132).
events imply for a particular market (emerging markets, U.S. market) or industry? Making this genre guess is key to understanding (i.e., creating) financial turmoil or crisis, and it is meant to intervene (or avoid intervening) in the debate.

In the case where the arena is the economy (and not the market), economic logics are used as well. The focus is narrowly in the economy to the exclusion of other social arenas. These articles are focused on what happens to firms and executives within the realm of the economy.

Characters. The third category is the type of characters of the story: in a narration through economic logics that focuses on the market, the protagonists are chosen by their role in the market dynamics.

Boltanski and Thevenot, (2006) describe the market world as populated by two types of characters, market objects and buyers and sellers:

As for the market world, it is not animated exclusively by business relations between buyers and sellers. This world is also peopled with omnipresent objects; the economist can overlook their role in the coordination of actions only when he treats them as endowed with a nature independent of the interventions of others. In this he displays the attitude of a person acting normally in the market world; in order to reach agreement on a transaction, such a person has to rely on the objectivity of the item and on its independence with respect to the various persons implicated in the transaction (P. 198).

To preview some of the findings of this dissertation, stories about market fluctuations in the economic crisis studied did incorporate these two types of characters: investors (buyers and sellers of financial objects) and financial objects.

Characters. Financial Objects. Among the most common in the articles about the crisis are markets, stock indexes, stocks and groups of stocks. Groups of stocks include, for instance, blue-chips or favorites. Markets, stock indexes such as the Dow Jones, and groups of stocks are actors in their own right within the narratives. They are referred to as if they are animated entities, consistent with how Boltanski and Thevenot theorize the subjects of the market world.
Similarly, Suttles (2010) finds in the stock market narratives of the Great Depression that “[s]tocks have emotions and the reader is invited to suffer or rage with them” (p.).

**Characters. Firms and Executives.** Alongside financial objects, executives and firms are as well protagonists, discussed as successful actors. They appear more in articles guided by economic logics but that are not in the format of market articles. Their success is indeed, as Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) explain, “…designated in particular by the vocabulary of competition: getting ahead, challenging oneself, taking the edge, being a winner, a top dog” (p. 197). Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) argue that worthy persons in the market world are “rich millionaires, and they live the high life. Their wealth allows them to own what others want, valuable objects, luxury items, upscale products” (p. 197). This dimension of a worthy person as wealthy and having a luxurious life style is less emphasized than that of the success through competition.

Other characters, as can be expected, are public officials in the U.S. Treasury and The Federal Reserve, or finance ministers and politicians. Their actions are interpreted by their consequences in the market.

Another key characteristic of the market world is that individuals are the subjects (Boltanski and Thevenot: 198). I would expect that this is a characteristic of the articles that are crafted through economic logics. In contrast, the subjects of the civic world are collective entities not individuals. Also, in a narration through civic logics I would expect that the protagonists are chosen by their role in a democracy, which include not only leaders of the democracy, such as Congress people, the president, candidates but also, citizens.

**Narrative Elements: Plot and Genre.** The construction of stories where animated objects are the protagonists, such as stock indexes, is very similar to their construction, as described by...
Suttles (2010:60), in the narratives for stocks during the 1929 and 1987 crises. This will be evident in the empirical chapters. Thus, here I detail the narratives that Suttles (2010) presents that are similar to those uncovered in this project. Concerning the stock markets narrative, Suttles (2010) argues as follows:

The genre is that of a band of explorers, adventurers, or athletes engaged in some hazardous or original feat that takes them beyond existing boundaries. Records are to be made and new heights to be scaled. There remains, however, a subjective side to the narrative, with periods of gloom, rage, suffering, depression and the like. Stocks have emotions and the reader is invited to suffer or rage with them. The story is less self-contained than that for business and the economy so that the reader is left with the impression that the unknown hovers at every turn. There is room for imagination and the anticipation of obstacles, trials, or intrusions not previously apparent. To comprehend or enjoy the story, one must be prepared for the unknown. More than a child’s story, it is probably suitable for adolescents. (P. 62)

Although the general lines of the narrative are identified here, Suttles theorizes the narrative mainly through the “positive side.” Stocks are thus explorers looking to surpass boundaries. In my reading, however, both positive and negative periods are needed to create the plot. They are opposed to each other, as semiotics explains. Suttles identifies positive periods when boundaries are broken upwardly, and negative periods when records are broken downwardly. During the weeks studied in 1998, both the good news and the bad news create an environment of uncertainty. The question, then, is: Is this ephemeral, or is it a long-term trend?

In these stories, as Suttles argues, for the protagonists the “unknown [seems to] hover” at every turn. A dramatic effect is sought by describing events as surprises, or as unusual. This is achieved by pointing out how events deviate from the historical record. This approach is used both for those events marking the crises and those representing an improvement over previous economic health.
Dow Jones (and Other Indexes). The Dow Jones is undeniably among the most salient characters in the narratives of the U.S. coverage of the Emerging market crisis in 1998. The preponderance of the Dow Jones as a character within stories about the markets began as early 1987. In his analysis of the daily and weekly economic news and their cycles, Suttles (2010) finds that use of the Dow Jones index had become prevalent in the news by 1987:

Jones is more obviously the solo hero (and male) struggling against a conspiracy of circumstances but still cracking records and averting plunges. Only occasionally taking a day off, Jones never lacks for courage, and even when rising on shaky legs, he is a sympathetic figure worth following. The odds against him make his survival rather breathtaking. The D. Jones narrative, then, is essentially a condensation of the stock price narrative. In this digested form, it also satisfies the reader’s requirement of leading characters; here a solitary hero relies on his own resources and swings with the punch. His is a solo aviator story, and there is no ambiguity about whom to watch, where our sympathies lie, or where to find good and evil. The adolescent’s stock market story has been “digested” into the child’s Jones story. (P. 117)

Suttles’ documentation suggests similarities between the way events are constructed in 1987 (in The Tribune, and in the NYT) and their construction in 1998 and 2008, as evidenced in the NYT and the WSJ. Suttles (2010) points, for instance, to examples that look very similar to what is found for 1998: “when it ‘crack[ed] 2,150’ in April, and when it ‘broke through the 2,400 mark’ in June as it ‘hit [a] two month high’” (p. 17). By October, however, it was said that ‘Wall Street awaits new tests’ as the Dow declined.” Suttles (2010) also contends that the Dow Jones “can establish ‘targets,’ ‘ceilings,’ and ‘floors’” (p. 17).

58 Suttles argues that content in the business section will increase (in terms of pages) when the Dow crosses certain “marks”: “century”, “half-century.” The focused sample of this project does not allow corroboration of these changes.


*Sources.* The sources included are by and large market participants (such as workers in financial firms, investors, market analysts) who are primarily focused on the market. Wall Street analysts are often brought in as sources possessing expertise and knowledge.

*Other Characters and Stories.* In the case of plots and genres, one finds a prevalence of romantic and tragic stories that are configured through economic logics. The characters of these stories are executives and anthropomorphized firms.

*Civic Logics and Civic Logics Typology*

To recapitulate what was presented in the literature review civil logics, or the discourse of liberty and repression, are expected to organize the meaning making of economic crises. Alexander and Smith (cf. Alexander 2006b; Alexander and Smith 2003a) develop a model of democratic/undemocratic actors’ motivations, of social relations and of institutions (see Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5, respectively). The attributes are organized through similarity and opposition, within and between each of the three categories. Thus, I expect that these sets would organize the coverage. Actors, social relations and institution could be described as democratic or undemocratic.

To compare in this project what would be an article written from a civic logics perspective or an economic logics perspective, a typology was constructed inductively, and deductively. The categories were outlined following the patterns in the data. That is why I discuss it with some examples of the data.

*Civic Logics Typology.* In the case of civic logics the arena expands to the country, the society, the democracy or the civil sphere. When the arena where news occurs is the country, the society or democracy, the newsworthy events that are described are those that are important for civic and political life. These are, for instance, those occurring in politics or the civil sphere such
as those related to the U.S. presidential campaign or the workers’ protests in Colombia. They are also events, which can be understood as occurring simultaneously in the economy and in the political and civil sphere, as they are affecting people as citizens, such as TARP.

**Characters.** In stories narrated through civic logics, one finds that typical characters are not animated objects As such they can be held accountable. They are, for example, public officials and of multilateral agencies.

**Narrative Elements (Plot and Genre).** The narrative elements in civic logics could be varied. Anticipating the findings, the most significant in the coverage is the mode of narration: low mimetic and high mimetic.

**Sources.** The sources are, often, those mentioned as actors, such as public officials. They are also observers in their positions as citizens.

Table 3 Discursive Structure of Motives. Cultural Structure of the Civil Sphere (Alexander, 2006b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Motives</th>
<th>Anticivil Motives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Passive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable</td>
<td>Hysterical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Excitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-controlled</td>
<td>Wild-Passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Distorted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sane</td>
<td>Mad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alexander (2006b:57)

Table 4. Discursive Structure of Social Relations. Cultural Structure of the Civil Sphere (Alexander, 2006b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Relations</th>
<th>Anticivil Relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Secretive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>Suspicious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Deferential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 Discursive Structure of Institutions. Cultural Structure of the Civil Sphere (Alexander, 2006b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Institutions</th>
<th>Anticivil Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rule regulated</td>
<td>Arbitrary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Bonds of loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Factions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Personality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alexander (2006b: 59)

Comparison between Civic Logics and Economic Logics.

Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) framework is useful to compare theoretically civic logics and economic logics, particularly because it gives the same structured information about the two worlds in question (see Table 1 for a fuller description of both worlds quoted from Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006: 193-203). Alexander provides structured information about the civil sphere, but less so about the economic sphere. In the following paragraph I outline the two worlds contrasting them through the categories that I found most relevant for the empirical analysis. As will be evident in the discussion Boltanski’s and Thevenot’s and Alexander’s contributions are compatible.

In Boltanski’s and Thevenot’s framework (2006: 193-203) the higher common principle, defines the common good in each of the worlds. In the market world is competition. In the civic
world, is the general will. The actors (subjects) of the market world are defined by market relationships: buying and selling. In this world is important, for instance, “do[ing] business with,” “negotiat[ing].” The subjects of the civic world are instead, defined by solidarity relationships, and are “collective persons and their representatives” (pp. 193-203). According to these authors, the “worthy” are the heroes of their world. The worthy embody the higher common principle. In the market world, the “worthy” is someone who wins the competition, and is “salable.” The state of worthiness, in the market world, is being wealthy. This is indicative of being successful in the competition. In the civic world, the state of worthiness is being representative, of a collective, and governed by the law (or rules). Finally, Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) define human dignity, as the capacity of people “…to rise to occasions in the service of the common good” (p. 141). In the market world, this capacity is focused on selfishness, and on the love of acquiring (things) (p. 197). In the civic world, human dignity is focused on “the aspiration to civil rights” (p. 187).

Sixth Section: Hypotheses

The following hypotheses connect different strands of literature. They are constructed in two sets of prior assumptions. The first set, considers the media as the communicative institution of the civil sphere (Alexander, 2006b). This will imply the prevalence of civic logics in all sections, and the existence of autonomous journalistic fields (2008). In this way, the civil sphere is considered home in the media, both in the general and business outlets (see Table 7).

According to boundary relations between spheres that Alexander (2006b) presents, this means that economic logics would be present if the economic sphere intrudes destructively, imposing economic logics. When economic logics and civic logics are congruent, the outcomes
in meaning would be similar to those that emerge when one non-civil sphere “facilitates (civil) outputs.”

The second set, considers the media in less ideal terms. Civil spheres in real civil societies, and the media within them, might have interpenetration of other spheres. The journalistic fields, and particularly the economic field, are not autonomous. This means that the media is fragmented. Other journalistic fields, such as the political, are expected to be more autonomous. Thus, the economic sphere is considered home to the business outlets and in the business sections within the general outlets.

According to boundary relations between spheres that Alexander (2006b) theorizes, this means that the civic sphere would civically repair the business outlets and the economic section, by imposing civic criteria into economic issues that were understood as appertaining only to the economic sphere. Equally, if the economic sphere treats economic issues in a way in which economic and civic criteria are compatible, it would mean that the economic sphere is facilitating output. In the case of non-business sections in the mainstream outlets, I would expect either a domination of economic logics or a mix of logics. There should be more autonomy in other journalistic fields, which are not the economic field.

In both of these sets, the possibility of alternative civic logics is left open for the case of Colombian coverage. These logics are expected to be present more in the coverage of the more immediate crisis (End-of-the-Century crisis). However, if they are available within the country it is likely, as well, that they would be used to discuss the Great Recession (less immediate crisis).

*Predictions by cases*

For the first set of assumptions, where the media is part of the civil sphere, the predictions by cases are as follows:
H1: For the End-of-the-Century crisis, one would expect that civic logics would be dominant in Colombian coverage in *Revista Dinero* (specialized business sphere) and *El Tiempo-Portafolio* (mainstream public sphere). Alternative civic logics might be present as well. If economic logics are present they indicate an intrusion by the economic sphere. In the case where economic logics are congruent with civic logics, they would have similar patterns as those of “facilitating output.”

H2: In the case of U.S. coverage, in 1998, one would expect that civic logics are dominant in both the WSJ (specialized business sphere) and NYT (mainstream public sphere). If economic logics are present they indicate an intrusion by the economic sphere. In the case where economic logics are congruent with civic logics, they would have similar patterns as those of “facilitating output.”

H3: For the U.S. coverage of The Great Recession, the expectations are as follow. In the case of the WSJ, one would expect civic logics would be dominant. If economic logics are present they indicate an intrusion by the economic sphere. In the case that these economic logics are congruent with civic logics the patterns would be similar to those existing when the economic sphere facilitates output of the civil sphere. In the case of the NYT, civic logics would be dominant. If economic logics were present they would indicate intrusion by the economic sphere. If economic logics are congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)

H4: In the case of the Colombian coverage of The Great Recession, in *Revista Dinero* and *El Tiempo-Portafolio*, a civic orientation would be dominant; this might be through civic logics and/or alternative civic logics. In the case that economic logics are present they would indicate intrusion by the economic sphere. If there were some elements that are congruent with civic logics, they would be similar to those when the economic sphere facilitates output.
For the second set of assumptions, where media is fragmented, the predictions are as follows:

H5: For the Colombian coverage of End-of-the-Century crisis, in Revista Dinero, economic logics are dominant. If civic logics were present, they would indicate that there is civic repair. In the case of El Tiempo-Portafolio, all the sections except business/economy would have a civic orientation that is dominant, which might be civic logics and/or alternative civic logics. In the case of the business/economic section (Portafolio), economic logics are dominant. If civic logics are available they are repairing (through civic criteria).

H6: In the case of U.S. coverage, in 1998, the WSJ would have dominant economic logics. If civic logics exist they would repair the economic sphere. For the NYT, civic logics would be dominant in the sections that are not business/economy. In this sections, if economic logics exist, they are destructively intruding. In business/economic section, economic logics are dominant. If civic logics were present that would mean that there is civic repair.

H7: For the U.S. coverage of The Great Recession. In the case of the WSJ, economic logics are dominant. If civic logics exist there is civic repair. In the NYT, in the sections except business/economy civic logics are dominant. If economic logics exist in these sections, this would mean that there is a destructive intrusion in these sections: from the economic sphere into the civic sphere. In the business/economic section, economic logics are dominant and if civic logics exist there would be repairing, with the imperatives of the civil sphere.

H8: For the Colombian coverage of The Great Recession one would expect that in Revista Dinero (specialized public sphere), the main logics would be economic. If civic logics, or alternative civic logics, were present they would signal civic repair. For El Tiempo (main public sphere), for sections other than the business section, the dominant logics would be civic,
or alternative civic logics. For the business or economic section of *El Tiempo* (which comes from *Portafolio*) the economic logics are dominant. If civic logics, or alternative civic logics, are present they indicate that civic repair is happening.

Table 6. First Set of Assumptions. Summary of Hypotheses. Media as the Institution of the Civic Sphere. Economic journalistic field more autonomous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>COLOMBIAN COVERAGE</th>
<th>U.S. COVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outlet: <em>Revista Dinero</em></td>
<td>Outlet: WSJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized business business public sphere</td>
<td>- Civic orientation (dominant): Civic logics and/or alternative civic logics (might exist)</td>
<td>- Civic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics:</td>
<td>- Economic logics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Intrusion by the economic sphere</td>
<td>- Intrusion by the economic sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)</td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream public sphere</td>
<td>Outlet: <em>El Tiempo-Portafolio</em></td>
<td>Outlet: NYT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Civic orientation (dominant): Civic logics and/or alternative civic logics</td>
<td>- Civic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics</td>
<td>- Economic logics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Intrusion by the economic sphere</td>
<td>- Intrusion by the economic sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)</td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2008. Less immediate crisis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outlet: <em>Revista Dinero</em></td>
<td>Outlet: WSJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized business business public sphere</td>
<td>- Civic orientation (dominant): Civic logics and/or alternative civic logics</td>
<td>- Civic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics</td>
<td>- Economic logics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Intrusion by the economic sphere</td>
<td>- Intrusion by the economic sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output).</td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream public sphere</td>
<td>Outlet: <em>El Tiempo</em></td>
<td>Outlet: NYT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Civic orientation (dominant)</td>
<td>- Civic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Civic logics</td>
<td>- Economic logics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics (Intrusion by the economic sphere)</td>
<td>- Intrusion by the economic sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)</td>
<td>- Economic logics congruent with civic logics (Similar to facilitating output)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In each cell there are the outlets that correspond to the mainstream or specialized business public sphere along with the institutional logics that might be found according to the hypotheses presented above. In parenthesis is noted if they are dominant.

Table 7. Second Set of Assumptions. Summary of Hypotheses. Fragmented media. Economic journalistic field not autonomous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>COLOMBIAN COVERAGE</th>
<th>U.S. COVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Specialized business public sphere | Outlet: *Revista Dinero*  
Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic logics (Civic repair) | Outlet: WSJ  
Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic logics (Civic repair) |
| Mainstream public sphere   | Outlet: *El Tiempo*  
- Sections except business/economy: Civic orientation (dominant): Civic logics and/or alternative civic logics  
Economic logics (destructive intrusion)  
- Business or economic section: *(Portafolio)*: Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic logics (Civic repair) | Outlet: NYT  
- Sections except business: Civic logics (dominant)  
- Economic logics (destructive intrusion)  
- Business or economic section: Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic logics (Civic repair) |
| Specialized business public sphere | Outlet: *Revista Dinero*  
Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic orientation: Civic logics and/or alternative civic logics (Civic repair). | Outlet: WSJ  
Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic logics (Civic repair) |
| Mainstream public sphere   | Outlet: *El Tiempo-Portafolio*  
- Sections except business: Civic orientation (dominant): Civic logics and/or alternative civic logics.  
Business or economic section *(Portafolio)*: Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic logics (Civic repair) | NYT  
- Sections except business: Civic logics (dominant).  
Business or economic section: Economic logics (dominant)  
Civic logics (Civic repair) |
In each cell there are the outlets that correspond to the mainstream or specialized business public sphere along with the institutional logics that might be found according to the hypotheses presented above. In parenthesis is noted if they are dominant.

*Seventh Section: Summary of Texts*

In this section I will describe the breakup of articles for each of the outlets by section, particularly regarding first page articles, Op-Ed, and business/financial/economic section.

*U.S. Coverage 1998: Emergent Markets Crisis (domestic context)*

In the case of the NYT 75 articles are sampled. There are 35 articles in Section A, for the combined sample of September and October 1998. From those, 4 appeared in first page. In
Section C, there are 40 articles. The following desks write the articles published in Section A: business/financial desk wrote 2, the editorial desk wrote 9, and the foreign desk wrote 22.

In the case WSJ, for the combined sample of September and October 1998 (70 articles were sampled) the breakup is the following. There are 43 articles in the Section A: four of them in first page. The following subsections have authored articles in Section A: Economy (6).

The breakup by section in the NYT, for the two months, is as follows. In the case of the U.S. coverage of the emerging market crisis the sample was similar for both months as this crisis was ongoing. Early September 1998 capture a large part of the turmoil in the emerging markets crisis, as the Russian crisis unfolded in mid-August 1998. For September 1998, in one week of sampling there are 37 articles. 18 articles were printed in Section A. Four articles were printed in first page: three written by the foreign desk and one by the business/financial desk. In Section C, there are 19 articles, all written by the business/financial desk. For October, 1998, there are 17 articles in Section A. Eight written by the editorial desk, six written by the foreign desk and one written by the business/financial desk. There are no articles in front page. There are 21 articles in Section C, all written by the business/financial desk.

The following are the subject topics of the articles on first page, taken from the information that the ProQuest Data Base includes in each of the articles: 1) “Devaluation; Federal Reserve monetary policy; Interest rates; Dow Jones averages,” 2) “Meetings; Catering; Social life &
International (25), Politics and Policy (1), Quarterly Mutual Funds Review (1), and What’s News (1). In Section C, 21 articles are printed. Section C includes articles from the following subsections: Economy (1), International (10), Politics and Policy (1), Quarterly Mutual Funds Review (1), and 8, which do not have subsection. 3 articles were printed in Section R, and one of the sampled articles has no section. In Section R, there are three articles from the Quarterly Mutual Funds Review.

Colombian Coverage 1998: End-of-the-Century Crisis and Emergent Markets Crisis

In the case of Revista Dinero, there are in September 1998 and October 1998 (comprising three issues) 22 articles. The articles are printed in three issues that were the closest to the intended sampling window. The issue of August 31\textsuperscript{st} is the closest to September 4\textsuperscript{th}, which is printed one month before of the event. The issue of September 14\textsuperscript{th} is the closest to September 11\textsuperscript{th} (which would close end the first week of coverage). The issue of October 13\textsuperscript{th} is the central issue in the window, as it is the first one after the event of the bankruptcy of Granahorrar in October 4\textsuperscript{th}. The previous issue of September 30\textsuperscript{th} was not chosen, even when it was closer to the anchor date, because it was prior to the bankruptcy of the organization. The issue of October 30\textsuperscript{th} was not included as it extended the interval through the last week of October.

customs; Global economy,” 3) “Boundaries; Economic conditions; Economic policy; Economic impact; Food supply; Political power”. The last article deals with the volatility of the bond market and its relation to the interest rates.
There are three first page/section articles (Cover). There are 7 articles in the Opinion section: 3 Editorials and 4 Opinion articles. There are 7 articles in business/financial sections: Companies (2), Business (1), Investment (3), and Your Finances (1). There are 5 articles in International Section, which include syndicated articles: International (1), International-Forbes (2) and International-The Economist (2).

In the case of *El Tiempo-Portafolio*, there are 80 articles sampled for September and October 1998. There are 11 articles in Editorial and Opinion: (7) Editorial, Opinion (2) and Analysis (2). In the first page, there are 9 articles: Cover (5) and Main Section (4). In the group of business/financial articles there are 39 articles. In the case of syndicated articles there are 14: Wall Street Journal Americas (1), and Financial Times (13). The remaining 6 articles are printed in International (1) and Neighbors (6).

For October 1998, there are 61 articles sampled distributed as follows: Editorial (5), Opinion (2) and Analysis (2); Cover (1) and Main Section (3); Business/financial Section (31); Financial Times (12) and Wall Street Journal Americas (1); International (1) and Neighbors (3).

For September 1998, there are 19 articles: Editorial (2); Cover (4) and Main (1); Business/financial group (8), Financial Times (1); and Neighbors (3).

*U.S. Coverage of The Great Recession*

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75 articles are sampled from the NYT. In this case for the combined sample of August and September 2008, there are 25 articles in Section A. 8 articles appear in first page (4 by business/financial desk, 1 by metropolitan desk, 1 Op-Ed, and 2 by national desk). The breakup of the articles in Section A is: the national desk writes 11, the business/financial desk writes 4, the editorial desk writes 5, there are 3 Op-Eds, and the metropolitan desk writes 2. In Section C, there are 45 articles. The remaining 5 articles are written by: two by the business/financial desk, in sections BU (1) and no section (2), one by the metropolitan desk, in Section B, and one by desk in Section F (no desk). 62

62 The breakup for the NYT by the two months is as follows. For August 2008, in one week there are 25 articles. In September 2008, in two weeks of sampling there are 50 articles.

In August 2008, there are 25 articles in total. 3 articles were printed in Section A. 2 articles were printed in first page: 1 written by the business/financial desk and 1 by the national desk. The third article in Section A, not in front page, is an Op-Ed. In Section C, 18 articles were written: 16 by the business/financial desk, 1 by Connecticut Weekly Desk, and 1 without section. In Section B, there is 1 article written by the Metropolitan Desk. In the Section BU, 1 article, written by Money and Business/Financial Desk, in the section F, 1 article without subsection. There is 1 article without section.

In September 2008, there are 50 articles in total. 22 articles in Section A. 5 written by the editorial desk, 2 Op-Eds, 2 written by the metropolitan desk, 10 written by the national desk, and 3 written by the business/financial desk. There are 6 articles in front page (3 business/financial desk, 1 metropolitan desk, 2 national desks). There are 27 articles in Section C, all written by the
In the case of the WSJ, 75 articles were sampled. For both months, there were 78 articles: There are 27 articles in Section A; 15 articles in Section B; 33 articles in Section C; 1 articles in Section D; and 2 in no section.

**Colombian Coverage of The Great Recession**

In *Revista Dinero*, 2008, there are 15 articles in total, for August and September 2008, within the sampling window. The sampling window consists of two issues. In the issue published on August 15th, there are nine articles that are (somewhat) related with the trouble that was brewing, both in the U.S. and globally, and that ended up with the bankruptcy and government intervention in Lehman Brothers. The nine articles are distributed as follows: There were four articles in the Opinion Section: in Opinion (3) and Editorial (1). There were six articles in other business/financial desk. There is one article without section written by the business/financial desk.

63 For the two months the break up is as follows. In August 2008, 25 articles were sampled. In Section A, there are 8 articles. 2 of these articles appeared in first page. In Section C, there are 13 articles. In Section B, there are 2 articles. There are 2 articles without section. In September 2008, there were sampled 53 articles. There are 20 articles in Section C, and 19 articles in Section A. Two of these articles appeared in first page. There are 13 articles in Section B, and 1 in Section D.
sections, which can be considered as business/economic: You and your money (2), Business (2), and General News (1). There were no articles in the Cover.

In the issue published on September 26th, there are six articles in total. There is one article in the Cover Section (first page) that deal with The Great Recession. There are three articles on Opinion: One in Editorial and two Opinion Columns. There are two articles that can be categorized as business/financial: Investment and Business.

*El Tiempo-Portafolio* coverage related to the U.S. and global crisis comprises 70 articles. In August there are 20 articles. There are 9 articles in business/financial, 5 in Opinion and Editorial, 5 in other sections (3 in International, 1 in Neighbors, and 2 syndicated in WSJ Americas).

The coverage in *El Tiempo-Portafolio* consists of 50 articles sampled in September 2008. There are 6 articles in the Cover section, 12 articles in the Opinion section, 14 articles are in sections that can be grouped in business/financial. In other sections there are 17 articles: 10 articles in the International section, 7 are syndicated articles from the WSJ Americas and 1 article in the Travelers section.

64 The break-up by section is as follows: 20 articles in August: International (3/20), Opinion and Editorial (5/20), and Business/Financial (9/20). This last category gathers the sections: Finance (4/20), Effective interest – rate (2/20), Financial Clinic (1/20), Two minutes (1/20), and Economy today (1/20). The remaining articles are in Neighbors (1/20), and *Wall Street Journal Americas* (2/20).
Dealing with Variation

There is variation between the number of articles in Cover or front-page sections, Editorial and Opinion, and business/financial. The way in which I dealt with variation was to identify key patterns in each of these types of coverage and sections, even when the number of articles might be smaller in some of these subcategories. I made sure that I examined how front-page coverage related to the patterns in the sections. In most cases, the key patterns within the sections were congruent with the articles of those desks/sections that were included in the front-page coverage. In the description of patterns within each of the chapters, I emphasized those that are prevalent in the most populated sections.
EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS
### SUMMARY TABLES OF FINDINGS FOR THE FOUR CASES

Table 1. Summary of Findings: Distribution of Institutional Logics. Four cases. Pattern of Fragmented Media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th><strong>Colombian Coverage</strong></th>
<th><strong>U.S Coverage</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More immediate crisis</td>
<td>Less immediate crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized business public sphere</td>
<td>Outlet: Revista Dinero Economic logics (dominant)</td>
<td>Outlet: WSJ Economic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream public sphere</td>
<td>Outlet: El Tiempo Civic logics (dominant) Business or economic section (which is Portafolio): Economic logics (dominant)</td>
<td>Outlet: NYT Civic logics (dominant) Business or economic section: Economic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less immediate crisis</td>
<td>More immediate crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized business public sphere</td>
<td>Outlet: Revista Dinero Economic logics (dominant)</td>
<td>Outlet: WSJ Economic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream public sphere</td>
<td>Outlet: El Tiempo Civic logics (dominant) Business or economic section: Economic logics (dominant)</td>
<td>NYT Civic logics, most sections: (dominant) Business or economic section: Economic logics (dominant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Summary of Findings. United States’ Coverage of the Great Recession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outlet and section</th>
<th>Civic/Economic logics</th>
<th>Key plots</th>
<th>Character structures*</th>
<th>Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>New York Times</em> Business/Financial Desk</td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td>Market article: A quest where the hero faces obstacles and is able to jump over them and achieve the goal</td>
<td>1) Animated entities: stock indexes, markets 2) Active, adventurous 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New York Times</em> Business/Financial Desk</td>
<td>Economic logic</td>
<td>A quest where the hero faces obstacles and is able to jump over them and achieve the goal</td>
<td>1) Executives 2) Active, in control of their destiny 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New York Times</em> Business/Financial Desk</td>
<td>Economic logic</td>
<td>A quest where the hero faces obstacles and is able to jump over them and achieve the goal</td>
<td>1) Firms: Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley (example) 2) Active, in control of their destiny. E.g., Merrill: Optimistic, democratizing. 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet and section</td>
<td>Civic/Economic logics</td>
<td>Key plots</td>
<td>Character structures*</td>
<td>Genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York Times</strong> Business/Financial Desk</td>
<td>Economic logic</td>
<td>A quest where the hero has faced obstacles and has been able to jump over them and achieve the goal but missed the last obstacle. It is a tragedy to lose this executive or this firm.</td>
<td>1) Executives, firms (example, Merrill) 2) Active, up to a point. Now they do not control their destiny. 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York Times</strong> Business/Financial Desk</td>
<td>Economic and civic logics</td>
<td>WS was following an unsustainable model (everyone praised it until it burst) Close to Icarus myth</td>
<td>1) Commercial/Universal banks, European banks 2) Stable, less complex, less profitable, tamed/stodgier 3) Investment firms (US) 4) Unstable, complex, profitable, entrepreneurial/independent 5)</td>
<td>Tragedy (partially)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York Times</strong> Business/Financial Desk (And Wall Street Journal (Business/Financial Desk))</td>
<td>Economic and civic logics (Jointly with next line)</td>
<td>WS is too arrogant and burned itself (Icarus myth). Took too much risk</td>
<td>1) WS (past) 2) Savvy risk takers (Economic logics) 3) WS (present) 4) Reckless (Economic logics) 5)</td>
<td>Tragedy (partially)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York Times</strong> National Desk (And Wall Street Journal (Business/Financial Desk))</td>
<td>Economic and civic logics</td>
<td>WS is too arrogant and burned itself. Now they have been humbled (Icarus myth)</td>
<td>1) WS (immediate present &amp; future) 2) Humbled (Civic logics) 3) WS (immediate past and present) 4) Greedy, arrogant, overly powerful (Civic logics)</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet and section</td>
<td>Civic/Economic logics</td>
<td>Key plots</td>
<td>Character structures*</td>
<td>Genres</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td><strong>Civic logics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Presidential campaign</strong></td>
<td>1) Obama</td>
<td><strong>Genres</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Focused on character opposition</strong></td>
<td>2) Obama: Folksy, quick</td>
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<td>3) McCain</td>
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<td>4) McCain: Inadequate, detached, inexperienced (semiotic opposition)</td>
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<td>5) Citizens/Voters</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>Economic and civic logics</td>
<td><strong>The common person dealing with the consequences of the crisis</strong></td>
<td>1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Desk</td>
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<td>2)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Wall Street</td>
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<td>4) Greedy, reckless</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5) Main Street, citizens</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>6) Helpless</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td><strong>Civic logics</strong></td>
<td><strong>TARP: WS was not adequately policed, and now (common) Americans have to pay for their excesses</strong></td>
<td>1) Main Street, citizens</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Semiotic opposition</td>
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<td>3) Wall Street</td>
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<td>4) Pretentious, privileged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlet and section</td>
<td>Civic/Economic logics</td>
<td>Key plots</td>
<td>Character structures*</td>
<td>Genres</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| *New York Times* National Desk | Civic logics          | TARP: WS was not adequately policed, and now (common) Americans have to pay for their excesses | 1)Democrats, citizens  
2) Semiotic opposition: responsible, active  
3) Republican administration, Washington, WS  
4) Passive, corrupt, indifferent, egoistical, (violation of public trust)  
5) Citizens  
6) Helpless | |
| *New York Times* National Desk | Civic logics          | TARP: WS was not adequately policed, and now (common) Americans have to pay for their excesses. Administration is responsible for its derailing. | 1)Democrats, citizens  
2) Semiotic opposition: responsible, active  
3) Republican administration, Washington, WS  
4) Passive, corrupt, indifferent, egoistical, (violation of public trust)  
5) Citizens  
6) Helpless | |
| *Wall Street Journal*     | Civic logics          | Presidential campaign                                                     | 1) Obama  
2) McCain  
3) McCain  
4) McCain  
5) McCain | |
| *Wall Street Journal* (Business/Financial Desk) | Economic logics       | Market article: A quest where the hero faces obstacles and is able to jump over them and achieve the goal | 1) Stock indexes, other animated entities  
2) Active, adventurous  
3)  
4)  
5) | Romance |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outlet and section</th>
<th>Civic/Economic logics</th>
<th>Key plots</th>
<th>Character structures*</th>
<th>Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal (Business/Financial Desk)</td>
<td>Economic and civic logics</td>
<td>WS is too arrogant and burned itself (Icarus myth)</td>
<td>1) WS (past)</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2) Sane, sustainable</td>
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<td>3) WS (present)</td>
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<td>4) Greedy, cocky, overly powerful, insane / irrational, unable to control themselves</td>
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</tbody>
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* Conventions:

1) Heroes

2) Description of heroes

3) Anti-heroes

4) Description of antiheroes

5) Victims
Table 3. Summary of Findings. Colombian Coverage of the Great Recession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outlet and section</th>
<th>Civic and economic logics</th>
<th>Key plots</th>
<th>Character structures*</th>
<th>Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>El Tiempo-Portafolio</em></td>
<td>(Aligned to) Civic logics</td>
<td>Crisis is not imminent for Colombia. It is out of its control. (Main narrative element in genre)</td>
<td>1) No actors (potential U.S. Decision makers) 2) 3) 4) 5) No actors (Colombian decision makers)</td>
<td>Low mimetic-Business as usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>El Tiempo-Portafolio</em></td>
<td>(Aligned to) Civic logics</td>
<td>Colombia needs to prepare; caution is advised in the medium or long term. (Main narrative element in genre)</td>
<td>1) Colombian decision makers (aspirational) 2) Active 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Low mimetic-Business as usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>El Tiempo-Portafolio</em></td>
<td>(Aligned to) Civic logics</td>
<td>Colombia needs to prepare (in the short run) (Main narrative element in genre)</td>
<td>1) Colombian decision makers: Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, 2) Active 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Medium-high mimetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet and section</td>
<td>Civic and economic logics</td>
<td>Key plots</td>
<td>Character structures*</td>
<td>Genres</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>El Tiempo-Portafolio</strong></td>
<td>(Aligned to) Civic logics</td>
<td>Crisis is not imminent for Colombia and away of its control. (Main narrative element in genre)</td>
<td>1) Without actors/ Financial system (relatively without actors) 2) Passive 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Low mimetic-Business as usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revista Dinero</strong></td>
<td>(Aligned to) Civic logics</td>
<td>Criticizes the passive role of Colombian and Latin American decision makers (e.g., Ulloa, 2008)</td>
<td>1) 2) 3) Latin American Countries 4) Passive 5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revista Dinero</strong></td>
<td>(Aligned to) Civic logics</td>
<td>Colombia needs to prepare; caution is advised in the medium or long term. <em>(Revista Dinero, cover section), p. 8-9</em></td>
<td>1) Colombian decision makers (aspirational) 2) Active (aspirational) 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Low mimetic-Business as usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revista Dinero</strong></td>
<td>Civic Logics</td>
<td></td>
<td>1) WS (aspirational), U.S. Congress, Federal Government 2) WS: profitable, safe; active 3) WS 4) Immoral, reckless (contempt for risk)</td>
<td>High mimetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet and section</td>
<td>Civic and economic logics</td>
<td>Key plots</td>
<td>Character structures*</td>
<td>Genres</td>
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<td>5)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Conventions:

1) Heroes
2) Description of heroes
3) Anti-heroes
4) Description of antiheroes
5) Victims
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Distribution of civic and economic logics</th>
<th>Key plots</th>
<th>Character structures*</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>El Tiempo-Portafolio</strong></td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td>A quest where the hero faces obstacles and is able to jump over them and achieve the goal</td>
<td>1) Granahorrar, Granahorrar leadership 2) Active, adventurous 3) 4) 5)</td>
<td>Nationalization Previous obstacles (change of private ownership)</td>
<td>Romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td>(Discussion of Bailout)</td>
<td>1) Government, FOGAFIN 2) Granahorrar (to be saved), not antagonist 3) 4) 5) Savers 6) Passive, in need of rescuing</td>
<td>Nationalization Massive bank withdrawals</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>El Tiempo-Portafolio</strong></td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td>A quest where the actor have jumped over obstacles and failed at the end. (Nationalization is not a good outcome)</td>
<td>1) Granahorrar 2) Active 3) Shareholders, government 4) 5) Shareholders, creditors, government, savers, Granahorrar (all lose)</td>
<td>Nationalization Obstacles faced by Granahorrar</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication</td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td>Civic logics</td>
<td>Civic (and economic logics)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>El Tiempo-Portafolio</strong></td>
<td>A quest where the actor have jumped over obstacles and failed at the end. Rags to riches and then fails</td>
<td>Centered in character description</td>
<td><em>(Discussion of public policy events)</em> Key narrative element in genre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>El Tiempo-Portafolio</strong></td>
<td>1) Julio Carrizosa (one of the shareholders) 2) Active 3) Shareholders (not strong role) 4) 5)</td>
<td>1) Public officials, government 2) Semiotic opposition 3) Workers 4) Unreasonable, ungrateful (privileged), irrational, irresponsible, self-interested (not ready to sacrifice for public interest) 5) Students, patients</td>
<td>1) Central Bank/ Government (Executive branch) 2) Active 3) Government (Executive branch)/Central Bank 4) Passive 5)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>El Tiempo-Portafolio</strong></td>
<td>Obstacles faced by the entrepreneur</td>
<td>Worker general strikes</td>
<td>Public policy events - Devaluation of the peso - Change in the currency band - Selling of reserves</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Character structures include:*
- Public officials, government
- Semiotic opposition
- Workers
- Unreasonable, ungrateful (privileged), irrational, irresponsible, self-interested (not ready to sacrifice for public interest)
- Students, patients

**Genres:**
- Tragedy
- --

**Mimetic Levels:**
- Low mimetic
- High
- Low mimetic
- Low
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Distribution of civic and economic logics</th>
<th>Key plots</th>
<th>Character structures*</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revista Dinero</strong></td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Investors</td>
<td>Market fluctuations. Peso’s steep devaluation</td>
<td>Romance</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2) Assumed or potential: Savvy, ready to deal</td>
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<td>3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revista Dinero</strong></td>
<td>Economic and civic logics (Jointly with next line)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Central Bank/ Developing countries</td>
<td>Theme: Fiscal adjustment</td>
<td>Low mimetic-high mimetic</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) Active</td>
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<td>3) Executive Branch/ Developing countries governments/Business people</td>
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<td>4) Passive</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revista Dinero</strong></td>
<td>Economic and civic logics</td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Central Bank/ Developing countries</td>
<td>Theme: Monetary policy</td>
<td>Low mimetic-high mimetic</td>
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<td>2) Active</td>
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<td>3) Executive Branch/ Developing countries governments/Business people</td>
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<td>4) Passive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Character structures* include investor, savvy, ready to deal, active, passive, and developed countries governments/business people.
*Conventions:

1) Heroes

2) Description of heroes

3) Anti-heroes

4) Description of antiheroes

5) Victims

6) Description of victims
Table 5. Summary of Findings. United States’ Coverage of the Emerging Markets Crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outlets and Sections</th>
<th>Civic and economic logics</th>
<th>Key plots</th>
<th>Character structures</th>
<th>Genres</th>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>New York Times Business Section</em></td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td>A quest where the hero faces obstacles and is able to jump over them and achieve the goal</td>
<td>1) Protagonists: Stock indexes, stocks, markets, and investors. 2) Active 3) Secondary: officials in the U.S. Treasury and Fed Reserve, Finance ministers. Emerging Market Governments 4) 5)</td>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>Market fluctuations (or their causes). Events that move the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlets and Sections</td>
<td>Civic and economic logics</td>
<td>Key plots</td>
<td>Character structures</td>
<td>Genres</td>
<td>Arena</td>
<td>Events</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| *New York Times Business Section* | Civic Logics | -- | 1) Federal Reserve  
2) Active, timely, aggressive  
3)  
4)  
5) | Low mimetic/High mimetic: Is this situation “business as usual” or is the crisis looming? | Economy and society | Interest rate changes |
| *New York Times (Desk)* | Economic and civic logics | (WS) | 1) Wall Street  
2)  
3)  
4)  
5) | | | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outlets and Sections</th>
<th>Civic and economic logics</th>
<th>Key plots</th>
<th>Character structures</th>
<th>Genres</th>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Events</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal (Business Section)</td>
<td>Economic logics</td>
<td>A quest where the hero faces obstacles and is able to jump over them and achieve the goal</td>
<td>5) Stock indexes, stocks. Other characters: Investors, 2) 3) Secondary: officials in the U.S. Treasury and Fed Reserve, Finance ministers 4) 5)</td>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Market fluctuations (or their causes). Events that move the market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Conventions:

1) Heroes

2) Description of heroes

3) Anti-heroes
4) Description of antiheroes

5) Victims
FIFTH CHAPTER: U.S. COVERAGE OF THE EMERGENT MARKET CRISIS

In this fifth chapter, I examine the media coverage in the United States of the Emerging markets crisis during three sample weeks paralleling key events of the largest and most recent economic crisis in Colombia: The End-of-the-Century Crisis (1998-1999). First, I briefly restate the events, and outlets that will be explored, and give an overview of the articles within the sample. Second, I present the main findings for U.S. coverage of the domestic effects of the Emerging market crisis. I will discuss the distribution of institutional logics (economic or civil logics). Then, I will describe the findings regarding the arena where the events happen and have consequences; the key actors involved; the central narrative elements, including those provided by plot and genre. Third, I will discuss the conclusions.

First Section: Events, Outlets and Articles

Events

To recapitulate what is presented in the Methods and data chapter, the sampling window for the U.S. coverage is the same as that of the Colombian Coverage. The sampling window is delineated around the bankruptcy of CAV Granahorrar, which initiated the banking crisis in Colombia. The government later on bailed out Granahorrar. The sampling window, of two weeks, starts in October 4th, 1998, and closes on October 21st. There is another week sampled one month before: September 4th to 11th. The End-of-the-Century crisis (more immediate crisis for Colombia) is the largest systemic crisis in the country that comprises the banking crisis.

During this period, the Emergent market crisis is unfolding in a global scale, as is explained in the chapter that gives an overview of the cases studied. The coverage in the U.S. focuses primarily on this global economic crisis. In 1998, the aftermath of the Asian crisis is
unfolding and, in August, Russian economy collapses. Brazil follows. There are a few Latin American countries represented in the U.S. coverage, such as Brazil and Mexico, but not Colombia. The importance of the Emerging market crisis in the overall coverage, from September 4th to September 11th, can be gained from its proportion to the total on the first-page: Of thirty seven first page articles, eight articles deal with the emergent markets crisis: Five articles on Russia, two on the market turmoil/global crisis and one on Japan. The second most important theme in this week was the Clinton-Lewinsky affair with twelve articles. 65

For reasons of scope, in this chapter I focus on the meaning making around the effects of the Emerging market crisis in the U.S. domestic economy, leaving the analysis of the Emerging market crisis abroad (for example, the in-depth coverage of the Russian crisis) for future research, as explained in the Methods and data chapter.

One of the key events discussed domestically in this period is an expected interest rate cut, which is part of monetary policy. There were two instances of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve in the sample, one in September 4th and another in October 15th, 1998. The emphasis will be on the cut on October 15th. This type of event was selected for the following reasons: First, the event was chosen because it reflects the response of the United States through the Federal Reserve to the Emerging market crisis. The analysis of this event is, thus, useful to examine how the Emerging market crisis is perceived from a domestic perspective, and how it is understood to affect the U.S. economy. Second, the event was chosen because it is part of

65 The remaining group, 17 articles, addresses various topics. There are one or two articles per topic, for a total of thirty-seven.
monetary policy and, thus, it can be compared to other key monetary policy events that were part of the End-of-the-Century crisis in Colombia. This event was relevant, as well, because Latin America was looking towards the U.S. in its management of the crisis. The interest rate defined by the Fed was going to impact Latin American economies.

*Context of the Emerging Market Crisis effects on the U.S.*

To provide some context of the domestic effects of the Emergent market crisis, it is worth noting that the United States, along with Canada, were able to maintain a good performance in the face of the aftermath of the Russian, and the Asian crisis. As of September 1998, the IMF Area Department Directors (1998) considered that North America was expected to grow at 3% (IMF Area Department Directors 1998). To recapitulate, the Russian crisis was the most significant within the development of the Emergent market crisis within the period examined. I further discuss these events in the sixth chapter, about the Colombian coverage of the End-of-the-Century crisis. In August 17, 1998 Russia entered into an economic crisis (Stiglitz 2002a). The country deeply devalued its currency and defaulted on its debt. The Russian crisis created a new stage of the Emerging market crisis, which had started in 1997 in Asia. Brazil and Japan, among others, are countries affected by the aftermath of the Russian crisis (Stiglitz 2002a). The IMF Area Department Directors (1998) explain that, for September and October, 1998, nevertheless, the international turmoil brought by the Russian crisis and other developments rather than really threat the United States served to restrict liquidity in a way that extreme monetary policy actions were not needed.

Some of the key events discussed in the news coverage in the United States, in this scenario, are those (that are constructed as) affecting economy and markets. For example, for
currency markets, the currency crash of Russia created turmoil that followed into mid-September and October, 1998.

**Outlets**

As presented in the Methods chapter, the outlets that will be examined are *The New York Times*, indexing a mainstream public sphere, and the *Wall Street Journal*, indexing a specialized business public sphere. 75 articles per outlet were sampled for each of the outlets.

**Articles: Overview of the Coverage: Main Topics**

News about the Emerging markets crisis in both the WSJ and the NYT can be divided in two groups. The first group focuses on the impact of the Emerging markets crisis on the domestic economy and explores the decisions that the U.S. has to make as part of the global institutions that are dealing with the crisis. For the breakup of articles between front page, business section, and editorial see the Methods and data chapter.

In the first group the articles revolve around the impact of the emergent market crisis on U.S. markets, which will be the core of the analysis presented in this chapter. The first theme is monetary policy, in relation to the changes in interest rates by the Federal Reserve and what it means for the domestic and foreign economy. The second theme is the role of the U.S. on managing the crisis, including the discussion of funding of I.M.F. for rescue operations, and the debate for approval of these funds in the Congress. The third theme is the situation of U.S. hedge funds as a result of the international turmoil.

The second group of articles focuses on the Russian political and economic crisis; contagion of the Russian economic collapse to Brazil and ensuing political and economic turmoil; development of the banking crisis and currency issues in Japan; a hodgepodge of
political and economic events unfolding in the aftermath of the peak of the Asian Crisis the previous year. To recapitulate, the results of the analysis of this group are not shown in this dissertation due to reasons of scope.

Second Section: Findings

In this section I answer the research questions posed in the chapter that reviews the literature and, again, the Methods chapter. I explain how people (actors and journalists) make sense of the events that are part of the Emergent market crisis, and that were felt in the U.S. economy and society. I will describe what types of events are singled out for narration, how are they linked with stories that explain them, which actors are involved and how they are narrated (genre). The typology or constellation of categories presented in the Methods chapter allows identifying which institutional logic is primarily used: economic or civic. Finally, I will explain one of the mechanisms through which crisis is narrated in both logics, categorizing events as surprising.

Distribution of Institutional Logics

In the creation of meaning about the Emerging market crisis in the United States economic logics and civic logics are represented in both of the media outlets. In proportion by number of articles, however, economic logics are the most relevant. Within these, one of the most prevalent patterns in the coverage is the market article format, which is first discussed in the chapter covering Methods and data (chapter 4).

The New York Times (NYT) coverage of the (domestic side of the) Emerging markets crisis is divided by the two institutional logics described in the literature review and the methods chapter: focused on the market and/or the economy (economic logics) and focused on civic life (civic logics). The resulting groups of articles organized by these two logics (examined through
sets of categories or constellations) overlap quite closely with those that would result if the articles were grouped by the desks that wrote them. The largest group of articles, approximately half, is written by the business/financial desk (42/75). Most of these business/financial desk articles are focused on the market (economic logics).

The second largest group of articles, approximately one third of the total, is written by the foreign desk (22/75). As a group, these foreign desk articles are of a more mixed orientation. Some of them analyze the turmoil or crisis from the vantage point of the market (economic logics), while others do so from the viewpoint of the country or democracy, with an orientation to civic life (civic logics). Finally, the editorial desk wrote nine articles. Four of these articles were related to the Emerging market crisis, and five to domestic effects of the crisis.

The logics that are prevalent in these editorial articles are economic and civic for those articles related to the Emerging market crisis. For the remaining five: three articles use economic logics and two uses a mix of civic and economic. The national desk wrote two articles and the metropolitan desk does not author any of the articles sampled. The relative scarcity of articles written by these two desks precludes categorization as to how the crisis was covered by each desk.

In the case of The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), the bulk of articles—about two thirds (50 articles of 70) — fit the general model of economic logics, focusing on the market. 25 of these articles appear in Section A. These include articles published within the International Section (14), Economy Section (5), and Quarterly Mutual Funds Review (1). 21 economic logics articles appear in Section C. These include articles published in the International Section (10), Politics and Policy (1), Economy Section (1), and Quarterly Mutual Funds Review (1). Finally, one article is printed in Section B, in the subsection Marketing & Media.
The second group—about a quarter of the articles (16 out of 70)—is that of articles focused on politics and/or civic life. This group of articles contains 10 articles from the International Section, 1 article from Politics and Policy, 1 from Economy, and 4 without section. From these, there are three Op-eds.

The third group includes four articles use simultaneously economic and civic logics. 2 articles were printed in International section, 1 in What’s News, and 1 in no section.

Key Narrative Elements (Plot and Genre)

The meaning making patterns regarding the coverage of the Emerging market crisis effect on the U.S. follow. In terms of economic logics the most prevalent patterns are the standard market article, and the stories where executives and firms are protagonists within the economy. In the standard market article the key plots is the quest, where the protagonists or heroes travel a path that is full of obstacles and are able to jump over them. They arrive at the finish line, obtaining the prize at the end. There are other stories, where financial objects are also animated such as those of the medical emergency, where financial objects or markets are in need of care, as if they were patients.

In terms of civic logics, the main pattern is that of a contest between a low mimetic mode and a high mimetic mode of narration of events. The case of the changes in interest rate (the first theme mentioned above) is an example of how these two logics mix in the narration of the same event (sometimes in the same article, and sometimes in different articles). I illustrate and summarize these patterns below (they will be expanded in the next sections)

Monetary policy actions of the Federal Reserve are narrated through a mix of economic and civic logics, in articles were the arena for these plots is the economy (and the broader
society). The newsworthy events are those that can affect the overall health of the economy. The actors are central bankers and investors. The most prominent narrative elements are related to the reading of the situation (genre): high mimetic or low mimetic. There is a contest about the meaning of the actions of the Fed (e.g., the changes in interest rate). The question for actors is how to interpret the events: Are these policy changes (e.g., interest rate cut) “business as usual” or are they the unusual response to an unusual event—a crisis that is unfolding? How do the policy actions suggest something about the present and the future?

In the case of standard market articles dealing with this subject, the arena is the market. The newsworthy events are the interest rate cut and the market movements (rally) that ensued. That is, events that are expected to or have caused market fluctuations. The actors are financial objects such as the bonds, which experienced a rally. In this orientation, the plots revolve around the financial objects and their new event, the rally, and what might happen in the future. Also, the stories are weaved around the policy event (the interest rate change) and how to interpret it in its consequences for financial elements.

Character Structures

As evident in the key narrative elements the key characters in the standard market article are animated financial objects such as stocks. In the articles where the arena changes to the economy or the society, the key actors are the ones that are often identified, such as central bankers. One of the signatures of the economic logic is that central characters are investors, rather than citizens.

In the following sections I will illustrate in depth the patterns that have been summarized in this first part of the chapter.
Economic Logics: Market Format Article

In this section I will illustrate the general meaning making patterns within the articles following economic logics (e.g., a market format article). These logics are organized through the ideal-type categories, which are presented in the Methods chapter (chapter 4).

One of the main narratives appearing in the coverage in the U.S. of the Emerging market crisis and the related financial/economic turmoil revolves around occurrences in the stock market and other types of markets on any given day or in any given week. Central elements through which this narrative can be explained include (developed in the fourth chapter, on methods and data): (1) the arena in which the news occurs; (2) newsworthy events; (3) characters; (4) narrative elements; and (5) sources.

The Arena of the Market Article: The Market. In the case of market articles the chosen arena to narrate the events is the market. This arena, defined a priori, delineates the types of events that are considered as newsworthy.

One of the ways in which one can see the focus on the market is the way they are introduced. A NYT article by Fuerbringer, for example, begins as follows: “Technology shares fell sharply yesterday, leading markets lower as the troubled world economy seemed to undermine investor sentiment.” In the same week, a WSJ article appearing in the World Stock Markets column starts with “Japanese stocks soared 6.2% Wednesday while the yen surged against the dollar, lifting spirits in the Asian markets as Japan appeared to move closer toward pumping public funds into its weak banks” (McKay 1998).

Equally, this narrative, which will be illustrated below, is developed to the furthest extent in specific types of articles both in the NYT and the WSJ that identify the market as the key site of inquiry. In the NYT, these articles are published under the heading “The Market,” with
various classificatory subtitles (e.g., Stocks, Bonds, Currencies, The Market Place, and Economic Scene). In the WSJ some of the most common column headings for this type of article also make direct reference to the markets, such as World Stock Markets or Current Stock Markets.

*Events in Market Articles.* The following examples are illustrative of how the constructions of events in a market article. These events are used in the articles that address two different markets: currency and stocks for the U.S. context. The events referenced below are constructed through associations with the past, present and future of the markets—whether currency or stocks. As explained above (in the first section: Events, Outlets and Articles) one of the key events discussed in the U.S. coverage are the interest rate cuts. These are discussed both within the market article format, and as part of other articles that mix economic logics and civic logics.

The first example of events in market articles used to illustrate concerns the currency market. An article chronicles the first rebound of the Russian ruble since its collapse in August of 1998, a key event which occurred about a month prior to the first week of the sampling window considered here (September 4-11). This is an event that is part of the Russian crisis that is relevant in the global currency market. The article is organized around a market fluctuation event: a “sharp rebound” of the Russian ruble (McKay 1998). This rebound takes as a reference point the period, three weeks earlier, when the government stopped upholding the currency targets. No longer able to maintain the target, the ruble crashed on August 17, 1998 and the country left its currency regime. The rebound as an event is delineated and classified in terms of its percentage gain from the reference point. The durability of this rebound or rally is also important, as it suggests what may happen in the future. The writer argues that the life of the rally will be short because of the market volatility suggested by a trading volume of $43 million.
Market analysts’ opinions (those of market participants) are used to corroborate the durability of the rebound and doubt that the increase can be maintained.

Russia’s ruble rebounded sharply yesterday for the first time since the government slackened its defense of the currency three weeks ago, despite persistent doubts over the country’s political and economic future. The currency strengthened to 15.25 against the U.S. dollar, a 37% gain from 20.95 on Tuesday. But thin trading volume of $43 million suggested the market remains volatile, and analysts doubt the rally will be sustained. The currency still is far below its value of 6.3 rubles against the dollar before the government announced a de facto devaluation and debt default on Aug. 17 (McKay 1998).

The second example, which concerns the stock market, was published in the NYT on September 8 and describes the event, an increase in stocks buying, as a “powerful rally” (Landler 1998). The rally is (partially) caused, according to the article, by an appreciated yen and protectionist government policies enacted by Hong Kong and Malaysia (e.g., Hong Kong government buying a large share of stocks). The event is cast as somewhat surprising and unwelcome by “free-market advocates,” as it resulted from what they would see as an undue intervention in market dynamics. The event is then quantified, as expected, in the third and fourth paragraphs of the article, through the change in Kuala Lumpur’s stock exchange index and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng Index. Here, the investors’ behavior, which created the event, is described as buying heavily as opposed to fleeing. Investors are importantly qualified as domestic rather than foreign.

Stock markets surged from Singapore to Seoul today in a powerful rally, fueled by a stronger Japanese yen and interventionist government policies in Hong Kong and Malaysia.

The sharpest increases were in Malaysia and Hong Kong, a pattern that dismayed some free-market advocates, since both recently intervened in their markets. In Malaysia, the Government imposed sweeping capital controls. Rather than flee, investors bought heavily. Kuala Lumpur’s stock exchange rose a record 23 percent, to 443.59 points. By shielding itself from the global market, Malaysia has been able to lower interest rates, attracting local investors, particularly big pension funds with ties to the Government.
In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index soared 7.9 percent, to 8,076 points, as investors reacted enthusiastically to lower interest rates and new Government measures to police the market more strictly. Those measures came in the aftermath of a $15 billion Government buying spree to prop up shares (Landler 1998).

*The Characters of the Market Article.* Stories about market fluctuations incorporate different characters. Among the most common are investors, markets, stock indexes, stocks and groups of stocks. Markets, stock indexes such as the Dow Jones, and groups of stocks are actors in their own right within the narratives. Groups of stocks include, for instance, blue-chips or favorites. They are referred to as if they are animated entities. For example: “The market believes that Long-Term Capital is long risky positions and short Treasuries, and the threat of them buying back Treasuries has helped the Treasury market at the expense of riskier markets” (Zuckerman 1998). Suttles (2010) finds in the stock market narratives, as explained below, that “[s]tocks have emotions and the reader is invited to suffer or rage with them” (p. 62).

Other characters, as can be expected, are officials in the U.S. Treasury and The Federal Reserve, or finance ministers, among others. Wall Street analysts are often brought in as sources possessing expertise and knowledge.

*Narrative Elements.* Some of the narratives that are available locate animated entities, such as stocks and the markets, as heroes in quests. This is the case of the Rubble, a hero that has faced difficulties, and now is seemingly surpassing an obstacle, as there has been a rally (McKay 1998).

There are other narratives such as those of a medical emergency, where the markets need some medicine to revive (see an illustration in the discussion of example 1, below). These narratives (both the quest and the medical emergency) are inspired in and very similar to the ones that Suttles (2010) found in his work.
I further illustrate some of these patterns through the analysis of a market article, printed in the WSJ. In this way one can understand the typology or constellation of categories more clearly as a set.

**Example 1: Economic Logics (The Market Article).** *A WSJ article about Market Changes in World Stock Markets*

Sarah Webb’s article, appeared in the World Stock Markets column of WSJ (Webb 1998). The article chronicles (in its first part) stock movement in the market given the interest rate cut of October 16th, while reporting on other events impacting the market during the same period. The article is long with a word count of 1622 and 41 paragraphs divided into two main parts. The first part consists of ten paragraphs, which are more “storied” and will be analyzed here. The second part mainly presents factual information about the changes in the markets. The analysis below aims to show several elements that organize and give character to this typical article in terms of the structure of articles focused on the market (economic logic).

**Arena.** First, the market is the key arena where newsworthy events occur and where they matter in this specialized article. The market as the site of exploration is taken as the default in this article—that is, it does not need to be justified.

**Newsworthy events.** Second, the events singled out as newsworthy are those affecting and occurring in the market. To recapitulate, the events occurring in the market and chronicled in the article are constructed according to patterns of buying and selling behavior. These events are, thus, mainly rises (and, to a lesser extent, falls) in stock exchange indexes and in prices of particular stocks. The event chronicled in this case, which influenced/caused the ascent of most of the stocks, is an interest rate cut made the previous day (on Thursday, October 15th). The rise of the stocks, on its own, is an event as well.
The impact on the domestic economy of the monetary easing is described by means of The Dow Jones World Stock Index. Asian and European markets did not have opportunity to respond to the news on Thursday, when the cut was enacted, but Europe’s rate was on the rise due to other factors. Thus, the consequences of events are also described within the arena of the market.

*Characters and Narrative Elements.* Third, the article reflects some of the ways in which the market is constructed as an animated being. The actors or subjects to whom events are attached, in the first five paragraphs, are stock exchanges, markets, or groups of stocks. These include “stock markets across the Americas,” “blue-chip Japanese stocks,” “Dow Jones World Stock Index,” and “European and Asian Markets.” The focus on the market in this article is easily noticeable given the protagonists.

In this case, given that the FED takes an active role, the markets are presented as passive. The markets are often constructed as active heroes in a quest where they win the trophy that is waiting for them at the end of the road.

The story that is developed is that markets are ill and they are in need of care. They need “medicine” to heal. They receive a “shot in the arm” from the government and they are alive again and are ready to take action. To illustrate this consider that after identifying the event in the lead, the writer describes its positive effects of the interest rate cut in international/foreign stock markets: “A surprise cut in U.S. interest rates Thursday gave a welcome shot in the arm to stock markets across the Americas, and major indexes soared by as much as 8%” (1rst paragraph). In a similar take, on the second paragraph, the writer argues “Exchanges in Canada and Latin America were the only non-U.S. exchanges still open [when the interest rate cut was enacted] and felt the immediate impact of the Federal Reserve's sudden easing.” These exchanges were
revived by the actions of the Federal Reserve. Thus, the markets are presented as the ones in need for rescue (passive), and the Federal Reserve rescues them with its policy actions (active). In paragraph 15, the writer reiterates that these markets felt the “rejuvenating impact of the U.S. rate cut.” This metaphor would fit into the narrative identified by Suttles (2010), that of the economy experiencing a medical emergency.

The similar pattern can be inferred for the Dow Jones, a frequent protagonist: “The gains in the Americas gave a strong boost to the Dow Jones World Stock Index, which closed up 5.22 points, or 3.08%, at 174.44.” This is one way in which the overarching story of the Dow Jones is crafted. Here he is recovering from a fall, and continues its quest.

Sources. Fourth, the market articles uses information that comes from standard sources. In this way, it creates a similar “neutral” tone for all the articles. The only quoted source in the article that is considered as an example is a business insider: “Chris Turner, managing director of economic consultancy I.D.E.A.” This shows the overall trend of calling business insiders, and other expert participants of the market, to voice their opinion to the exclusion of others.

Civic Logics

Civic logics, as mentioned above, are mostly present in the NYT in articles written by the Foreign Desk. This orientation can be explained include (developed in the fourth chapter, on methods and data): (1) the arena in which the news occurs; (2) newsworthy events; (3) characters; (4) narrative elements; and (5) sources.

The articles authored by the Foreign desk can be divided in two groups. The first group covers the developments in emerging market countries. The second group discusses the role of the United States and multilateral agencies, where the country has a seat or power, in stopping the crisis. In the second group, for example there is one article where the event that is discussed
is the U.S. participation in an I.M.F. meeting with officials of Latin America. One of the key arguments of these officials is that their economies are sound.

The use of civic logics can be illustrated through an article of the second group, where civic logics are intertwined with and in dialogue with economic logics. The article, published in October 7th, is located in Section A (Sanger 1998).

The larger than average article, at 1203 words, debates the consequences of the “world financial crisis”, for countries and economies. This indicates that the relevant arenas are the economy and the civil spheres. The key actors, that are quoted, are President Clinton, the president of the World Bank, and Treasury secretary Robert E. Rubin. These are political and economic actors who represent their organizations.

The article discusses the disagreements that have been already brewing in the IMF meetings but now in public. Some of the actors are looking to change the reading of the situation at the global level, and for the United States. There are actors quoted arguing for an understanding that the crisis is global, in a high mimetic view. For instance, the article quotes the finance secretary of Hong Kong, who argues: “‘The debacle at L.T.C. helped,’ he added, referring to Long Term Capital Management, the Greenwich, Conn. hedge fund that required a Wall Street bailout two weeks ago. ‘Suddenly there was a recognition in this country [the United States] that we are all in the same boat’” (Sanger 1998).

In terms of narrative elements, the most important is that interpretations of the situation are made through arguments that can be characterized through civic or economic logics. Wolfensohn, the World Bank President, voices his criticisms are crafted in terms of opposing key economic actions and ideas, pushed by IMF, with motives that are relevant from a public interest perspective: “In the rush to stabilize currencies and bring about economic reform, too
little attention was being paid to the growing ranks of unemployed and the risks of undercutting political stability” (Sanger 1998). The actions encouraged by the IMF are at a macro level and often discussed in general economic terms, such as GDP growth. Wolfensohn is highlighting that these actions have clear consequences to the “poor and middle class,” which are not the usual actors that are taken into account. This actor emphasizes the connection between consequences of economic measures, which are defined as abstract happening in the economic sphere and markets and the consequences for real people. The suffering of these people has been hidden from the United States and those (Westerners) that sit in the multilateral agencies; Wolfensohn poses. Criticizing IMF politics and seemingly the way in which they are thought of in economic terms, Wolfensohn “…argued that before the world can turn to building what the Clinton Administration calls a ‘new international financial architecture,’ it must adjust its approach to the crisis so that ‘mathematics will not dominate humanity” (Sanger 1998). The abstract nature of markets is contrasted with the human experience.

This article, which primarily uses civic logics, starts with a way of seeing the crisis oriented through economic logics. Markets are animated beings. They are in need to be tamed: “As President Clinton argued anew today that ‘we must find a way to temper the volatile swings of the international marketplace,’ the president of the World Bank publicly broke with the approach that the United States and the International Monetary Fund have taken in managing the global crisis” (Sanger 1998).


In this section I will illustrate when civic and economic logics are used simultaneously (though the articles do have a primary orientation) in the case of the coverage of a specific type
of event: an interest rate change instituted by monetary authorities, whose importance is discussed in the first section above. This is a topic that both outlets share, and that is significant in number of articles. There are eight articles in the WSJ referring to interest rate changes (of 15 searched by the key word “interest rate” in the abstract).

These articles are useful as well to understand how the international crisis was seen from a domestic perspective. The changes in the interest rate in the United States are mainly in response to the international economic turmoil, according to several observers. The management of the interest rate is part of monetary policy.

This examination is useful in illustrating the mix of civic and economic logics when the discussion is around monetary policy and the actions of the FED. The analysis of the articles also illustrates the nuance in the meaning making patterns. In this discussion, one finds similar patterns to those of the discussion of monetary policy in Colombia during the End-of-the-Century crisis.

To present the nuance in the use of economic and civic logics, I thickly describe three articles from the NYT. These articles were published on October 16th, 1998 regarding the intervention of the Federal Reserve in interest rates. The key event is the Fed’s decision to cut two key interest rates by one-quarter of a point. The interest rates in question are the Federal Funds rate and discount rate (Morgenson 1998). As a consequence, the two-year Treasury note

66 Bloomberg (1998) identifies the two rates as: 1) Federal funds rate – the interest rate at which banks trade balances with each other, typically overnight and 2) the discount rate – the interest rate at which the Fed lends to financial institutions.
enjoyed the biggest rally in more than three years, as pointed out by two articles (Bloomberg 1998; Morgenson 1998).

These articles are illustrative of the general patterns for this topic. One is an Editorial. The other two of the articles belong to the NYT section entitled The Markets, which has three subdivisions: stocks, markets and bonds (Bloomberg 1998; Morgenson 1998). Both of the articles in question fall within the latter subcategory. This series is mentioned above.

The editorial comprises 370 words (Anon 1998). The article written by Gretchen Morgenson, appeared on the first page of the business section (Morgenson 1998). Because it includes many of the meaning making dynamics or mechanisms used in “market” articles, while being more explicative, Morgenson’s piece will be the center of this example. At 1229 words and 17 paragraphs, the article is about one third longer than the average NYT article in the sample (830 words). Gretchen Morgenson is a renowned NYT journalist who won a Pulitzer Prize in 2002. The Bloomberg article, while shorter than average (452 words and 12 paragraphs), is typical in terms of length for wires coming from Bloomberg News: the average word count for the five articles available in the sample is 389.

Arena and newsworthy events. The interest rate is explored as an event of the economy, the markets and the society. The articles analyzed here, which address expectations of or actual changes in interest rates in the midst of economic turmoil, combine elements of market articles that should be familiar to us by now. Each article opens with a newsworthy event related to interest rate change. In some cases, a stock or bond increase (e.g., rallies) is narrated as the main event while the interest rate cut functions as the explanation for the market movements.

Characters. The editorial constructs the Fed as a powerful protagonist that should play a role in the solution of the global financial or economic turmoil (Anon 1998). The plot of the
editorial, in a nutshell, is that now that the Fed has eased monetary policy, it is demonstrating it can be proactive and address the global crisis. This is a typical pattern of civic logics, where actors are characterized as active, within the sacred side of the binary of the discourse of civil society (Alexander 2006).

By easing monetary policy, the Fed adds to recent evidence suggesting that “officials around the world” are no longer passive or “complacent about the financial storm” (Anon 1998). This policy action has made it plain to observers and actors (European policy makers, “financial markets” and investors) that the Fed is an energetic actor. The Fed pursues bolder courses of action “…determined to prevent a world recession.” The agency “rightly decid[es] that the cautious rate reduction it made Sept. 29 was not enough” (Anon 1998). While the article is not geared towards the market, the editorial shows similarities with the market articles in terms of their characterization of the Fed. For instance, in (Webb 1998), a typical market article as described above, Turner, a business insider describes the Fed through its actions as an active agency. He synthetizes the two readings of the situation (low mimetic and high mimetic) that are discussed below in “narrative elements”, which are part of the set of civic logics: “The cut looks like ‘an aggressive preemptive move by the Fed, especially coming between meetings,’ Mr. Turner continued, ‘so long as we don’t get any bad news.’ His concern is that some investors will be left wondering whether the Fed has been pushed into cutting rates by some bad news that is still to come out – such as another hedge fund in trouble” (Webb 1998).

There are as well some of the characters of the market articles, such as various types of investors.

Narrative elements. Taken as a whole, these articles offer more “storied” content than the WSJ article presented above (Webb 1998), which is a typical market article. They possess more
meaning making elements, such as deeper character construction. In the discussion of the interest rate cuts I did not identify clearly woven plots within the group of articles but rather actors’ interpretations of the events in terms of their urgency: narrated in low mimetic or high mimetic mode.

The salient narrative element is, thus, the mode of narration **low mimetic or high mimetic**, which are part of civic logics as well (Smith 2005). The following questions explain if the situation is high mimetic or low mimetic: What are the reasons for and consequences of this event? How are these consequences or reasons assessed or interpreted by key participants/actors within the market under consideration (e.g., stocks, bonds)? What are plausible explanations? What do the event and effects of the event suggest for the future? Alternative explanations for events are differently weighted in the articles, fitting the journalistic model of balanced coverage presenting opposite views.

The important pattern here is that, as in other cases of discussion of public policy (and, in this case, an element of monetary policy), the various interpretations of the causes or motives that account for the Fed’s decision to cut the rates at a particular moment outside of its usual scheduled meetings can be understood as part of a meaning making contest. The contest is about how to interpret the threat posed to the U.S. economy/market by the global/ foreign financial crisis or turmoil. Journalists narrating the story, and the various sources quoted, aim to convey their own assessment of the threat level (their own reading of the situation).

Explanations for the unusual timing of the interventions and reasons for enactment of the cuts are examined by different parties. The assessment made by each party (high mimetic/low mimetic) suggests which courses of action should be followed. For example, given international events (a key event being the crisis in Russia) and market changes, should the U.S. (Federal
Reserve) act? Morgenson (1998), in an article on October 16th, examines the interest rate cut of the previous day. The key question for investors, Morgenson argues, is: “Why did the Fed move at all and why did it move when it did?” The actors voicing different interpretations are guessing what the various economic signals (e.g., inflation) might mean: Do they indicate trouble in the domestic economy? How might the future look (narrative link between the past, present and future)?

Schlesinger’s (1998) follows the same line of inquiry as Morgenson (1998) in a 633 word article, which focuses on the interest rate cut of September 29th (“a cut of a quarter of a percentage point in the federal-funds rate”). This cut followed the same broad motivations as the one done two weeks afterwards. Both cuts were in response of the Russian crisis and other interconnected events that happened on mid-August. Schlesinger explains the Federal Reserve’s reasoning, and details how the event is assessed and evaluated by investors and observers. The author places an emphasis on explaining the timing of the cut which suggest different interpretations (low mimetic/high mimetic). Schlesinger describes as well actors’ expectations about the Federal Reserve’s intervention, particularly about the next scheduled meeting in October, 1998.

In the next paragraphs I present in more detail the construction of both modes of narration: low mimetic and high mimetic within the articles.

Low Mimetic Reading. According to a low mimetic interpretation, the global financial crisis has not grown or spread that much, nor has it affected the U.S. The focus is, thus, on the health of the domestic economy. The low mimetic reading does not demand urgent action and out of the ordinary action, in the present or in the future, as the situation is “business as usual”
(Frye 2000; Smith 2005). For instance, the NYT editorial, which is part of the group of articles presented in this section, argues:

Financial markets soared in reaction to the unexpected rate cut, with the Dow Jones industrial average rising more than 240 points in just 45 minutes. *That was an indication that investors did not see the action as a warning that the Fed knew of any imminent disaster, such as a pending financial failure, but rather as a sign of determination to help the global economy* (Anon 1998) (Emphasis mine).

This interpretation is low mimetic because there is no impending crisis on the (U.S.) domestic economy. The FED is compelled to act but it does not need so to save the U.S. economy. One sees as well the use of a pattern, which is often part of market articles. Financial markets are the actor in the first part of the quote, and the key event is part of the markets movement: “they soared”. The behavior of investors suggests that there is no impending domestic crisis. Thus, the situation is interpreted, thus, in a low mimetic mode.

*High Mimetic Reading.* A high mimetic interpretation, in this discussion, states that the crisis is indeed increasing in severity and that the U.S. may already be feeling its effects, or would in the immediate future. These effects may be evident, for instance, in a credit contraction. A high mimetic interpretation calls for action, which matches the nature of the situation (Frye 2000; Smith 2005).

According to an argument presented both by Morgenson (1998) and Bloomberg News (1998), investors and other actors interpret the Fed’s action as an indication that the crisis is closer to home than anticipated or that the Fed has insider knowledge that the crisis is worse than imagined. Only the Fed possesses the information necessary to visualize the scenario. This is the reason why the Fed cut the interest rate outside of its scheduled meetings. For instance, “Richard Schwartz, who oversees $21 billion in bonds at the New York Life Asset Management in Parsippany, N.J.”, a market participant, states that the Fed’s action “tells me there is significant
concern about the financial system and the liquidity being provided by financial institutions…” (Bloomberg 1998). The high mimetic interpretation applauds the actions taken by the Fed (cutting interest rates) and suggests that further intervention may be needed. Morgenson (1998) specially presents detailed arguments that follow the pattern of civic logics. Bloomberg News (1998) mixes these interpretations with standard market article features.

Another example of this high mimetic reading comes from Schlesinger (1998), who discusses the interest rate cut of September 29th. He states that the Fed is acting because it is following an interpretation that conditions have deteriorated, necessitating an easing of monetary policy. The “factors” accounting for the cut are “fragility of the global financial market” and a resulting “gloomy outlook” for the American economy.

Sources. Comparing the three articles about the interest rate on October 16th, illustrates how the type of sources cited contribute to the general orientation of the articles. In Bloomberg News (1998) there are three sources, all of them business insiders. They are identified as working in Bankers Trust Company, in First Chicago Capital Markets, and in New York Life Asset Management. In the case of the editorial, the only referenced source is Wim Duisenberg, “the head… of the European Central Bank” (Anon 1998). In the article of Morgenson (1998) the mix of logics can be glanced from the sources: William Dudley, economist at Goldman, Sachs, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond president and the FED (as an agency).

After examining the key character structures and narrative elements present in the two institutional logics, I close this section of findings explaining how events have been constructed in the crisis as surprises.

Construction of Events: Event as a Surprise. Another key pattern within the U.S. coverage is how event are narrated as unusual and constructed as a surprise. I will illustrate this
pattern through the three articles that have been discussed: a Business Section piece, a Bloomberg News wire and an Editorial.

A fairly typical pattern of both market articles, structured through economic logics, and other crafted through civic logics is that the key event around which the plot is developed is constructed as a surprise. This construction is somewhat routinized in the structure of articles focused on the market—the same type of events are categorized over and over as unusual. It is important to note, however, that these are indeed times of economic turmoil with degrees of importance placed on events constructed as novel.

The Fed’s action is characterized as abrupt by the Editorial: “By suddenly cutting interest rates yesterday, the Federal Reserve sent a strong message that it is worried about the world economy and determined to prevent a world recession” (Anon 1998).

In Morgenson’s (1998) account, the key actors in the “financial markets” are bewildered by the cut: “traders and investors [were caught] completely flatfooted,” and “already-battered bond investors [are] more nervous than ever.” In the Bloomberg News article, the cut is described as “unexpected” in the lead, with two sources later supporting this assessment. Business/market insider “John Burgess, who oversees about $90 billion at the Bankers Trust Company,” is quoted as stating, “It certainly caught us by total surprise”(Bloomberg 1998). Similarly, “Tom O'Connell, a Treasury note trader at First Chicago Capital Markets” characterizes the monetary easing as “just a shock...The timing shows how much they are concerned about the market” (Bloomberg 1998).

Discussion and Conclusions

In reference to the first objective of this dissertation, which is as presented in the introduction, to understand how economic crises are created in the public sphere, this case allows
drawing the following conclusions. The most common meaning making patterns, within economic logics is the standard market article. In the standard market article, one of the key stories is the quest, in a romantic genre, where the protagonists or heroes travel a path that is full of obstacles and are able to jump over them. They arrive at the finish line, obtaining the prize at the end. This narrative is interesting as the characters are animated financial objects, such as currencies or stock indexes rather than people.

In terms of civic logics, the main pattern is not fully developed in terms of plots. The most salient narrative element is that of genre, where one see a contest between a low mimetic mode and a high mimetic mode of narration of events. In this case, the actors are investors and central bankers. Actions by central bankers are interpreted through the available modes of narration by investors, and other economic actors.

In reference to the second objective of the dissertation, identifying if the public discussion of economic crises, as organized through the media, would be shaped through two strong institutional logics widely available: civic and economic logics, or exclusively by one of them.

This case shows the importance of civic logics, as have been documented by cultural sociologists, to narrate economic events. Civic logics are mixed with economic logics, particularly when discussing issues that are related to public policy. However, one of the key findings is that indeed economic logics are fully developed and widely used in the discussion of the crisis. The standard market article attests to this. This has implications, as will be discussed below, on the way in which we understand the media and its role.
The discussion of the third and forth objectives will be conducted in the Discussion and Conclusion chapters. These objectives deal with how civic logics might be different in the Global North and the Global South, and if they can be understood as capitalistic ideology.

The fifth objective is to identify the relationships between institutional logics in the coverage and the spheres they represent. In this case, the findings in relation to the distribution of logics by section and outlet are as follows. Mostly, the expectations of a fragmented media are met. The WSJ shows dominant economic logic particularly, as have been discussed through the standard market article. This indicates, as hypothesized, that WSJ, being a specialized business outlets is close to the economic sphere, is less autonomous, and thus, economic logics are prevalent. Civic logics are present but in less degree, particularly, as mentioned, through discussion of public policy regarding interest rates. In this case, assuming the economic sphere as home of the WSJ, civic logics are entering to repair the economic sphere. This means, for example, that actors discussing policy are bringing in criteria of public interest when discussing economic issues, and/or journalists understand these issues from the perspective of the economic and the civic.

The NYT shows in the business section a clear dominance of economic logics, and in most of the other sections (except business) a mix of economic and civic logics, being civic logics dominant. This indicates that the distribution of logics is different across sections. As hypothesized, if one understands media as a composite of journalistic fields, the business section reflects the lack of autonomy of the journalistic field. Equally, it could reflect that (in the extreme of heteronomy) the economic sphere is the home of the business section.

Civil logics are indeed present in the business section, in the NYT especially in articles that deal with issues of public policy such as the interest rate cut (similarly to the WSJ).
Following the hypothesis that the business section is part of, or at least analogous, to the economic sphere, the existence of these logics indicates that there is civil repair (if they come from the civil sphere) or “facilitating output" if they are invoked by economic actors who are including civil criteria. The hybrid nature of public officials in economic subjects help explain why civic logics are present when discussing public policy. Public officials by definition should follow the public interest, but in management of economic issues, they might invoke criteria that emerges from economic and business expertise.

The sixth objective is to examine how economic crises are constructed as part of the economic sphere (a crisis circumscribed to the economy) or as a broad social crisis. In this case this objective could not be fulfilled as this construction happens, in this period, in relation to the economic crises that are unfolding in Russia and Brazil. It happens as well in the follow-up of the Asian crisis. As the Emerging Market crisis was not included due to reasons of scope, this will be tackled in future research.

In this chapter I examine the coverage of the End-of-the-Century-crisis in two Colombian outlets. I will present, first, the overview of the coverage including the outlets and articles explored. Second, I will explain which events were chosen and why, giving some context about the overall economic situation. These two topics, breakup of articles and description about the cases, are expanded in the Methods and data chapter. Third, I will present the findings of this chapter, focusing on the arena where the events are set, the relation with the newsworthy events, the character structures, the key narrative elements (genre and plot), and the sources employed. I will discuss, as well, the distribution of institutional logics.

First Section: What is the Overview of the Coverage?

In this section I will summarize which where the outlets chosen and the number of articles explored, with a breakup by section or desk. I will describe as well the main topics of the coverage.

The outlets that were examined are *El Tiempo-Portafolio* indexing the mainstream public sphere and *Revista Dinero* indexing the specialized business public sphere. To recapitulate, the aim was to sample 75 articles in each of the outlets. There were 70 sampled for *El Tiempo-Portafolio* and 22 for *Revista Dinero*.

The Colombian coverage of the End-of-the-Century Crisis key themes are the following: 1) currency policy actions, 2) the fiscal adjustment and austerity measures, 3) the bankruptcy of Granahorror and the government intervention, including its effects in the broader financial sector, 4) and the workers’ protests, including the two general national strikes.
Within the coverage in *El Tiempo-Portafolio* and *Revista Dinero* there are three groups of articles according to theme and section that are relevant overall.

The first group is composed by the articles, which are more oriented towards the local dimension of the crisis. Within this group are opinion articles and editorials. This chapter will be focused on this subgroup given that contributes more with distinct patterns that are not described in the chapter of the U.S. coverage of the Emerging market crisis.

Articles that are more oriented towards the international dimension of the crisis compose the second group. These articles cover in depth key the emerging markets crisis on its own (such as the Russian crisis) more than the local crisis. Within this group are most of syndicated articles, printed in the economic section (*El Tiempo-Portafolio*) or the international section (*Revista Dinero*). The group of syndicated articles has similar patterns to those of U.S. coverage of the Emerging market crisis in 1998. As explained in the Methods chapter, this dimension was removed from the project for reasons of scope.

The bankruptcy and government intervention of Granahorrar is mainly discussed in *El Tiempo-Portafolio* in articles in the first page and in Economy Today. Six *El Tiempo* articles published between October 4th and 18th (i.e., in the primary sampling window) analyze the case of Granahorrar.67 For context, it is important to note that for the rest of October 1998 fourteen additional *El Tiempo* articles feature Granahorrar’s situation and events. These articles are not

67 A key word search of “Granahorrar” produced ten articles, of which four are brief—less than 150 words—and thus discarded.
analyzed, as they do not fall within the sampling window. Notably, eight articles about Granahorror were published in El Tiempo a month earlier, within the window.

Second Section: Chosen Events and Rationale

In this section, I will recapitulate which was the anchor event around which the sampling window was constructed, and will give additional information that provide context for the discussion of the findings. In the first part of the section I present a general overview of the impact of the Emerging Market Crisis on Latin America and the U.S. I will, as well, give information about the key events that were discussed in the coverage. The events explored here show the different dimensions that were at play in the unfolding of the End-of-the-Century crisis.

Second Section. General Overview Impact of Emerging Market Crisis

To capture the discussion and the effects in September and October 1998 I refer to Stiglitz (2002b) and to Finance and Development’s (IMF Magazine) issue of September 1998. This is an issue where IMF Area Department Directors are asked to evaluate the effect of the Asian crisis on different regions (IMF Area Department Directors 1998).

Stiglitz argues that the Asian crisis was: “…the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression— one that would spread from Asia to Russia and Latin America and threaten the entire world.” (2002b) In 1998 the East Asian crisis generated effects in other countries (Stiglitz 2002c), starting to configure a broader Emerging Markets Crisis. In terms of the capital markets: “The crisis had led to a general skittishness about investing in emerging markets, and investors demanded higher returns to compensate them for lending capital to this countries” (Stiglitz 2002c)
Regarding Latin America, as of September 1998, Claudio M. Loser explains that the Asian crisis, thus far “…has had significant spillover effects in developing countries of the region” (IMF Area Department Directors 1998). Nevertheless, he states, the Asian crisis has not been as consequential for the region as the Mexican crisis. Regarding capital inflows the IMF Director argues that these have “slowed considerably” since November 1997. (IMF Area Department Directors 1998)

Loser argues, “For the most part, the policy response to the Asian crisis in the emerging Latin American economies was prompt and decisive: interest rates were raised significantly in some cases, and fiscal policy has generally been restrained” (IMF Area Department Directors 1998).

Colombia crafted a “policy response” to the economic turmoil that was similar to that of other Latin American countries in the fiscal side. It had planned a gradual fiscal adjustment, which was communicated by the incoming president in early August 1998. As the international environment began to change, the Administration modified its position arguing that the adjustment had to be steeper and quicker. Interest rates were high at this period in Colombia and this interacted with currency policy. Many observers criticized the level of the interest rates and of the exchange rate. These were key aspects of the development of the End-of-the-century crisis in its internal and external drivers.

As of September 1998, the IMF projected that the “output growth” in Latin America would go from 5 percent in 1997 to 3 percent in 1998 (IMF Area Department Directors 1998). The IMF Western Hemisphere Director argues that probably the fiscal deficits in Latin America would increase, relative to 1997. The external current account deficit is expected to follow the same trend, going from 3.3 of GDP to 4 percent in the same years (IMF Area Department
Directors 1998). Relative to the management of inflation, it was expected that the “substantial progress” in decreasing it across the region will hold (IMF Area Department Directors 1998).

The factors that were weighting in widening the deficits are the “drop in the world prices of oil and other key commodities, which has been exacerbated by the Asian crisis, reduced export revenues, and additional expenditures made for relief and repairs in several countries owing to damage related to El Niño” (IMF Area Department Directors 1998). In Colombia, the drop in oil prices and the expenses related to El Niño were the most discussed.

Within the Emergent market crisis that was brewing in 1998, the events in Russian were some of the most consequential. The Russian government had weaknesses in its finance structure which led it to augment its sovereign debt (Stiglitz 2002c). As a result of this situation, in August 17, 1998 Russia experienced a currency crash and defaulted on its debt. Stiglitz (2002c) points out to the “announcement” of that day as the event that “precipitated a global financial crisis”. After it “interest rates to emerging markets soared.” (Stiglitz 2002c) These were higher than during the peak of the East Asian crisis.

In Colombia during September and October 1998, the difficulty of accessing funds (“the closure of the capital market”) was relevant and discussed by many observers.

Regarding the United States (and Canada), the IMF Area Department Directors (1998) explain, in September 1998, the country has being able to maintain a good performance in the

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68 In addition to the measures explained above, Stiglitz (2002c) explains that Russia set up “temporary controls of capital” and “support to a payment pool set up by the largest Russian banks in order to maintain the payment stability” (p. 259, note 6).
face of the aftermath of the Asian crisis: “In the United States and Canada, domestic demand is strong, and the crisis has served essentially to reduce the need for monetary actions to slow the economy” (IMF Area Department Directors 1998). As of September 1998, the IMF considered that the relative strength of North America would aid Latin American countries, because their trade, close to 50%, was with this subcontinent. North America was expected to grow at 3%, at this point. (IMF Area Department Directors 1998)

Key trends of the crisis in this period in the U.S. economy are: an increase in capital flows (“flight to quality”), a decline in “long-term interest rates”, and an appreciation of the dollar (IMF Area Department Directors 1998). Thus, the discussion about these trends and the related decisions are the ones that are singled out in the U.S. outlets and in the related Colombian outlets.

Second Section. Anchor Event: Granahorrar’s bankruptcy and subsequent government intervention

Firstly, to recapitulate, Granahorrar's bankruptcy and subsequent government intervention were chosen as the anchor events of the sample for 1998. These events marked the beginning of the banking crisis in Colombia (for more details on the relevance of this event see the Methods chapter). Below, I will give an overview of the nature of Granahorrar and the events that led to its bankruptcy on October 4th, 1998, and its bailout. Granahorrar is a mutual type organization for saving and lending, especially in mortgages for housing (coorporación de ahorro y vivienda,
CAVs, by its initials in Spanish). This organizational form, the CAV, was created in the 1970s.\(^6^9\) Granahorrar provides an exemplar of the crisis endured by this particular sector.

Granahorrar’s collapse was the result of “strong pressures of liquidity” that began early in 1998, as the government agency FOGAFIN explains in hindsight (Fogafin, 2009).\(^7^0\) These liquidity issues generated “a strong distrust of the public” and were the result of Granahorrar’s “balance sheet structure \((estructura de balance)\) and a capital deficiency” (Fogafin 2009:143). Overall, Granahorrar had losses of $291,390 million pesos (Fogafin 1998: 5).

Granahorrar aimed to solve its problems of liquidity by seeking resources from the interbank market, the “liquidity supports” of the Central Bank and FOGAFIN (Fogafin 2009:143). In the last period before its collapse and nationalization, FOGAFIN agreed to buy

\(^6^9\) For a historical view of the CAV as an organizational form see (Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012)

\(^7^0\) Urrutia-Montoya and Llano (2012) explain that the crisis was addressed from the government standpoint by four governmental agencies representing different branches of government: “The Supreme Court \((Corte Constitucional)\), the Central Bank, FOGAFIN and the Finance Ministry \((Ministerio de Hacienda)\).” Urrutia-Montoya and Llano (2012) state: “The Bank and the Ministry were looking to provide the necessary conditions to reactivate the credit. For this, it was sought to capitalize the banks that needed it, above all public banks and to lower the cost to access liquidity. The objective of FOGAFIN was to protect the savers deposits and that of Superintendence was to heal the financial system.” (p. 58) FOGAFIN is talked about but only regarding 1999.
unpaid loans (cartera) from Granahorrar in the amount of 373,000 million pesos. The objective was to grant the CAV liquidity. Granahorrar agreed to buy the loans back on September 30<sup>th</sup> (Fogafin 2009:143). However, the CAV’s troubles were “of such magnitude” that it failed to honor the agreement. As a result, per the signed terms, the sale of the unpaid loans to the government agency was final (Fogafin 2009:143). This meant that Granahorrar was officially in default: “Granahorrar needed to report a loss of 128.726 million pesos, which would have rendered it illiquid” (Fogafin 2009:143). This default triggered its eventual nationalization (toma de posesión), as defined in the law (Fogafin 2009:143). FOGAFIN had previously loaned additional resources to Granahorrar and thus, as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, it had guaranteed promissory notes for a total of 499.820 million pesos, a debt amounting to 134% of its overall loan operations.

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1998 the then Banking Superintendence ordered an immediate capitalization of 157,000 million pesos in order to fulfill the legal requirements (Fogafin 2009:143). When the CAV’s shareholders failed to comply, the Pastrana Administration nationalized it through FOGAFIN (on October 4<sup>th</sup>) (Fogafin 2009:143–44).<sup>71</sup> According to Fogafin (2009: 143-144), “This intervention made possible the protection of resources belonging

<sup>71</sup>The technical explanation follows: “Given the failure of shareholders to fulfill the order of capitalization, the Board of Directors of FOGAFIN, in exercise of the powers contained in the organic statute of the financial system, proceeded on October 3, 1998 to reduce the nominal value of the shares of the [CAV] to the sum of a cent and make the capitalization for $157,000 [million] which meant its nationalization” (Fogafin 2009:143–44).
to one million six hundred thousand savers, worth 1.3 billion pesos.” FOGAFIN then capitalized Granahorrar with an investment of 90,000 million pesos during 1998, and 82,000 million pesos during 1999 (Fogafin 2009:143–44).

The rest of the events discussed here are related to other dimensions of the large systemic crisis that was unfolding. There are events related to the management of the exchange rate, and the intertwined discussion regarding the fiscal adjustment, and the workers’ general strikes.

Table 13 Granahorrar Chronology per El Tiempo-Portafolio’s articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event (Highlighted by El Tiempo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, September 25th</td>
<td>Granahorrar President sends an S.O.S to the government (Portafolio 1998g) Finance minister seeks creditors (banks who hold Granahorrar’s shares) who will actively pursue a solution to save Granahorrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 29th</td>
<td>Savers withdraw 25,000 million pesos from Granahorrar (Portafolio 1998g) FOGAFIN and Banking Superintendence announce agreement of shares given to settle debt (Portafolio 1998g) The agreement is later rescinded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 30th</td>
<td>FOGAFIN (initial) loans are due (Portafolio 1998h) Initial agreement between Granahorrar and its creditors (Portafolio 1998f) Creditors and Granahorrar start negotiations. (Portafolio 1998j)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 1st</td>
<td>Granahorrar’s shares are insufficient to pay loans (1998g) Negotiating parties leave the table; the agreement is suspended. (Portafolio 1998m) Carrizosa’s lawyer warns that the bargaining occurred under duress. (Portafolio 1998g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, October 2nd</td>
<td>Negotiations are resumed (Portafolio 1998g) Administration asks Carrizosa, one of the shareholders, to capitalize Granahorrar (Portafolio 1998j) Government announces no intervention at the moment (Portafolio 1998g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>El Tiempo</em> praises an agreement between shareholders and creditors (Portafolio 1998k) but this agreement is later rescinded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administration asks Carrizosa, one of the shareholders, to capitalize Granahorrar (Portafolio 1998j)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When Granahorrar asks FOGAFIN for help, it buys unpaid loans (<em>cartera</em>) under a buy back agreement for approximately 345,000 million pesos. Other banks lent it 130,000 million pesos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, October 3rd</td>
<td>Government announces it will guarantee liquidity. Nationalization is not discarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, October 4th</td>
<td>Bankruptcy of Granahorrar. The organization is nationalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 5th</td>
<td>First day of new management. Rosario Sintes is appointed president (EFE 2008b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Granahorrar is capitalized in 157,000 million pesos by FOGAFIN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second Section. Event: The Currency Episode

In the period of study, September and October 1998, key events of distinct components of the unfolding systemic crisis are debated. A currency crisis was part of the End-of-the-Century crisis. Thus, the discussion about the exchange rate is important in the understanding of meaning making around the crisis (see the Chapter about the cases of study for further information).

The way in which this topic is addressed is similar to others in public policy, such as fiscal adjustment. Thus, I will discuss in the next section the patterns about the currency crisis and management jointly with other patterns related to monetary policy, banking crisis and fiscal adjustment. This allows to illustrate the patterns around a larger set of themes.

The events examined here – occurring in September and October, 1998 – are part of what Urrutia and Fernández (2000) defined as a “currency episode.” The currency episode of 1998-1999 is composed of several specific events around the dynamics and management of the exchange rate level (Urrutia M. and Fernández M. 2000). See the key events in the currency episode in the Table 14 below.

The country was experiencing an attack on the exchange rate level and the Central Bank was defending the level of the exchange rate and the currency band regime, as a response to external and internal events. Several reasons, importantly the crisis in international markets
unfolding since August and heightened in September for Colombia, forced the Central Bank to
displace upwards the lower limit of the band 9% in that month (Urrutia M. and Fernández M.
2000): 181, 198). This is one of the key events in the episode. In that same month, an auction of
Repos at 90% annual effective rate is approved (Graph 17, (Urrutia M. and Fernández M. 2000):
198).

Urrutia and Fernandez (2000) identify other key policy events in this currency episode
such as the decisions that the Central Bank took on October 1998, to provide liquidity to the
markets, which were related to exchange rate management. For instance, the Central Bank
decreased the needed capital provisions that the financial organizations had to fulfill, and also,
increased the 7 days Sale and Repurchase Agreements (known as Repos in Spanish and in
English) (Graph 17, (Urrutia M. and Fernández M. 2000): 198).

Table 14. Relevant Events to Understand the Exchange Rate Moments during 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (Month)</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1998</td>
<td>Standard and Poors decrease the grading of Colombia as issues of credit in (its) currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1998</td>
<td>TBS achieved 63.97% E. A. (effective annual rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1998</td>
<td>Increase of real supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1998</td>
<td>Crisis in markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1998</td>
<td>Movement of the exchange rate band 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1998</td>
<td>Approval of the auction of Repos at 90% E.A. (effective annual rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16th 1998</td>
<td>Economic Emergency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Graph 17, Exchange Rate between Bands 1998. Central Bank. Elaborated by the
Monetary and Reserves Management Unit of Central Bank (Subgerencia Monetaria y de
Translation mine.
Second Section. Event: Workers’ General Strike

There were significant protests in the country as a result of neoliberal policies and austerity measures being implemented in the late 1990s. These measures were enacted before and during the period examined here. Some academics and practitioners argue that these measures were partially responsible of some of the aspects that precipitated the End-of-the-Century Crisis. There were two nation-wide strikes, led by peak union organizations that are captured in the window one at the end of September and one in mid-October. These two general strikes were chosen as another type of key event because they highlight the consequences of the crisis for groups, such as workers, which are not taken into account in other views.

Third Section: General Findings

In this section I will discuss the general findings of the case, summarized regarding the distribution of logics and character structures.

Distribution of Institutional Logics

In the creation of meaning about the End-of-the-Century crisis and the Emerging market crisis within Colombian coverage both economic logics and civic logics play important roles.

Civic Logics. Civic logics are used, beside public policy issues, to discuss the Workers’ General Strike in *El Tiempo* and some aspects of the government intervention on the savings organization, Granahorrar, in both *Revista Dinero* and *El Tiempo*.

Economic Logics. Economic logics are used to discuss the bankruptcy and government intervention in Granahorrar when the focus is on the journey and the survival of the organization, as an example of many others banks and financial organizations are going through a similar
turmoil in *El Tiempo*. In the case of *Revista Dinero*, the articles that are printed in business/financial sections use economic logics (7 articles, 31.8%).

The articles that are printed in business/financial sections are briefer than the ones in the sections mentioned above and use economic logics (7 articles, 31.8%).

*Mix Economic and Civic Logics.* In articles that discuss public policy issues, such as fiscal austerity measures or currency policy, the usual pattern is a mix between economic and civic logics. This happens in 10 articles out of 22, 45.5%, in *Revista Dinero*, which are printed in the Opinion, Editorial and Cover sections.

The confluence of economic and civic logics is reflected in the type of audience to which *Revista Dinero* addresses. The magazine orients itself to talk simultaneously business leaders and public elite decision makers, especially in issues of public policy. The analysis of public issues brings in a broader perspective where civic logics are included. The civic logics enter the discussion in public policy to bring in issues and constituencies, which are not taken into account from an economic/market perspective.

Economic and civic logics are also present in the International articles in *Revista Dinero*, which take into account the Emerging market crisis and discuss it (5 articles, 22.7%). For reasons of scope, as is mentioned in the Methods chapter, the emphasis of the analysis of this dissertation is not in the Emerging market crisis.

*Character Structures*

Actors in the articles discussing the End-of-the-Century crisis are varied, depending on the section and on the topic at hand. In Editorials and Opinion articles, for some commentators, the actors are less delineated, and more implicit and abstract. In these articles, a low mimetic narration goes hand in hand with characters that are more implicit.
As there is not an urgency to act, there is no need to name the actors that would be accountable. In some cases, they are more explicit. In a narration that intends to increase the urgency moving to the pole of high mimetic, actors are more explicit. In these actors, columnists address elites who are expected to act. This is the case of public officials.

In the case of Granahorrar, the actors are more concrete, as well. It is the organization, and one of the leaders of the organization. In the case of the currency episode, the actors are the Central Bank and the Administration. In the case of the Workers’ General Strike, the key actors are the workers, the citizens as a whole and the Administration or public officials.

*Fourth Section: Summarized Presentation of Findings*

In this section I will describe more extensively the meaning-making patterns, emphasizing the arena where events occur, the character structures, the narrative elements (plot and genre) and the sources, for a sample of the events discussed in the second section of the chapter. First, I discuss the patterns of economic logics, illustrating with some examples. Second, I focus on the key topics of Granahorrar Bankruptcy, the Workers’ Strikes, and public policy issues, such as currency management, explaining how are they narrated.

*Economic Logics*

In *Revista Dinero*, economic logics are prevalent in briefer articles printed in different sections that can be grouped as business/financial. These are not mixed with civic logics. These are seven articles, which amount to about a third of the total. These articles do not follow strictly a market format as is the common in the coverage of the WSJ and NYT in 1998, but do hold a consistent economic logics orientation as will be evident below.
One article that illustrates this pattern was printed on October 13th in the Companies section (Revista Dinero 1998f). The article “Tenacity is needed” addresses the economic turmoil from the perspective of participation in the market. This article can be categorized through the four dimensions mentioned above. In this article, thus, the arena is the market. The key actors are, thus, investors. The events that are important are variations in the market and the events that have produced it. There are no sources quoted. Regarding the narrative elements available, there is a romantic view. The crisis is seen as an opportunity. This romantic view is the same of the case of the quests available in the market format articles, where the future is bright. However, the protagonists here are not animated entities such as stock indexes. The protagonists are the investors.

The article gives advice to investors on how to invest to take advantage of a dire economic situation. For instance, the article argues for short-term investment: “The decision regarding the (financial) entity (which is) chosen to make the deposit is very important. In times of nervousness, turnover in the secondary market of less liquid papers is further reduced and discounts on the price increase.”

Revista Dinero (1998f) conveys the idea that the market will reward those who invest cleverly and wait:

But if you definitely are not in a rush and want your money to double or triple in two or three years, the best you could do at this point is to invest in stocks. The stock prices have reached almost ridiculous levels and at some point have to rebound sharply. Actions like Valores Bavaria, Bavaria, Banco Granahorrar and Bancolombia [mostly banks] are found today for less than half of what they were worth in January. The truth is that companies are there, operating well and stock prices are victims of a market that has reacted with excessive force. But this will not last forever.

In the following subsections, I will describe the use of both economic and civic logics by events.
Economic Logics. The bankruptcy and government intervention in Granahorrar is mainly narrated in *El Tiempo-Portafolio* through several plots in romantic and tragic genre, in an economic logic orientation (for an extended description of these plots see the Appendix 1 of this chapter). This is the case for the articles on sections such as Economy Today. The arena for these plots is the economy. The newsworthy events are those that are important for the firms’ trajectory and survival, such as those that have generated obstacles for the firm. The protagonists are the anthropomorphized firm and one of its shareholders. The preeminent sources are actors from the economic sphere and knowledgeable about Granahorrar, such as shareholders, creditors, and executives.

The romantic story line in this case leaves the lesson that heroes are always able to jump over obstacles in their journey and achieve the goal they aimed for, being profitability or survival (González P. 1998; Portafolio 1998g). Granahorrar has already jumped over many obstacles and now it is facing bankruptcy and a government bailout. The organization will be successful again after navigating a path riddled with obstacles. In these stories Granahorrar is an animated actor, the protagonist, and it is described as a salient and exemplar organization (González P. 1998; Portafolio 1998k, 1998h).

The tragic story line starts the same as the romantic one, with an organization that has been successfully navigating obstacles. However, the ending is different (Portafolio 1998d, 1998b). Granahorrar failed. Nationalization is the tragic outcome that marks the end of the story. One of the reasons that explain it is that nationalization did not benefit most of the groups involved: shareholders, creditors and government. The only ones benefited were savers. There is
another parallel tragic story with Julio Carrizosa, one of Granahorrar’s shareholders, as the protagonist. Carrizosa is a case of rags to riches (Portafolio 1998d, 1998b). Nevertheless his fate is tragic: he lost the fruits of his labor at the end through the bankruptcy of Granahorrar.

_Civic Logics._ Granahorrar's bankruptcy and intervention are analyzed, as well, from a different perspective from a civic logics orientation: from the stability of the financial system and the broader economy and the consequences of the bailout for its future stability, and from the trajectory of the firm. These logics are present in articles in _El Tiempo_, which are in the first page, and combined with economic logics in non-economic sections. Equally, they are present in a key Cover article of _Revista Dinero_, published immediately after the bankruptcy.

The key newsworthy events (and issues) explored are Granahorrar’s bankruptcy and (government) bailout. These events, is argued, are not only important for the survival of the firm, but also because of their potential consequences for the broader financial system, economy and society. Thus, the arena where the issues occur is the economy and the society. The health of the financial system is mentioned but not in terms of the market.

The Government as a whole, and FOGAFIN as the government agency, is narrated as a heroic actor, which was active and acted in a timely fashion (Portafolio, 1998a, 1998d). The government intervention is important for its consequences in the broader financial system, for savers and, less so, for taxpayers. The institutional logic use is a civil one, as the government intervention is assessed from a public interest perspective. For instance, _El Tiempo-Portafolio_ argues that a bailout is guided by the "public good" and expected to benefit savers and not shareholders (Portafolio 1998h).

Regarding narrative elements, the discussion of these issues is less storied. The element that is found regarding genre is that it is narrated in a low mimetic mode.
Public officials and *El Tiempo* and *Revista Dinero* journalists, as the omniscient narrators, described as unique (i.e., an outlier) and not typical. The bankruptcy is not likely to affect other organizations or the system as a whole. There is no need to be worried about an imminent banking crisis. Furthermore, the intervention of the government was timely, and this way a crisis is averted. Given this interpretation, future actions, as expected in a low mimetic view, are thought as "business as usual": Public officials, for instance, advocate that solutions for this event are specific, and there is no need to think about their generalizability, they are not going to be repeated (Revista Dinero, 1998f)

*Workers’ Strikes: Summary of the Arena, Characters Structures, Narrative Elements and Sources by Institutional Logic*

*Civic Logics. El Tiempo-Portafolio* covers the workers’ protests related to the austerity measures that the government was enacting or pushing forward to fight the economic crisis. This is the only outlet that discusses the protests. In the narratives mobilized for this case the *arenas* are the society and the economy, given the nature of the claims of the groups, the events, and the consequences. The *newsworthy events* are the general strikes that were programmed for September and October. The main *characters* are the government and the workers that are protesting. The unionized workers, who are collective characters, populate the civic world and are valued in it.

Given that the consequences of the economic crisis, the austerity measures that were enacted and the marches that were programmed and taking place, are analyzed in relation to their impact on the economy and the broader society. The nature of the events, which are rarely included in standard economic articles, and the characters and sources indicate that this theme is
narrated through logics that are closer to civic ones. The opinion of union leaders and public officials is relevant for this perspective.

The fundamental way in which the national strikes are discussed is through the binary opposition of motives of actors, coming from the discourse of civil society. Public officials pollute workers who are unionized and other workers who are protesting, while they attempt to purify themselves (Portafolio 1998a, 1998i). Workers are described by these public officials (and the omniscient narration of the newspaper) as self-interested, only seeking a wage increase, and unreasonable. These officials describe government as altruistic and reasonable in opposition to workers. The government is described as the one trying to save the day, looking to balance the budget amidst an economic crisis, and looking out for citizens. The public officials argue that workers should “sacrifice” for the public good.

Illustrations of these patterns are an article dated October 5th, which explains and justifies the president's call for public sector workers to exercise “consciousness” with respect to the economic situation of the country and the viability of their demands. In that conscious mindset, they are exhorted to accept a 14% increase for all workers (Portafolio 1998a). The same characterization is made in another article, dated October 6th, according to which continuation of the strike was deemed irresponsible and senseless: “There is a total absence of responsibility [of the workers] in terms of the implications of this strike, given the country’s difficult economic conditions”: the strike “is equivalent to no less than the protocolization of the greatest senselessness, contrary to the most elemental national conventions (Portafolio 1998i).

However, there are some elements in the debate that one could identify as being economic logics. The government is pushing a neoliberal agenda and the workers are resisting it. The
workers’ unions were denouncing the focus of the government on a steep fiscal adjustment, which was going to be financed mainly by the workers.

A strong critique of neoliberal reforms is not presented within this topic in the newspaper, which is desperately needed to contextualize the issues. The workers’ case is seen in a more comprehensive and sympathetic light in an alternative public sphere, that of unions. Ahumada (2000) shows the difference in unions’ understanding of the events of the period. The struggle during this period in Colombia for them was against a neoliberal agenda including privatizations, liberalization, and decreasing workers’ rights. Ahumada (2000) supports her argument in interviews with union leaders and unions’ publications, which are rarely quoted in the mainstream media.

For an extended description of these meaning making patterns see the Appendix 2 of this chapter.

Public Policy Issues and Construction of the End-of-the-Century Crisis in Revista Dinero. Summary of the Arena, Characters Structures, Narrative Elements and Sources by Institutional Logic

In this section I will illustrate two dynamics in meaning creation regarding the crisis. On the one hand, I will discuss how the crisis is constructed in Revista Dinero. On the other hand, I will show the use of economic and civil logics in making sense of the issues. I describe how public policy issues, such as exchange rate fluctuations and the currency band modifications enacted by the Central Bank, are narrated through several plots mixing economic and civil logics. The articles that discuss public policy issue include those that advise elites regarding fiscal adjustment and currency management.
Construction of the Crisis in Revista Dinero

Revista Dinero began printing articles about the international economic turmoil early in 1998.72 “The crisis” did not merit a cover until the second semester. The weekly magazine devoted the cover of the June 16, 1998 issue to “the largest economic crisis of the postwar period.” Reference to the crisis as such became the norm with the July 21, 1998 issue cover, where the magazine explicitly named the economic turmoil a “financial crisis.” The August 31, 1998 issue, which is the first in the sample analyzed here, made reference to the “crisis” and “economic storm.” 73

Revista Dinero in its issue of August 31st captures, for the first time, the event of August 17th in Russia, where there was a currency run on the Ruble. The Magazine dedicated a long cover article to the international turmoil. One of the ways in which this key event and its consequences are discussed in this article is through economic logics, identifying as newsworthy the behavior of the stock market and the currency market. Revista Dinero argues that early on August 21st: “[A]s the reports of the Dow Jones came in, of the stocks of Asia, Latin America and Europe and the Colombian peso was [deeply] devalued, there was only one question in the air: will this time hit us?” (Revista Dinero 1998e) The international events are tied to key “local”

72 I use other articles not included in the sample to show the progression of the construction of the crisis during the first four trimesters of 1998.

73 Thereafter, a myriad of covers during 1998 and 1999 reflected distinct aspects of the crisis, including uplifting features about investment opportunities.
event a deep devaluation of Colombian Peso in August 21th: The Peso “was devalued to touching almost the ceiling of the exchange rate band” (Revista Dinero 1998e).

This steep devaluation, the event that is highlighted, is tied up with the possibility of Colombia experiencing an economic crisis. The key question that allows interpreting the present event and tying it to the future is: “will this time hit us?” This indicates that after the developments of the Asian crisis, and its aftermath, probably now the crisis is closer to home. This question will be repeated several times in the following months and the response will change. The question is key for actors that are advocating for a distinct reading of the situation: Is economic turmoil, “business-as-usual” (low mimetic), not yet a crisis, which does not need extraordinary actions? Or is it a full blown dangerous crisis (high mimetic) where it is imperative to act and stakes are high? This question allows writers to connect previous events with future concerns and actions, by connecting previous assessments of the danger to current ones.

The cover article of August 31st, emphasizes that the urgency of government action particularly in the fiscal front has changed with the recent international events: “With the change in the global economy, fiscal adjustment is more urgent than ever. The Minister of Finance has to get full throttle.” (Revista Dinero 1998e) The perception of risk of emerging economies have changed, thus, getting funding in international markets will be harder for Colombia. This is clear from the change of spreads. The author argues that Colombia must understand these new circumstances and the fiscal adjustment should be not only faster but deeper that initially planned. This is an argument that would be repeated later on, when the three months of the new government are completed.

The writer is aiming to change the mode of narration moving from low mimetic to high mimetic, which is tied to the type of actions that are needed, and the speed at which they are
needed. The Magazine argues that these international events and their consequences show the fragility of Colombian economy and the need for quick changes (Revista Dinero 1998e). Even when some of the international turmoil seemed to have subsided on August 24th, and the cover article of August 31st points to it, it still concludes that the message for Colombia is that the situation has drastically changed.74

Regarding currency management, an Op-Ed columnist equally pushes in an article of the same August 31st issue for a drastic change (Fernández Riva 1998b). Javier Fernández Riva conveys the need for the Central Bank to change the limits of the exchange rate band and of changing the exchange regime completely.75 The writer reminds the reader that in the previous issue of Revista Dinero, two weeks before, he had stressed the need to take advantage of the favorable conditions: “I suggested that the Bank of the Republic should exploit the haven of tranquility existing at that time with respect to exchange issues and raise the dollar band (limits) before any international interference made the value of the dollar climb back.”76 Now, he

74 This assessment is different to, for example, the one generally done by the Magazine regarding the Great Recession, when the assurance of better conditions, for example in the stock market, after a few days into the turmoil, is enough to cool down concerns in Colombia.

75 Fernández Riva is an economic consultant who, according to Urrutia and Fernández (2000), was salient in the public “currency episode” debate of 1998-1999.

76 Fernandez Riva’s views, as outlined in this Revista Dinero Op-Ed, are similar to those expressed in other instances and highlighted in Urrutia and Fernández’ (2000) analysis. “Indeed,” they comment, “Javier Fernandez argued from early January the need to eliminate the
emphasizes, that opportunity has been lost. The columnist thus argues: “In the current world situation the exchange rate band has become a threat to the economy, for nothing. Alternatives must be considered” (Fernández Riva 1998b). According to the Op-Ed writer, the exchange band regime is polluted: it is simultaneously useless and a threat. The Central Bank has been passive or misguided on this issue and needs to change course (Fernández Riva 1998b).

exchange rate band when the appropriate circumstances were present.” Here the authors were referencing an article published in early January 1999 in the magazine *Prospectiva económica.*

Fernández Riva argues as well that the band should be eschewed and “[one should be] content with statements showing that the Central Bank is committed to a stable real exchange rate.” Urrutia and Fernández (2000) explain his argument further, pointing out that, in some cases, the position to encourage changing the regime has actually been paired with a preference for a certain level in the exchange rate: “…a more general position advocated floating the exchange rate, but with volatility controlled by a Bank intervention, i.e. an exchange rate band [in place] but not announced” (p. 181).

This article can be categorized thematically, as criticizing the level of the currency, through the distinction that Urrutia and Fernandez (2000) advance. These authors posit, based on empirical examination, that arguments erupting in the currency episode can be classified as: a) against and in favor of keeping the exchange band currency regime, and b) against and in favor of keeping a certain level of the dollar at a certain point in time (e.g., allowing the dollar to move from $2.300 pesos per dollar).
Fifteen days later, on September 14th, 1998 the same Opinion columnist explains that the country is entering a recession while discussing the expectations around interest rates (Fernández Riva 1998a). Fernández Riva talks about “…a recession of reserved prognosis.” He ties the current conditions to those probable in the future: “Without the slightest alarmist mood, I have the distinct impression that for the first time the country has a high probability of entering real, real a recession, by the combined effects of fatal interest rates, a terrible external environment and recessive fiscal adjustment” (Fernández Riva 1998a). In this way the Opinion columnist paints a picture in which the recession is the most likely event in the future of Colombia. The crisis as such is crystalizing.

The causes of the future recession, which are evident in the present, are very high interest rates, the international environment, and the fiscal adjustment, which is going to be procyclical. The columnist mentions in his assessment two of the key public policy topics that will be discussed in the next month: interest rates, and the fiscal adjustment.

Similarly, in another Opinion article 15 days later, Fernández Rivas’s continues to build up the urgency, contributing to construct the crisis as such. The mode is now high mimetic. As of September 28th, the situation is not of a business-as-usual, which can be solved through a gradual approach. The columnist describes how the consequences of the fiscal adjustment, which had been identified by the new Administration early on as a priority, have changed. The Administration had proposed a “…a serious and rapid adjustment but not ‘a shock’ [approach]” (Revista Dinero 1998d). This incremental approach was feasible in the scenario where “…an important part of next year fiscal deficit could be financed with external credit, reducing the pressure on domestic resources …” (Revista Dinero 1998d). However, “[t]he closure of the international capital market forces to accelerate and accentuate the fiscal adjustment” (Revista
The columnist argues that through a serious but not hasty adjustment, it was expected that the country could “…avoid a drastic increase in taxes and a collapse of public investment in the midst of a recession” (Revista Dinero 1998d). Now a gradual approach seems farther away from possibility. Fernández Riva also issues a warning, connecting the present events with the future: if there is not an effective coordination between fiscal and financial policy, “fiscal adjustment will fail and the country will enter a recession of reserved prognosis” (Revista Dinero 1998d). As of September 28th, the banking crisis does not seem evident for many observers, but it is brewing. Granahorrar is going to be bankrupt in a few days.

In October 13th, an article posits that the recent events call for a renewed interpretation of the economic situation and what is needed (Revista Dinero 1998c). It prompts as other articles have done since August 31st to modify the reading from a low mimetic to a high mimetic: “The country received two warnings (campanazos de alerta) the first week of October that make obvious the need to adjust the macroeconomic strategy” (Revista Dinero 1998c). In contrast to the gradual adjustment that was proposed in August by the new Administration and the finance minister, Revista Dinero argues, “The financial adjustment should be accelerated. The Banking Superintendence needs the financial teeth of the reform bill that is before Parliament to facilitate the exit of [financial] entities. An urgent message to be sent to Congress” (Revista Dinero 1998c). It seems that, the observers consider that the Administration has been passive; it has not yet responded in a way that acknowledges that a crisis is imminent. Other actors, like the Congress, need to jump in.

On October 30th, Javier Fernández Rivas, points out to a “…a general feeling of economic wreck…” (Fernández Riva 1998c). The columnist considers this feeling “amazing” given that the Administration was highly popular at the time of the inauguration and three
months into the period, the feeling has drastically changed. Furthermore, this is a well-regarded Administration on economic topics: “…in contrast to Samper's [former Administration] boasts excellent international relations and has a luxury economic team” (Fernández Riva 1998c). Also, it is one “…whose election by a historic majority vote shoot stock market indexes upwards for a few days…” (Fernández Riva 1998c).

Public Policy Events: Summary of the Arena, Newsworthy Events, Characters Structures, Narrative Elements and Sources by Institutional Logic

In this section I will detail the coverage of issues related to the crisis from the perspective of monetary and fiscal policy and in their interaction with currency policy. See the overview of the impact of the Emergent Market Crisis on Latin America and the U.S. above, in the first section of this chapter, where the key events are discussed.

The focus will be on the patterns of articles published about the exchange rate level and the currency management included in the discussion above, are part of a broader trend about a “currency episode,” during the 1998-1999, as identified by Urrutia and Fernández (2000). The currency episode is discussed above in the description of the events that are considered in this case. There are articles about this subject both in Revista Dinero and El Tiempo-Portafolio. Below I will describe the patterns of these articles through the typology aforementioned.

Civic logics and economic logics are used to discuss these public policy issues. In this case the arena is the economy, or the economy and the society.

Newsworthy events. The newsworthy events in public policy issues might be those emerging from the evolving international crisis, such as currency shocks, and others within the issues of fiscal adjustment and exchange rate management, as illustrated above. The relevant currency events are discussed in the first section of this chapter, above. These events can be
further categorized as market or public policy events part of the “currency episode,” within the sample. Market events are the events that affect the currency market, such as the crisis in international markets. These include the variation in the exchange rate due to external and internal economic events. For example, market fluctuations, such as the devaluation of the peso in the first week of September in response to the events in Russia in mid-August (Revista Dinero 1998b). Equally, there are public policy events, such as the change in the currency exchange band enacted by Central Bank or the Central Bank’s defense of the level of the exchange rate by selling reserves.

The modification of the currency band, a public policy event, in early September 1998 given the exchange rate behavior in the previous year is one of the events discussed. This decision was prompted, according to the Central Bank head, by the strong structural changes of the “country's external sector” triggered by the Asian crisis (Urrutia-Montoya and Llano 2012:9–10). The currency turmoil had started in 1997.

**Narrative elements.** One of the key narrative elements in discussing public policy is the mode of narration, within genre. The actors debating the causes of the global crisis, the currency turmoil, and the fiscal problems (and the actions to be taken) are seeking to change the interpretation of the situation from high mimetic to low mimetic. This pattern is exemplified above with currency issues and fiscal adjustment, among other public policy issues.

As seen above, the attempt in changing the interpretation involves three steps, which are woven in the debate by different actors: making sense of the past, making the connection with the present, and suggesting actions for the future. Making sense of the past may involve reinterpreting the past, sometimes the very recent. In this past there are the seeds that are blooming in the present or will be blooming in the future. Then, through this interpretation of the
past and present actors mold the needed responses in the future. This way in which actors intervene in the debate is consistent both with Smith’s (2005) view of the modes of narration, and more generally with Barthes’ (1978) understanding of the structural elements of narratives.

There are two articles in Revista Dinero, additional to the ones presented above, through which these narrative elements can be exemplified. In Lora’s (1998) article, the economy is the arena where the events unfold. The debate is about how to rescue economies and countries out of the crisis, and who should be responsible for it. The reading of the situation should be changed for developed countries, from a low mimetic to a high mimetic. Lora considers that developed countries and multilateral organizations should act alongside developing countries giving them a shared role in solving the global crisis. Both groups should be protagonists in the crisis. The author argues that even when emerging countries have had mistakes in their economic management they cannot solve the crisis on their own: “Without a coordinated effort from Washington, the crisis will spread like wildfire” (Lora 1998). Equally, developed countries indeed share the responsibility: “It is wiser to accept that international investors, and international agencies themselves, did not detected in time policy errors and overestimated the profitability of business in Asia and Latin America and its potential for sustained growth” (Lora 1998).

An editorial of September 28, 1998, “Adjusting another band,” is oriented towards advising elites (Revista Dinero 1998a). The editor communicates a pressing need of rejecting the old conception and advocates for a new reading of the situation that enables a connection with the future, in a similar pattern to the articles constructing the crisis presented above. The Editor urges the Government to let go of the current framing of the situation, one where the “seriousness of the inherited situation and the need of adjustments” is emphasized: “Enough is
enough!” The Editor urges the government to shift towards a “constructive” mode and one that looks into the future: “As much as its communications, the government needs to improve its focus on the structural issues and on coordination of the executors to address them effectively. The issues need to change and ...[the government needs to] adjust the other band [that of the ministers]” (Revista Dinero 1998a). As explained in the analysis of characters below, the Government should replace other actors that have been in charge.

Revista Dinero argues that in the first months of the Administration (starting on August, 1998) important issues to the development of the country that have been neglected through the emphasis on the fiscal adjustment and exchange rate management. The editor poses that indeed they are “…the most urgent tasks. But paradoxically, far from being the most important” (Revista Dinero 1998a).

Characters. The characters include Colombian public agencies such as the Central Bank, those from the Executive Branch (Ministries, Banking Superintendence, Administration) and the public officials attached to it. Others characters who populate the political and civic world are foreign governments, multilateral agencies, and business as a group (empresarios). The characters that are relevant in these articles are mostly this type of actors, not stock indexes, or stocks, animated entities, although some events are mentioned as well in a way that is part of economic logics. This supports the idea that this topic is anchored in the economy and the society instead of the market.

These characters are described using semiotic oppositions. For instance, in Lora (1998), actors are constructed in opposition to each other: developed and developing countries. This opposition includes government, and multilateral agencies such as the IMF. Developed countries are constructed as been passive in the management of the crisis, assigning the responsibility for
the crisis and its solution to developing countries. Now, developed countries are asked to be active. Developing countries are in need of developed countries: they cannot tackle the crisis on their own.

In the case of *Revista Dinero* (1998a), article mentioned in the description about the construction of the crisis above, there is a similar discussion on who should be dealing with the crisis. The editorial argues that the Executive Branch should be in charge (it is not argued explicitly but it is likely that is from the Central Bank, who is leading the fight on currency and monetary issues): “To change this it is required to sharpen the other side: the orchestra in which ministers move. They must be relevant and effective.” The Administration, should have by now a coherent approach, after fifty days of being appointed (*Revista Dinero* 1998a).

Business people should, as well, take the baton from the government: “The attention of people and business people (*empresarios*) should be focused on issues that matter to us” (*Revista Dinero* 1998a). These relevant issues are of more structural character. *Revista Dinero* is talking directly to its audience of business people and exhorting them to act. The Executive Branch and the business people have been passive until now, and are asked to be active. Central Bank has been in charge, but has not accomplished what is needed.

*Sources.* Some of these articles, Op-Eds, editorial and the Cover of *Revista Dinero*, do not cite too many sources because they are formatted as opinions. The sources that are quoted can be characterized as the actors discussed in characters, above.

*Civic and economic logics.* One of the ways in which the prevalence of civic logics in the discussion of issues can be seen is through *Revista Dinero* (1998a). This editorial has as well a discussion, which is meant to broaden up the understanding of the issues that are at play in the economic turmoil. The Magazine argues for the relevance of achieving equity to be a sustainable
society and for economy to be effective and sound. The editor reminds the reader of the synergy between dimensions, without a sustainable society there is no healthy economy. The adequate development of the country is needed to be able to surpass the economic turmoil. Here one sees some intermingling of civic and economic logics through civic repair (or “facilitating input”).

Discussion and Conclusions

To summarize the findings of this chapter, in Revista Dinero, the most common pattern in two sections, Cover and Opinion, which includes editorial, is a mix of economic and civic logics. The Magazine consistently develops this pattern. The Magazine develops an approach to the issues that comprises economic logics: actors in the economy are protagonists, and valued by their actions, guided by logics coming from the economic sphere. It is unapologetic in this orientation. Nevertheless, the Magazine also addresses public policy regarding economic issues directly. Revista Dinero positions itself to debate with and inform elite decision makers who need to have the public interest at hand. The analysis of these issues, in the most important articles of the Magazine, brings in a broader perspective where civic logics are included. The civic logics enter the discussion in public policy to bring in actors, which are not taken into account from an economic/market perspective, and reasons that include the public interest in the discussion, more so than the accounts that employ economic logics do. This happens in the Cover and Opinion sections in articles that usually discuss public policy, such as fiscal austerity measures or currency policy (10 articles out of 22, 45.5%).

Economic and civic logics are also present in the International articles, which take into account the Emerging market crisis and debate it (5 articles, 22.7%). For reasons of scope, as is mentioned in the Methods chapter, the emphasis is not in the Emerging market crisis.
Economic logics are the main orientation of articles that are printed in sections that can be grouped as business/financial. These are briefer and less prominent than the ones in the sections mentioned above and use economic logics (7 articles, 31.8%).

From the perspective of the hypothesis that considers media as fragmented, these patterns indicate that in Revista Dinero, particularly in the discussion of the local crisis, that economic logics are “at home” within the Magazine and civic logics enter to (civically) repair.

In the case of the business/economic section of El Tiempo (which comes from Portafolio), the expectation was that economic logics would be dominant. If civic logics were available in this section, as in the case of Revista Dinero they would be repairing the section, as an economic sphere terrain (understanding economic issues through civic criteria). The coverage of Granahorrar's bankruptcy, discussed in the economic section of El Tiempo mainly through economic logics, is an example of this section being an economic sphere terrain, where economic logics are dominant. The existence of civic logics, in lesser degree, indicates that civic logics are repairing. This is the case, when the bailout is discussed from a perspective of the broader economy (financial stability) and society (discussing rights).

In the case of El Tiempo, it was expected that all the sections except business/economy would have a civic orientation that is dominant. This civic orientation might be comprised of civic logics and/or alternative civic logics. There is indeed a civic orientation, and it is exemplified in key topics of the crisis such as workers’ strikes, the currency management, and the fiscal measures. Civic logics and economic logics were mixed to discuss the case of the Granahorrar bankruptcy and bailout in sections different to economic ones. In these sections it was expected that the bailout would be narrated mainly through civic logics. There are no alternative civic logics.

In this empirical chapter I will describe meaning making about the Great Recession in two U.S. media outlets. First, I will briefly remind the reader the about the events, outlets and articles that are explored as part of the sample. Second, I summarize the main findings for this case and provide in-depth description of the central patterns in the use of economic logics and civic logics. Third, I will present the conclusions.

First Section: Events, Outlets and Articles

Events

The Great Recession started on September 15th when Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. This is the anchor event around which the sample of coverage in a two weeks period was constructed, to recapitulate what was presented in the Methods chapter.

There were others events that were equally central when the Great Recession was unfolding within the sample window. To identify them I used a timeline put together by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York (Federal Reserve Bank of New York n.d.). The timeline accurately reflect the events that were highlighted by the outlets in the articles studied here (see Table 15, p.210).

On September 15th, two key events happened related to Lehman’s bankruptcy: Bank of America purchased Merrill Lynch and AIG debt was downgraded by the three larger rating agencies which showed (and stated) the trouble that the insurance agency was in (Federal Reserve Bank of New York n.d.). A day later, the Fed lent resources to AIG for a total of $85 billion. In terms of policy, the Fed maintained its fund rate at 2% (Federal Reserve Bank of New York n.d.).
The trouble in money market funds was also part of the crisis at this moment. On September 16th, RMC ‘breaks the buck’ (the share went under one dollar per share) and the next day other money market funds experienced difficulties. Other events that are relevant, and were highlighted in the coverage were the change of Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs from investment banks to commercial banks.

Table 15 Events of the Great Recession, September 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Type of Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>Fannie Mae and Freddy Mac are placed in Federal conservatorship</td>
<td>Other policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>Lehman announces $3.9 bn loss in Q3</td>
<td>Market event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>Moody’s and S &amp;P threaten to downgrade Lehman</td>
<td>Market event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 14</td>
<td>Eligible collateral for TSLF and PDCF expanded</td>
<td>Other policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 14</td>
<td>10 banks create $70 bn liquidity fund</td>
<td>Market event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>Bank of America purchases Merrill Lynch</td>
<td>Market event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>Lehman files for bankruptcy</td>
<td>Market event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>AIG debt downgraded by all three major rating agencies</td>
<td>Market event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>RMC money market fund “breaks the buck”</td>
<td>Market event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Fed funds rate maintained at 2%</td>
<td>Fed policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Fed loans $85 bn to AIG</td>
<td>Fed policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>More money market funds come under pressure</td>
<td>Fed policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Treasury establishes the money market guarantee program</td>
<td>Other policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Paulson calls for government plan to purchase troubled assets from financial institutions</td>
<td>Other policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>SEC bans short-selling on 799 financial stocks</td>
<td>Other policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21</td>
<td>GS and MS approved as bank holding companies</td>
<td>Fed policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 24</td>
<td>New swap lines opened with Bank of Australia, Sveriges Riksbank, Danmarks National-Bank, and Norges Bank</td>
<td>Fed policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>ECB and SBN swap lines are increased by $10 bn and $3 bn</td>
<td>Fed policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>WaMu is closed by OTS</td>
<td>Market events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>OTS and FDIC acquire WaMu</td>
<td>Other policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>84-ay TAF allotments increased $75 bn, two forward TAF auctions totalling$150 bn introduced and total swap line doubled to $620 bn</td>
<td>Fed policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>Treasury bailout plan is voted down in the House</td>
<td>Other policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>Systemic risk exception allows open bank assistance to Wachovia</td>
<td>Market events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Federal Reserve Bank of New York (n.d.)
Outlets and Articles

The outlets that were chosen, to recapitulate, are the New York Times (NYT) and the Wall Street Journal (WSJ). The NYT is a general interest outlet, which represents the mainstream public sphere. The WSJ is an outlet that represents the business public sphere.

Overview of the articles. The sample examined here, to remind the reader, is comprised of 75 articles per media outlet (see Methods chapter for more detail on the sample).

For the month of September 2008 the business/financial desk writes the largest group of articles—approximately 75% of the total: thirty-one articles out of fifty. The second largest group—approximately one fourth of the articles—is written by the national desk (ten out of fifty). Finally, the editorial desk authors five articles, there are two O-Ed articles, and the metropolitan desk writes two articles.78

78 In August, 2008, a month before the crisis, the breakup is as follows: There are 25 articles in total. From these articles, 19 are written by the business/financial desk (86.4%), 1 by the national desk, 1 by the metropolitan desk, 1 by the editorial desk (Op-Ed), 2 without desk, 1 Connecticut Weekly desk. For reference, this is the information included in the Summary of texts: 3 articles were printed in Section A. 2 articles were printed in first page: 1 written by the business/financial desk and 1 by the national desk. The third article in Section A, not in front page, is an Op-Ed. In Section C, 18 articles were written: 16 by the business/financial desk, 1 by Connecticut Weekly Desk, and 1 without section. In Section B, there is 1 article written by the Metropolitan Desk. In the Section BU, 1 article, written by Money and Business/Financial Desk, in the section F, 1
In the case of *The Wall Street Journal*, in September 2008, the largest group of articles is printed in Section C (20 articles). The second largest group, numerically, comprises 19 articles, published in Section A. Of these two are printed in first page. The third one comprises 13 articles, in Section B. (There is one article in Section D).

Second Section: Summary of Findings. Institutional Logics, Characters, and Narrative Elements (Types of Stories and Genre) in the Coverage of the Great Recession

In this section I will present the findings regarding the U.S. coverage on the Great Recession. First, I will outline the distribution of the coverage between economic logics and civic logics by outlets. Second, I will discuss in more detail the meaning making patterns within each of the institutional logics, in terms of the typology described in the introduction to the empirical chapters.

*Distribution of Logics*

Economic logics and civic logics are both relevant in the construction of the crisis in U.S. coverage about the Great Recession. About ¾ of the articles in the sample in the NYT, on September 2008, make sense of the crisis through economic logics. These are most of the articles written by the business/financial desk. In total, this desk writes thirty-one articles out of fifty (September 2008), and xx articles out of 25 (August 2008).

article without subsection. There is 1 article without section (written by Business/Financial Desk).
Economic logics are used in two main ways. First, market format articles are used (this format is explained in the introduction of the empirical chapters, and will be recapitulated below). Second, stories about executives and firms embarking on quests, which have been institutionalized, are mobilized for a positive depiction of Wall Street executives and firms.

In the NYT, about a fourth of the articles are narrated through civic logics. Civic logics, are used in the NYT, on two themes: the presidential campaign and the effect that the crisis is having on its development, and on the approval of TARP and its effects on society, not just on the financial system.

In the WSJ, economic logics are used in the majority of the coverage, particularly through the market format article. The articles using civic logics deal with the same topics as the NYT: the presidential campaign, and the debate about TARP.

The institutional logics that construct the coverage are differently distributed in the sections of the newspapers, particularly in the NYT. Economic logics are primarily used in the Business Section of the NYT, and in the WSJ, which indicates that they are part of the same economic journalistic field. NYT National desk articles, as a group, are of a more mixed orientation. The articles that use civic logics, covering the presidential campaign and TARP, are written by the National desk. While one might expect that Op-Ed articles and those written by the metropolitan desk, to be more aligned with civic orientations, this argument is difficult to test, as there are only a few such articles in the sample, and they are heterogeneous.

In the following sections I will discuss the main patterns of these two institutional logics, starting with economic logics. For economic logics I explain the market format article, and the plots with executives and firms as protagonists. Second, I discuss a key way in which civic logics and economic logics are mixed in the discussion of WS. Within this part I, first, explain the way
in which WS was constructed, then the narrative elements present, such as type of stories where
WS as a character is in the center. One of the stories is woven around the topic of the change of
investment firms to banks, and the other around the opposition of the model of the commercial or
universal bank, and the investment firm.

Economic Logics

Economic logics. First pattern: Market format. One of the key patterns in economic
logics, as mentioned, is the use of a market format article. To recapitulate, a market article is
defined by the following characteristics: (1) the arena in which the news occurs, is narrowly
defined as the market. (2) The definition of a/the market as the arena thus limits the type of
events that are constructed as newsworthy, such as those that generate variation in the markets,
or the same variation is identified as an event. (3) Characters: this narrative chooses actors due to
their role as participants in the market. These actors include regular buyers and sellers
(investors), traders, and financial analysts. Government officials and politicians are actors whose
actions are discussed in terms of their impact on markets. (4) Narrative elements. The market
articles address the crisis in standard ways, reporting what has happened to the stock market, or
other markets, such as the currency markets. The most common stories locate the characters,
such as markets or stock indexes, in quests. Most of the stories are romantic. (5) The sources that
are used are business insiders, such as traders, who can make sense of the events in the markets.

To illustrate these patterns, examples from two articles follow. The first example, on
September 15th in the WSJ, discusses the behavior of the dollar as it responds to the crisis events:

The dollar has risen like a meteor since late July, fending off hurricanes, the U.S.
government bailout of failing mortgage firms, downbeat economic forecasts by the
Federal Reserve, even the prospect of another Fed rate cut.
But its gains came under threat of reversal already Friday as markets prepared for a solution to problems of Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. By late Sunday, prospects of a deal, though, had dimmed and traders were preparing for a possible bankruptcy filing. While such a move could prompt more flight-to-safety flows into the dollar, it could be offset by developments elsewhere in the financial sector (Molinski 2008).

As we see, in this example, the dollar is animated and the protagonist. The dollar has been facing obstacles since July, as would a hero on a quest: “fending off hurricanes, the U.S. government bailout…” However, the situation now is different, as economic turmoil increases. The dollar continues in its quest, and there is uncertainty into what will be next for this hero as markets wait for the unraveling of Lehman’s bankruptcy and the aftermath. Next days will give the dollar the opportunity to jump over this new obstacle.

The second example, on September 16th printed in the NYT, discusses the effects of the Lehman Brothers’ bankruptcy, and the related events on the market:

Fearing that the crisis in the financial industry could stun the broader economy, investors drove stocks down almost 5 percent Monday, sending the Dow Jones industrial average and Standard & Poor's 500-stock index to their lowest levels in two years.

The Dow fell 504.48 points, its biggest one-day point drop since Sept. 17, 2001, the first trading day after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks (Berenson 2008).

This example highlights the construction of events in the market. The events that are discussed are the “crisis in the financial industry,” which is the cause of the Dow falling. This event of the market is constructed through its quantitative variation, 504. 48 points. The comparison of the event to the historical drop of September 11 highlights the unusualness and severity of the crisis.

Economic logics. Second pattern: The romantic, or tragic, quest of firms and executives.

Economic logics are used in another ways, besides the market article format. In this case, the arena where the events unfold is the economy. The newsworthy events are those that are relevant to the trajectory of the firms, within the selected stories. In these plots, which narrate the crisis
through the actions of firms, the firms are protagonists and animated beings. Business insiders are used as sources.

The plots are centered on the characteristics and trajectory of the executives and firms involved in the turmoil. These articles depict firms and executives within stories that were common in economic news—chronicles of their "life" events—prior to the collapse of Lehman Brothers. The executives are described in a quest where they have successfully jumped over obstacles to achieve their goals, such as survival or profitability. These stories depict executives' actions as bold and courageous when acting on behalf of their firms.

There are two basic genres: romance or tragedy. In the romantic view, these firms surpass obstacles and eventually emerge victorious, as they have been in the past. In the tragic view, these valued firms ultimately collapse.

A romantic story is that of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley. These firms were confronted by a storm (i.e., the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers and related events). The investment banks were able to navigate the storm and now they are successfully becoming bank holding companies showing their business acumen. This is discussed in the third week of September. They are shown as firms in charge of their destiny. This change, which could be interpreted as the only way these companies could maintain afloat is described still as an active decision of the firms: “Now that they are under siege, the two proud but humbled giants of Wall Street [Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley] are having to reinvent their own businesses” (Perez 2008). The opposition between proud and humble appertains more to the construction of WS as an actor, from the perspective of civic logics as will be discussed below.

An example of the aforementioned plots is the story that laments the purchase of Merrill, a valued and renowned firm, by Bank of America. The change of ownership, “a new chapter for
Merrill, is interpreted as well as a tragedy: a “fall from grace” (Story 2008). Merrill, the hero of the stories, will cease to exist independently. The firm will go from an active actor to a passive one. The culture of Bank of America, a commercial bank, is different from that of Merrill, an investment bank, and will clash with it: a slow commercial bank versus an entrepreneurial investment bank. This is a view of the firm from an economic logics perspective. The firm is a key and revered actor of this sphere.

Merrill trajectory is narrated in romantic fashion, using some themes coming from the civil sphere: as an exemplar of the “fundamental optimism of WS,” and describing it as a firm that was able to democratize access to the stock market. Merrill is aligned to the sacred side of the binary Wall Street/Main Street, as it is “the brokerage firm that brought Wall Street to Main Street” (Story 2008). Merrill, as the author argues, was credited after the 1929 crash with having brought investment to ordinary Americans and ameliorating the WS reputation: “… [It] promoted the idea that anyone, not just the rich, should invest in markets” (Story 2008). This article presents an interaction between the civil and economic sphere where civic qualities emerge from the actions of the firm and are compatible with civic ideals. In this case, the economic sphere is shown as “facilitating output” (Alexander 2006b).

In the next section I explain a key pattern that mix economic and civic logics: the construction of WS.

Economic and Civic Logics: Characters and Narratives Common in Articles Using Mixed Logics

Wall Street (WS) is developed as a character and placed in the center of different plots across a relative large number and types of articles. In these stories WS is gradually created as monolithic, animated and described as being greedy, cocky and (excessively) powerful. The way
in which these characteristics are constructed (as polluted or sacred) indicate that WS is judged first as part of the economic sphere and then as part of the civil sphere.

*Civic and economic logics. Character structures. Construction of WS.* The gradual construction of WS as an actor particularly after Lehman’s Brothers bankruptcy can be supported in an analysis of the coverage a month earlier. In August 2008 “Wall Street” is primarily used as a word identifying the sector. The characteristics that would define it later on are not highlighted when talking about WS as an entity. This happens for 17 articles in the WSJ and the NYT that mention WS one or more times: Five articles in the WSJ and twelve articles in the NYT. To illustrate in the *NYT*, for instance, WS is noted, in one of the articles, as continuing to “shed jobs,” facing ongoing losses and with “few bright spots…this summer” (Grynbaum 2008b; Mcgeehan 2008).

In September 2008, as the crisis unfolds, the WS term gains more expressive content. Wall Street is portrayed by several observers as greedy, cocky and excessively powerful. It is

79 In September 2008 in the *NYT*, 28 of 50 articles contain one or more mentions of “Wall Street.” Sixteen of these 28 articles have one or more mentions relevant for the analysis. Thus, nearly one third of the total develop the concept (16/50, 32%). These 28 articles contain 42 mentions relevant for analysis, with an average of 0.66 mentions per article. In the case of the WSJ, 19 of 50 articles mention WS, of which 15 are relevant. As in the case of the *NYT*, approximately one third of the articles develop the concept (15 out of 50).
important to note that this is true in coverage at the beginning of the crisis, i.e., when Lehman Brothers collapses, Merrill Lynch is to be bought by Bank of America, and the problems of A.I.G. begin to become evident (its debt, for example, is downgraded) (Schwartz and Dougherty 2008; Story 2008; White and Anderson 2008). For example, greed is mentioned as a key attribute of WS at the beginning of the crisis: “Fear and greed are the stuff that Wall Street is made of. But inside the great banking houses, those high temples of capitalism, fear came to the fore this weekend [when Lehman’s filing for bankruptcy was imminent]” (White and Anderson 2008).

Civic and economic logics. Narrative elements. Construction of WS. One of the general plots where WS is a protagonist is the following: Wall Street was too arrogant and has led the financial system of the U.S. to the precipice. This story has similarities with the myth of Icarus, who flew to close to the sun and his wings made of wax melt. Icarus was arrogant and ignored his father’s warnings. The genre of this plot is tragedy. This plot is softened by a point of view in which the investment bank firms are still valued, and seen as active, as in the romantic plots aforementioned. The story has civic logics components that will be explained below.

Civic and economic logics. Narrative Elements. Construction of investment bank firms: Opposing models. Wall Street firms are purified and polluted through an opposition of the characteristics of bank models: the investment bank versus the commercial (universal) bank. In this plot, there are at play judgments coming from the civic sphere and from the economic sphere. Coming from the economic sphere, from the perspective of sound business practices, the
argument is that WS was reckless and thus generated their own collapse. Coming from the civic sphere, the argument is furthermore that these firms are a threat to democracy. These firms have been reckless, they have been going against the law, and affecting citizens that now have to recue the firms involved.

*Civic and economic logics. Narrative Elements: Opposing Banking Models.* This umbrella plot has different variants. One of the variants explains that WS pushed its attributes to the extreme, and this led it to its demise. It compares between bank models. Investment banks were, prior to the crisis, highly valued organizational forms, and exemplars of U.S. capitalism. Commercial banks are opposed to investment banks. The investment bank characteristics that were highly revered—especially by insiders—, in the extreme, are the same that led WS to its collapse. The opposition of bank models and the result of WS excesses are understood primarily from an economic sphere perspective.

The transformation of Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs from investment banks to bank holding companies in the third week of September is useful to illustrate the meaning making where executives and firms are protagonists, and the connection to the establishment of WS as an actor. As bank holding companies Wall Street’s two most prestigious firms will come under the close supervision of national bank regulators, subjecting them to new capital requirements, additional oversight, and far less profitability than they have historically enjoyed (Hilsenrath, Paletta, and Lucchetti 2008). Five articles offer discussion of this topic (Hilsenrath et al. 2008; Kashyap and Stein 2008; Schwartz and Dougherty 2008; Wall Street Journal 2008; White and Story 2008). These articles were by looking for WS mentions in connection with change from investment to banking.
U.S. investment banks were admired for being “brash,” “independent,” bold risk-takers, and highly profitable, prior to recent developments, according to outsiders—observers and journalists among them (Schwartz and Dougherty 2008; Wall Street Journal 2008; White and Story 2008). These characteristics define a investment bank identity which is also crafted via opposition with “traditional” or “universal” banks which are conservative, passive—subject to supervision that limits their autonomy—, and less profitable than before (Hilsenrath et al. 2008:2).

However, the adequacy of the investment bank model is now being examined and questioned. For instance, a WSJ article explicitly state that investment banks previously thought of as savvy risk takers can now be properly understood as reckless. The leverage that brought “record earnings” was ignored by investors until the crisis hit, when the downside of the high leverage strategy became obvious (Hilsenrath et al. 2008:29). WS ability to produce significant profits with borrowed capital does not seem as clever as before, and its costs are now clear (Hilsenrath et al. 2008:29)

Consider the following article, which exemplifies the same categorization, with a comparison of the past and future of WS. The *NYT* journalist argues the change from investment banks to bank holdings “has transformed Wall Street into an arena of greater stability, less complexity… and smaller profits.” This construction implies that WS was an unstable, volatile, complex and large profit generating sector/arena prior to the crisis. Notably Samuel L. Hayes, Harvard Business School Professor Emeritus, quoted in the article, does not condemn the previous structure and logic of WS, and he expresses concern that changes may “[curb] their entrepreneurial initiative.” He contends that the change was meant to occur anyway (Schwartz and Dougherty 2008).
Similarly, a WSJ article writer juxtaposes Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley’s past characteristics as stand-alone investment firms to their future characteristics as bank holdings. The “fiercely independent,” “freewheeling” banks (aligned with the sacred side in economic logics) would become “stodgier” by regulation (aligned with the profane side). Restrictions would make them put “the speed break” (Reilly, Eavis, and Peers 2008).

Narrative Elements: Civic Logics

Interestingly, positive attributes tied to the investment banking model are seen as progressively negative by some observers as the crisis develops (Schwartz and Dougherty 2008). Several actors, mostly from the financial sector or sectors linked to it, deeply value characteristics that have defined the investment bank model. With the unfolding of the September events and during the week thereafter, outsiders readily criticize these revered characteristics.

One example in the character structure described above is tied to civic logics is an article printed in the WSJ where German Finance Minister Peter Steinbruck articulates a critique of both WS and the U.S. during the third week of September. Steinbruck describes the investment firm model as “crumbling” (Thomas 2008). Steinbruck posits that the model is unsustainable, insane and greedy: “Anglo-American free-market policy” fosters an “insane drive for higher and higher profits” with “yields of 25% [that] can’t be generated in the long term.” The traditional European model is opposed to that of the U.S., making it thus sustainable and sane (Thomas 2008). This semiotic opposition conveniently omits the fact that many European banks were deeply involved in the crisis. Steinbruck describes U.S. investment firm motives in terms that align with the counter democratic code in terms of the motives of actors. Firms are actors and their search for profits is “insane” (mad).
Steinbruck predicts that U.S. power and status will diminish within the global economy as a result of the crisis (and, not unlike the firms, the U.S. will be forced to adjust). This, in turn, will result in the emergence of more poles, including Europe (Thomas 2008).

In the next section I will discuss the use of civic logics in The Great Recession coverage.

**Civic Logics**

In this section I will describe the use of civic logics in The Great Recession coverage focusing on two issues: The Presidential campaign, and the approval of TARP. I also describe the use of civic logics through the case of the average person.

**Civic Logics: Presidential Campaign.** Civic logics are used to narrate the presidential campaign and the approval of the bailout package in the U.S. Congress in their relationship to the crisis. These topics have been historically considered more political and part of the civil sphere. These articles crafted through civic logics are printed in the *NYT*, written by the national desk. In the case of the *WSJ*, are mostly printed in section A.

A cluster of articles focuses on the effects of the financial crisis on the ongoing U.S. presidential campaign. Three articles in the *WSJ*, printed in section A, deal with the campaign (Holmes and Meckler 2008; Meckler 2008; Meckler, Holmes, and Cooper 2008).

The first way in which meaning is given to the crisis is identifying it as a key event that brought a different dynamic to the debate. Several actors identified the financial crisis as an event that was trumping others which had marked the rhythm of the campaign up to that point. The financial turmoil, “the roiling U.S. financial crisis” (Meckler, Holmes, and Cooper 2008), is described in the *WSJ* of September 19th as the “…newly dominant issue in the presidential
campaign” (Holmes and Meckler 2008). By September 25th it is understood to have taken “center stage” (Meckler, Holmes, and Cooper 2008) and “… turned the nation’s attention to economic issues that tend to favor the Democrats…” (Meckler 2008:1).

The paragraph below typifies the understanding that the financial crisis “interrupted” the campaign. The issues that candidates and voters were facing changed and the financial crisis emerged as a key election issue:

The latest twists in the neck-and-neck campaign landed in the middle of a week when troubles on Wall Street and Washington’s reaction came to dominate the contest, leaving both Sens. McCain and Obama scrambling to figure out how best to respond (Meckler, Holmes, and Cooper 2008).

The second way in which meaning is given to the crisis is highlighting its unusualness. The event is so monumental that it threw people off balance. Troubles in the economy puzzled presidential candidates and left them unsure how to respond: “[they] rush[ed] to release proposals” (Holmes and Meckler 2008). Similarly, it left voters wondering: “It’s as if the financial crisis has frozen its electorate in place,” stated a Republican pollster responsible, along with a Democratic pollster, for the WSJ/NBC News poll (Meckler 2008:7). Some observers speculated that due to the uncertainty about the contenders and the “rapidly changing financial landscape,” stakes had risen for the upcoming presidential debate (Meckler 2008:10).

The disruptive effect of the crisis is highlighted in the articles covering the campaign: The candidates met amid a crisis rocking the nation’s financial infrastructure, and the moment transformed the debate—which was supposed to be devoted entirely to foreign policy and national security—into a clash over domestic agendas as well. Much of the first half centered on the economy, giving each candidate the chance to spotlight his intentions regarding taxes and spending (Meckler, Holmes, and Chozick 2008).
The presidential debate was more dramatic than usual, as was also the case in the White House one day after the discussion of the $700 billion bailout (Meckler, Holmes, and Chozick 2008).

*Civic Logics: Presidential Campaign. Candidates’ Response to the Crisis.* The response to the financial crisis as a deeply unusual event, then, is key for presidential candidates. The financial crisis was approached in the same way as other critical events during presidential campaigns: it was up to several actors to assess the candidates’ response. Gauging this response permits actors to pollute opposing candidates and allies, and to purify themselves and their allies.

McCain’s response to the crisis did not help him. On September 17th, two days into the crisis, the NYT opens an article stating that “the financial system has absorbed one of its biggest shocks in generations” (Cooper 2008). The NYT thus sets the scene for McCain’s inadequate remark with respect to the crisis: he insists that the fundamentals of the economy are strong. This remark suggests that McCain is caught off guard by the WS meltdown. The remark seems to dismiss the financial crisis while McCain dances out of tune at a sensitive moment, when the economy is tumbling. Thus, McCain appears incredibly detached from the situation (Cooper 2008). The NYT describes this in the next two paragraphs: Hours later [after the remark] he backpedaled, explaining what he had meant, namely that American workers, whom he referred to as the backbone of the economy, were productive and resilient. By Tuesday he was calling the economic situation ‘a total crisis’ and denouncing ‘greed’ both on Wall Street and in Washington (Cooper 2008). The sharp turnabout in tone and substance reflected recognition not only that
McCain had struck a discordant note at a sensitive moment but also that he had done so with regard to the very issue on which he could least afford to stumble (Cooper 2008). This costly mistake, according to the NYT, further showed that management of the economy was not McCain’s strong suit. He failed to understand the issues and lacked experience. The NYT argues that the impression about the candidate’s readiness to deal with economic turmoil appeared to be correct and was fostered by McCain’s own admission (Cooper 2008).

The NYT account clearly suggests that McCain changed his approach to the issue. He moved from a low mimetic stand (there is no problem) to a high mimetic: it is “a total crisis” (Cooper 2008:1). The candidate tries to correct his critical mistake many times while commentators continue to highlight it. In one exchange, McCain communicates the relevance and urgency of the crisis, increasing in mimesis, even proposing to “suspend the campaign” as well as the debate scheduled for Friday 26th.80 His rival, Senator Obama, takes this opportunity to pollute him. Obama questions this decision, arguing that a president would have to juggle multiple responsibilities and emphasizing that he is up to the task, while McCain is not. In a

80 “Republican Sen. John McCain said he would suspend campaigning to help tackle a $700 billion bailout proposal and called on Democratic rival Sen. Barack Obama to postpone their debate Friday, as the roiling U.S. financial crisis took center stage in the presidential campaign” (Meckler, Holmes, and Cooper 2008) (September 25, paragraph 1).
similar vein, Democrats questioned McCain’s motives and overtly “…dismissed the moves [to postpone the campaign and debate in order to deal with the crisis] as political gimmickry…” (Meckler, Holmes, and Cooper 2008; Lattman 2008; Mitchell 2008).

Underscoring the inappropriateness of McCain’s now heightened response, Sorkin (2010) reports that Paulson was upset because after “…an entire afternoon of hearings on the Hill trying to persuade skeptical lawmakers to pass his TARP legislation, [he] had just learned that John McCain, the Republican candidate for president, had announced that he was suspending his campaign to return to Washington to help work on the financial rescue plan” (p. 488). “The crisis, which seemed only to be deepening, was now becoming part of the tactics of the presidential elections”

Civic Logics: Presidential Campaign. The Debate. The presidential campaign is narrated as a fight between two opponents, who are characterized through oppositions and the vocabulary of motives of the discourse of civil society. As chronicled by the WSJ, one of the debates is said to have been a contest of power, “a testy exchange” where none of the candidates was backing down. The candidates are described as quarrelling about all sizes of issues and interrupting each other (Meckler, Holmes, and Chozick 2008:9). While both are recognized as contenders, McCain is said to be folksy and quick, and Obama is described as sharper, quick on attack, not
intimidated. On the topic of the economy, the WSJ journalist dissects Obama’s symbolic strategy: “Sen. Obama, who was offered the first question on the economy, came out fighting, in effect blaming Sen. McCain for the crisis and tying him to the unpopular President George W. Bush, a crucial part of the Democrat’s strategy in this campaign” (Meckler, Holmes, and Chozick 2008:10). He blames Republicans, tying McCain to “unpopular” President Bush.

Civic Logics: Discussion of TARP. The discussion of TARP, the Troubled Asset Relief Program, around September 25th is crafted through civic logics (Ross Sorkin 2008; New York Times 2008; Stanley 2008; Hulse 2008; Lohr et al. 2008; Andrews 2008). To provide some context, the following were key events: On Thursday, September 25th Republicans, pushed by McCain’s stance, refused to support the bill. Both parties were negotiating in the White House with the key representative and the presidential candidates (Sorkin 2010:489). The following Saturday, September 27th, Paulson attempted to resume negotiations in a meeting with Congressional “leaders” (Sorkin 2010:492–93): The urgent nature of the bill was stressed in the meeting, with an emphasis on what had happened in the case of Washington Mutual over the previous week.

81 Alexander (2010b:xiv) defines the alignment with the Discourse of Civil Society as follows: Obama is “on the civil side of the binary, i.e., calm, analytical, measured and thoughtful. McCain, on the other hand, is uncivil: he is impulsive, instinctive, uneven and dramatic (p. xiv).
Civic Logics. Discussion of TARP: Characters. The main characters that are opposed in the discussion of TARP are WS and Main Street. Main Street is a broad term used as a signifier for average American citizens. In the context of the discussion of providing public funds to rescue financial entities, American citizens are identified as “ordinary taxpayers,” “Americans,”—those in the valuable real economy in opposition to the financial economy. Main Street, and American citizens, are opposed to Wall Street, as will discussed below. Political actors such as senators align themselves with citizens. The Administration is another actor, who is held responsible.

Civic Logics: Discussion of TARP: Plots. The discussion of TARP uses common narrative mechanisms in the description of actors. WS is polluted as an entity by observers. Main Street and American citizens are purified. Senators and other political actors, link themselves symbolically to average American citizens. Through these plots, WS gradually emerges as a delimited actor who can be blamed.

One of the plots highlights the causes and responsibilities of actors. Wall Street was irresponsible, irrational and out of control. The Administration is responsible as well for the financial crisis for not regulating and not policing WS adequately. The victims are American citizens who will be paying for the bailout.
TARP, as Sorkin (2010) points out, faced a difficult pass for Congress due to a host of factors: the time pressure brought to bear to approve the bill, the cost of the plan, lack of limits for compensation of executives who were part of the firms that were going to be rescued, the briefness of the bill, among others (p. 488). For more context see Sorkin (2010: 487 and ff). A significant amount of criticism erupted from both sides of the aisle when the bill was submitted for Congressional approval. Sorkin (2010) sums it up this way: “Democrats charged that it was a way for Paulson to line the pockets of his friends on Wall Street, while Republicans denounced it as just another example of government intervention run amok” (p. 488). In the discussion of TARP in the Congress the NYT chronicles how legislators felt the urge to publicly “deride” WS and express their concern for the “ordinary taxpayer,” siding with the latter (Stanley 2008:2, 7). The vast majority of the Senate Banking Committee speaks of WS greed and lax oversight on September 24th:

And that only accentuated the long and redundant windup. Almost every member of the Senate Banking Committee wagged a finger at what they described as Wall Street's greed and lax regulatory oversight. Just about all of them voiced passionate concern for the ordinary taxpayer. And every one of them felt the need to say so on television. That loquacity drove cable news programs to cover other events like the stock market and the General Assembly. C-Span 3 stayed the course (Stanley 2008:7).

Lloyd Dogget (D-TX) compares the debris of the WS crisis to that left after a “drunken brawl.”

Common Americans are left to pay the bill after investment banks have behaved irrationally, and have been unable to control themselves, as if drunk. WS was not adequately policed or regulated. The Administration is responsible for that. Dogget also uses a reference made by Bush about WS
suffering from a hangover to explain what is wrong with the bailout. Meanwhile, American citizens have to shoulder the bill: “And now [Dogget says, addressing President Bush] you’re really demanding that Americans who didn’t get invited to the party must pay for everything destroyed in the drunken brawl” (Hulse 2008:2).

In another article, structured as a Q & A, the journalist argues that people who are not invested in Wall Street and do not know its dynamics are being made responsible: “Yes, you could argue that people who cannot tell soybean futures from puts, calls and options are being asked to clean up the costly mess left by Wall Street” (Hansell 2008). This is clearly identified as unfair. The article also points out that authorities have described the bailout, which is neither morally nor financially tenable, as better than inaction given that the effects of a full blown financial crisis could be significant for average Americans (Hansell 2008). This view moves between low mimetic and high mimetic.

_Civic Logics: Average person._ Civic logics are also used in the NYT to discuss the impact of the financial crisis for an ordinary person. This approach is located within civic logics as it highlights the relevance of the crisis for an average person, a citizen, not for an investor. The arena of this examination includes the society and not only the market: The effects of the financial crisis are explored for the average person who has invested.

The financial crisis, seemingly remote, begins to affect average Americans. The following examples illustrate it. In an article titled “Wall Street's Ills Seep Into Everyday Lives”
the stories of people affected by and dealing with the crisis are narrated (Jeniffer Levitz, Brat, and Casey 2008). For instance, the article recounts the story of Carolyn Sloane, a 43-year-old paralegal in Wallingford, Vermont, who invests in cows to deal with the end of the bulls market. Active in the stock market since 1989, Sloane stated she discovered a “desire for hard assets” when the recent turmoil in Wall Street began (Jeniffer Levitz et al. 2008).

Another article, printed on September 26th, sets up an opposition between polluted Wall Street (wealthy and liable) and sacred, more average sectors that will become innocent victims (Grynbaum 2008a). In this case, Main Street refers to the brick-and-mortar level of the U.S. economy. For instance, an analyst (identified as T.J. Marta, “a fixed-income strategist at Royal Bank of Canada”) establishes an opposition between Wall Streeters—“highfaluting, fat-cat[s]”—and those working in the real economy. The “brick-and-mortar level of the U.S. economy” will be affected by the crisis and by the government response to it (Grynbaum 2008a).

In the following section, I will briefly summarize the key findings of the chapter, and will develop the conclusions.

Conclusions and Discussion

In this section I will summarize the findings and will discuss the contributions to the literature. I will guide the discussion addressing the six objectives posed in the Introduction Chapter.

First and Second Objectives: Main Meaning Making Patterns
In reference to the first objective of this dissertation, as presented in the introduction, to understand how economic crises are created in the public sphere, this case allows to draw the following conclusions. This creation, as has been mentioned, can be understood through character structures, narrative elements (plot, and genre).

The literature suggests that public discussion of economic crises, as organized through the media, would be shaped through two strong institutional logics widely available: civic and economic logics.

Indeed, one of the key findings of this chapter is that these two logics, jointly, shape the U.S. coverage of The Great Recession.

To recapitulate, the key events of the Great Recession on September 2008, examined in this dissertation, are narrated in the NYT through economic logics and civic logics. The most prevalent in proportion is an economic logic: About ¾ of the articles in the sample in the NYT make sense of the crisis through this logic. The Business/Financial Desk writes these articles. The most common pattern is that of the market article.

In the case of the WSJ, economic logics are deployed following two styles. One is the market format article, as well. The second one focuses on the characteristics and trajectory of executives and firms involved in the turmoil. Thus, the arena for these plots is the economy. The newsworthy events, as in the case of the firms in the Colombian 1998 coverage, are those that have been hurdles faced by the depicted firm. They are the “life” events of these executives and firms. The executives are described in a quest where they have had to jump over obstacles and achieve their goals. The firms are protagonists and animated beings. The stories depict executives’ actions as bold and courageous when acting on behalf of their firms, for example, without expanding on the possible negative consequences of their actions for other stakeholders.
such as investors, savers and the citizens. There are two basic genres: tragedy or romance. In the romantic view, these firms jump over obstacles and eventually emerge victorious, as they have been in the past. In the tragic view, these valued firms ultimately collapse. The preeminent sources are business insiders such as financial analysts.

Civic logics are used to narrate issues that have been constructed as more political and part of the civil sphere. There are two key topics discussed: one is TARP and the other is the presidential campaign and its relation to the financial crisis. The key events in these topics are, for instance, the debates after the financial crisis hit, and the discussion of TARP in the Congress. The national desk of the NYT writes articles, which employ civic logics. One fourth of the total sample is written by national desk. There are less salient patterns, numerically, which use civic logics. One of them is the impact of the crisis for an ordinary person. In these articles the arena of this examination is society not the market. This person is not addressed as a participant in the market but as a common person, as a citizen.

Second and Fifth Objective: Distribution of Institutional Logics

In this section I will discuss the second objective of this dissertation, which includes understanding how the types of logics that might guide the meaning creation in the public debate are distributed among outlets and sections, and the fifth objective, which focus to identify the relationships between institutional logics in the coverage and the spheres they represent.

The findings of this case indicate that media is closer to being fragmented and guided by a mix of logics, including those of the economic sphere, than to being exclusively guided by civic logics. In this case, one finds that the business section of the NYT and the WSJ, in general, are primarily shaped by economic logics. This is evident in the market format article, which is
shared with the WSJ. This is the case of the WSJ, as well, where one finds that indeed economic
logics are dominant, particularly in sections that can be grouped as business/financial.

In turn, in the NYT, civic logics are indeed dominant in the sections except for the
business/financial. Civic logics are used primarily to discuss key aspects of political and civic
life. In the articles that use predominantly civic logics, economic logics are present but not
significant proportionally. Their existence indicates that there is a destructive intrusion in these
sections: from the economic sphere into the civic sphere.

Civic logics are present, alongside economic, in issues that been traditionally
approached by political journalism, such as the presidential campaign. In the WSJ and in the
business/financial section the NYT, civic logics mix with economic logics. This happens in the
articles that discuss the approval of TARP, a subject where the public interest should enter the
discussion of the bailout, as the money the government would be employing is from
taxpayers/citizens. In this way, civic logics are entering a discussion defined as economic, thus
shaped by economic logics, and repairs the economic sphere by including civic criteria.

This distribution of logics is systematic, and indicates that indeed, in the case of the
coverage of The Great Recession, a key economic event, in the United States, the media should
be understood as fragmented. Journalistic fields have different levels of autonomy versus the
spheres they cover, and this explains which types of logics are available. In the case of economic
events the economic sphere has a strong pull, and economic journalism is not that autonomous.
This explains the similarities between the business section of the NYT, and the WSJ, a
specialized business outlet.

The discussion about the third objective of the dissertation, the differences between
Global North and Global South, and about the fourth objective, examining if economic logics are
understood as capitalistic ideology, will be included in the Discussion and Conclusions chapter (Chapter 9)

**Sixth Objective: The Great Recession in the Economic Sphere and the Civil Sphere**

The sixth objective of this dissertation is to examine how economic crises are constructed: if as bounded by the economic sphere or as a broader social crisis. In this case I will examine how a crisis that is located in the economic sphere might move towards the civil sphere.

In this section, I discuss how the findings presented answer this research question. The meaning making patterns uncovered in the examination of the first two weeks after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers show some of the ways in which the process of constructing the financial crisis as a social crisis is unfolding.

**Constructing the social crisis: Wall Street.** The first way in which the economic crisis moves towards being a social crisis is through the (re-) construction of Wall Street as a monolithic entity and through pollution. Wall Street is located by actors who are discussing the crisis in the profane side of the binary of social relationships in the discourse of civil society: Wall Streeters establish deceitful and calculating relations where they expect to win the competition they engage in and are (implicitly) opposed to the average citizen or person. The average person (or entity) is altruistic and establishes truthful and straightforward relations in terms of the sacred side of the binary of the discourse of civil society.

In terms of the characteristics of institutions, Wall Street (the investment firms organizational field and its related stakeholders) is a field that is guided by power (and search for money and wealth) and not by law. It is guided by its own sense of well being (it is oriented towards the particular, the success of firms and executives) instead of universalistic (oriented
towards the common good). Wall Street falls into a crisis because it has been reckless and expects citizens to pay for their bankruptcy, bearing the consequences of their actions.

These oppositions that are emerging in the first two weeks of the crisis will be further emphasized and heighten in the future to create meaning in the Occupy Wall Street movement (Wagner-Pacifici 2012).

This character structure shows that gradually Wall Street is being assessed through the logics of the civil sphere and not through the logics that are part of the economic sphere. Polluting an actor, which might be a person, an organization or a collection of firms, for being wealthy, is not consistent with (pure) economic logics. As mentioned in the literature review, in the economic sphere money, education or expertise would be valued independently to civic ideals and actions (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006; Walzer 1983).

Wealthy and successful executives and firms, those that win in the competition of profitability and survival, are the heroes of the tales of the economic sphere, as has been explained above. This is how, according to Walzer’s (1983), “worth” is adjudicated (by themselves or by other actors) from their position in a distributive sphere, such as the economic sphere (Ch. 1).

The valued practices are those appertaining to the economic sphere, and particularly to the investment banks field, aiming to achieve value for shareholders without regard of exploiting or excluding other stakeholders. Thus, these valued practices in the economic sphere are dangerous when they are used in the civil sphere. As issues of the economic crisis, such as the TARP, begin to impinge on the public interest, the danger heightens. As Alexander (2006b) notes, stratification in the economic sphere may be translated into the discourse of civil society:
“To be rich often seems to suggest moral goodness; insofar is it does, wealth is translated into the discourse of liberty” (p. 204).

This construction of Wall Street, as acting within the civil sphere and judged by its criteria, contributes to highlight once again that there is a cleavage in society. This cleavage, based on money and power, is damaging for democracy. In September 2001, considering Wall Streeters as polluted was beyond bounds given that in response to the tragedy they had been constructed as heroes and at the center of civil society. In the midst of the Great Recession, through the interpretation of new events they are indeed polluted.

*Constructing the social crisis: Financial Crisis and Political Topics.* The second way in which the financial crisis is transformed into a social crisis, intertwined with the first one, is by giving it centrality within the key topics of democratic life. Thus, the financial crisis moves from an economic arena of specialized knowledge to a civil arena. Both the WSJ and the NYT do this by linking the financial crisis to citizens’ concerns. Particularly, during the second week after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, the financial crisis moves to the center of the debate in the presidential campaign. Similarly, in the discussion of TARP, topics appertaining to the civil sphere come to the front.

The findings of this dissertation are consistent with those of Alexander (2010a) regarding the presidential campaign. The financial crisis became a key turning point in the presidential campaign of 2008. Alexander insists it is not evident a priori precisely how the financial crisis would have an impact on the campaign, and thus studying the events interpretation is critical. The financial crisis, as Alexander (2010a), argues “[came] to dominate the contest” (pp. xiv, 244). The latter remark refers both to the troubles on Wall Street and to Washington's reaction to them. Alexander (2010a) argues further that in the context of the presidential campaign the
“financial crisis migrates from [the economy] to the center—of society—[to the civil sphere] and as such changes from objective to subjective” (p. 245). The author contends that until the financial crisis erupted and became part of the quest for the presidential seat, “the economy has been treated as a boundary of the civil sphere and a secondary one at that. Now it moves to the very center. Civil society in the United States becomes engulfed by an extraordinary sense of precariousness” (Alexander 2010a: 245).

In his analysis of the presidential campaign, Alexander (2010a) argues that through the financial crisis, “the realization [has] settled in that American capitalism is going through something historic—and not in a good way” (p. 245, note 13). The financial crisis was a time stopping “event” not unlike other crises, such as that occurring on September 11th (Alexander 2003, 2010a).

Introduction

In this empirical chapter, I examine the media coverage in Colombia of the Great Recession (that is, a less immediate crisis case). This chapter builds extensively on the previous chapter (seventh chapter). In the seventh chapter the key patterns of the U.S. coverage of the Great Recession (that is, a more immediate crisis case) are described.

In this chapter, first, I present the events that are examined, and an overview of the topics and types of articles present in the coverage. Second, I discuss the distribution of institutional logics for each outlet and cases, and summarize the key patterns. These patterns include the character structures, narrative elements (key plots and genre) and sources. Third, I present the conclusions.

First Section: Events, Outlets and Coverage Overview

Events

The events that will be discussed here are among those that are central for the Great Recession within the sample window (Federal Reserve Bank of New York n.d.). These events, covered in Colombian outlets, are part of the ones discussed in the U.S. coverage of its own crisis (for an inventory of the key events see Table 15 above). To recapitulate, on September 15th Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. This is the anchor event around which the sample of two weeks in September was constructed (see Methods and data chapter). That same day other key events unfolded, which were among the most covered: Bank of America purchased Merrill Lynch and AIG stated its trouble when its debt was downgraded by three rating agencies (Federal Reserve Bank of New York n.d.).
Within this set of events of the Great Recession, the events that were covered in Colombia include: actions of Central Banks (American and European), including interest rate management; the change of Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs from investment banks to bank holdings; the discussion about the approval of TARP; the variation of the exchange rate (dollar-Colombian peso) as a result of the events; and the consequences for U.S. and global markets of the financial crisis (Black Monday).

*Outlets*

The outlets that were chosen, to recapitulate, are *El Tiempo-Portafolio* and the *Revista Dinero*. *El Tiempo* is a general interest outlet, which represents the mainstream public sphere. The economic section of *El Tiempo* comes from the business newspaper *Portafolio*. *Revista Dinero* is an outlet that represents the business public sphere.

*Coverage Overview*

In this section, I will discuss the main themes by each of the following sections in the outlets: Cover section, syndicated articles: WSJ Americas and International section. 82 The themes in the Editorial and Opinion sections are expanded in the description of patterns, thus, I do not include

82 To recapitulate, in September 2008, from the 50 articles sampled in *Portafolio*, 14 articles are in sections that can be grouped in business/financial. There are 12 articles in the Opinion section. There are 10 articles in the International section. There are 6 articles in the Cover section. 7 articles are syndicated articles from the WSJ, printed in the section WSJ Americas. In the Travelers section, there is 1 article.
them here. The Cover section themes are reflective of the key topics within the business/financial
news.

*Syndicated Articles WSJ Americas.* In the period examined *Portafolio* has a
syndicated page of the *Wall Street Journal Americas.* Overall, there are 36 articles published in
the sample window in September 2008. From those 36, 19 articles discuss the crisis. The key
themes of these syndicated articles reflect the breath of the coverage examined in the seventh
chapter

Of these 19 articles, seven articles were sampled in September. The themes of these
articles are: the impact of the Great Recession on the real economy, particularly in the real estate
market, on the retail sector sales and on high-end fashion (Binkey 2008; Newman and Frank 2008; Zimerman and Saranow 2008). Also, these articles explore the survival of boutique
investment firms in Wall Street, given the crisis (Karmin 2008), the political effect that the
intervention of the FED in Wall Street may have in its independent nature (Reddy 2008), and the

83 The key themes in these 19 articles, to give a broader overview, are: the dollar and its behavior
in the market, the impact of the crisis on real economy (2); a profile of the group behind Henry
Paulson; the behavior of oil in the market; monetary policy; the change of Morgan Stanley and
Goldman Sacks, from investment banks to bank holdings; personal investment: Crisis as an
opportunity; Survival of firms in Wall Street, given the crisis (2); finding causes for the crisis or
weaknesses in firms (boards); Relationship between crisis and publicity; and the impact of WS
on real estate and economy around. As is evident, these topics are a subset of those covered by
the WSJ and the NYT, explained on chapter on U.S. coverage.
relationship between the crisis and publicity (Vranica and Kang 2008). One article explores the impact of the crisis for the average person (Jennifer Levitz, Shuker, and Steele 2008).

*International themes.* In the first week of the crisis in September, the International section’s articles focus on the international response to the U.S. crisis. In the second week after the crisis erupted the International section reports as well on key events in Latin America and Europe, as part of the unfolding difficulties. The turmoil was already brewing, as well in the International arena, which is reflected in the coverage in August 2008. Most of the ten articles in this section, as will be discussed below, are brief. To give an illustration of these articles, I summarize some of the key topics.

In August, two articles deal with what is going on in Europe. The first one, on August 15th, discusses the contraction of the EC economy which has happened for the first time since the Euro was put in place (Bloomberg 2008). The second one, on August 14th, focuses on the risk of recession for the UK, with economic growth decreasing and inflation increasing (AFP 2008a).

In the second week after Lehman Brothers’ bankruptcy, the International section reports also on Latin America and Europe. For Latin America, it is reported that the Banking Superintendence of Venezuela mandated the banks that are part of the national financial system to build a guaranty fund for those banks that had assets exposed in the crisis of Lehman and Merrill Lynch (EFE 2008d). For Europe, it is reported on September 26th, that Madrid had to make the decision to cease public works “to avoid a larger deficit” (AFP 2008d). Similarly, on September 29th, an article explains that Spain approved its national budget in the midst of the recession and the country will have to be very frugal to face a difficult climate (EFE 2008a).

*Cover themes.* Cover articles in *El Tiempo-Portafolio* will be discussed below in relation to their categorization by the desk that writes them, from the editorial or Opinion sections, or
from business/financial news. To illustrate the themes that captured the attention. In September 2008, in the stories that tie the Great Recession with its local impact, the key topics are the following: The general consequences of the U.S. crisis in Colombia, examined in an interview with the Minister of Finance, and in an article about the increase in the dollar. The behavior of economic growth in Colombia is also tackled: growth decreases in 2007 and the forecast for 2009 is discussed in one article. Equally, the effects of the crisis on Colombian stock markets are covered.

From a global perspective, the topics include: The effects of the crisis on (global) stock markets, the global decrease in capital flows, and the increase in capital flows in Latin America for 2007. Focusing on the U.S. the topics are: the effect of Lehman Brother’s fall and Merrill sale in the markets, the investment firms involved are discussed (Portafolio 2008d), the debate of TARP, the bailout of AIG and its consequences in stock markets.

Second Section. Summary of Findings: Logics, Plots, Characters and Genres

In this section I will summarize the distribution of institutional logics by outlets. Then I will describe the meaning making patterns by sections in El Tiempo-Portafolio and Revista Dinero.

Distribution of Institutional Logics

Revista Dinero. In the business magazine, economic logics are used dominantly in 11 out of 15 articles: in most of the business/financial news (6 articles out of 15) and in half of the articles in the Editorial and Opinion sections (4 articles out of 15). The main Cover article, which covers the Great Recession, is organized primarily through economic logics. Economic logics are mixed with civic logics, as well in the Opinion section (4 articles out of 15).
In the analysis I found that prior to the Great Recession, in *Revista Dinero* there was a higher use of economic logics. From nine articles, in August 2008, seven used economic logics: one Editorial, two articles in the Opinion section, and four articles in the section “You and Your Money”, which classifies as business/economy. The remaining two articles use civic logics: One Opinion article, and one general economic news article (which deals with the topic of inflation).

After the Great Recession hit, in the issue published on September 26th (311), 2008, there are six articles in total. Three of these articles use a mix of civic and economic logics. The (long) Cover article and the three Opinion articles, use both civic and economic logics. Three of the articles use economic logics: An editorial uses primarily economic logics, as do the two articles in business/financial, in the sections Investment and Business.

*El Tiempo-Portafolio.* In summary, in this media outlet economic logics are prevalent within business/financial news, the International Section, and the syndicated articles. In the first two sections, neutral articles are also prevalent. These neutral articles are brief and written by Agencies. Civic logics are prevalent in the Opinion and Editorial Section. To illustrate this distribution, I mainly use September 2008, as it is the most relevant for the analysis. Of a total of 50 articles: close to half of the articles (20) use economic logics: Cover section (6), business/financial (6), International (3), and WSJ Americas (5). About a third of the articles (15) are neutral; they are printed in International (6), business/financial (8), and travelers (1). 14 articles use primarily civic logics: 12 of the Opinion section and 2 of the WSJ Americas, and 1 article, in the International Section, uses civic and economic logics.

*Narrative Elements (Plots and Genre) and Character Structures: El Tiempo-Portafolio’s Syndicated Articles*
The group of syndicated articles from the WSJ has, unsurprisingly, similar patterns to those described in the aforementioned chapter dedicated to U.S. coverage, for economic logics and civic logics.\textsuperscript{84}

For instance, in the WSJ Americas, there is an article that explains the actions of common people in response to Lehman Bankruptcy, and the failure of the government to bailout it. This is the same case as the plot identified in the chapter on U.S. coverage, where the media outlet examines impact of the crisis for an average person, who is not only an investor but has a broader life and role. In these articles, the arena of this examination is society not the market. The consequences of the crisis are assessed in the life of these people, as average people, not as investors. The syndicated article of the WSJ, features several cases of people affected by the crisis and their strategies to deal with it: “In Kalamazoo, Michigan, Shirley Larkins, 64, says she is too nervous to see her retirement account, invested largely in mutual funds ... She and her husband ... are worried about their level of spending... They will not invest more money in the markets, at least for now” (Jennifer Levitz et al. 2008).

In another syndicated article from the WSJ, the role of the Federal Reserve is questioned. The more political rather than technical character of the Fed might pose some problems: “...[T]he Federal Reserve is taking on the most political role in its history, using government funds and its credibility to end the storm. However, the measures ... present some risks. The independence of the US central bank could be under threat” (Reddy 2008). This is similar to the

\textsuperscript{84} The syndicated articles are translated by the author from their version in Spanish.
criticisms that are voiced in the United States coverage. The article employs civic and economic logics.

In an article published on September 27th, smaller firms in Wall Street are understood as the ones where the banking model might sustain itself: “While the biggest U.S. players are exiting from the pure-play investment-banking scene, about a dozen smaller investment banks remain. Analysts expect them to survive and keep the stand-alone business model alive, albeit at a much more modest level than on Wall Street” (Karmin 2008).

These banks, as the heirs of the “stand-alone model”, are valued through economic logics. They are seen now how Wall Street larger firms were seen, by actors in the financial sector, before the crisis: “Some analysts suggested that these boutique investment banks resemble in some ways the businesses that Goldman and Morgan Stanley had 25 years ago, when they were much smaller private partnerships” (Karmin 2008).

Narrative Elements (Plots and Genre) and Character Structures: El Tiempo-Portafolio International Articles

The crisis is also covered through articles in the International section that are primarily written by Agencies: AFP and EFE (8 out of 10). These brief articles mainly inform about the events rather than analyze them in-depth. The patterns that create meaning, in the way of characters, plot or genre, are not complete or available in all of these short and formatted articles. In general, they can be understood as neutral. In a few cases they use elements of economic logics and/or civic logics, as will be explained and exemplified below. As mentioned above, there are three articles using economic logics, one using economic and civic logics, and six articles are neutral out of the International section articles printed in September 2008. For August 2008, two articles are neutral, with some elements of economic and civic logics.
Three articles are useful to illustrate patterns. One article reports, on September 19, “the large [global] central banks took a coordinated action to increase the amount of dollars available in dehydrated monetary markets while the financial hurricane is chipping trust away” (AFP 2008b). This article has some brief elements that point to economic logics, such as the focus on the market as the key arena. On September 26th, in another article that has elements of economic logics, it is reported that “[t]he London Metals Exchange (LME), where the prices of basic metals are fixed, continues to be full of adrenaline, but the financial crisis has suppressed ‘the appetite for risk’ and the recession has hit the demand of metals” (AFP 2008c).

A third article printed on September 19th reports the turmoil in the Russian economy through economic and civic logics (EFE 2008c). The share value of two of the main banks in Russia fell deeply as a consequence of U.S. crisis. The Russian Government, including President Dmitri Medvéved, is quoted announcing that the stock market would resume their activities the next day after having being frozen by the Government on September 18th. The article argues the authorities have enough resources going forward to wither the crisis.

In the article on the effects of the Great Recession on Russian economy, typical patterns of economic logics can be spotted: the markets are the focus and are discussed as animated beings: “The markets will receive all the necessary support”, to regain their stability (EFE 2008c). Equally, there are some civic logics patterns. The President is shown as an active leader who proposes the Central Bank to monitor the situation (EFE 2008c). The Russian President tries to keep the audience calmed arguing that the measures taken are enough to address the crisis: “‘There is not today a more important task than maintaining the stability of our financial system. Now it is the number one priority’...” (EFE 2008c)
Narrative Elements (Plots and Genre) and Character Structures: El Tiempo-Portafolio

Business/Economic articles

In the business/financial articles in El Tiempo-Portafolio the following are examples of the use of economic logics, which are the dominant logics in the articles that are long enough not to be neutral. There are six of these articles in September 2008, and one in August 2008.

Economic logics can be exemplified with the articles that dealt with the variations in stock markets and currency markets. An article about the exchange market rate, published a month prior to the unraveling of the Great Recession with Lehman’s collapse indicates that the patterns in market articles are pretty stable. As of August, 2008, “the mortgage crisis in the United States, affecting the balance sheets of the largest banks in North America”, the reported event, was tied to the decrease of the exchange market rate (Portafolio 2008a). The crisis referred to is the subprime crisis starting on 2007.

On this article, printed in August 18th, 2008, the movements of the exchange market rate are described as follows: The dollar is “catching up,” gaining “strength” and “regaining ground” against the Euro after it had “weakened substantially.” Meanwhile the Euro is described as “continued to weaken” and “reached levels of $ 1.46, the lowest level in the last five months.” This behavior is described as a response to uncertainty that now is prevalent regarding to “the economic future of Europe” (Portafolio 2008a).

In September 17th one of the articles that talk about the dollar is prominently featured in the Cover section. In the long article, of 1042 words, the current turmoil and its impact in Colombia are addressed. The dollar increase is described as “…[breaking] yesterday another psychological level (this time for 2,100 pesos)” (Portafolio 2008b).
In September 25th, in an article called “Markets haven’t found their bearings yet” in the Finance section, the newspaper makes reference to the exaggerated hike in the dollar, explaining it as a “particularity” of Colombian markets (Portafolio 2008c). Colombian markets are described as animated and this particularity seems like a character flaw: “Colombian financial markets show every day that they are some of the most volatile in the world, and that was confirmed yesterday with a new hike of the dollar (i.e., the EMR)…” (Portafolio 2008c).

The article focuses on the relevance of the variation of the levels of the exchange rate and their causes. The piece compares Colombian markets to its reference group the emergent markets, arguing that they shared the trend on September 24th. Nevertheless “…the peso took the first price with a fall of 3.50 percent” (Portafolio 2008c). Portafolio judges it: “we are very out of sync” (Portafolio 2008c).

Narrative Elements (Plots and Genre) and Character Structures: Editorials and Opinion: El Tiempo-Portafolio and Revista Dinero

In this section, I will discuss the existing patterns in Editorials and Op-Eds in Portafolio and Revista Dinero.

The key narrative pattern of Editorials and Opinion articles lays within the narration of The Great Recession in a low or high mimetic mode. There are two readings of the events occurring in September 2008 in editorials and Op-Ed articles written in the economic section of El Tiempo (Portafolio), and in Revista Dinero. These readings can be located in a continuum going from the low mimetic pole to a medium mimetic point. There is a low mimetic reading from the perspective of Colombia (less immediate crisis); and a high and low mimetic from the perspective of the country experiencing the crisis (more immediate crisis). For further detail see Appendix 3.
In this coverage the articles do not include completely developed stories with a specified genre. The most identifiable pattern, which is related to genre, is a low mimetic and high mimetic interpretation of events. The articles run in a continuum from low mimetic to medium mimetic. However, the connection to particular actors, and their actions, depending on the low mimetic or high mimetic interpretation is not established in an identifiable way, most of the time. This is different to what one would expect when actors are seeking to define a crisis situation through a particular narrative and a particular genre (Smith 2005).

**Reading of the Great Recession, from the perspective of Colombia.** In the first view, towards the low mimetic pole, the crisis is understood as not imminent for Colombia and away of its control. In the second view, moving towards a mid-mimetic but still low mimetic, the crisis is understood as an alarm, which may indicate that caution is needed in the medium or long term, but not something that should create panic. In the third view, the crisis is understood as pressing. This is a mid-mimetic interpretation. This reading criticizes the passive role of Colombian and Latin American decision makers and expects them to act.

In the first two low mimetic readings of the crisis, motives aligned to those thought of actors within civic logics come into bearing: there has to be a calm and reasonable approach on the part of unnamed observers, who might be elites and investors. These articles, however, do not clearly single out the actors that would exhibit this behavior and that should be in charge. The columnists argue that Colombia needs a rational and calmed analysis of the events that are unfolding in the United States not panicking over them. This analysis will indicate that there is nothing to worry about (Ávila 2008). Some of the columnists’ arguments seem to follow Aesop’s fable of The Boy who Cried Wolf. People are sounding false alarms, a columnist argues (Gaviria 2008). The author does not delve into the consequences for when the alarm is real but it could be
inferred following the story. There is no need to panic about the events; every time there is a crisis there has been a panic but then the consequences are not as dire as previously thought of.

The columnists privilege this low mimetic view, which is aligned to that of sources in the public sector. The message is that there is no need to panic. Everything is well right now.

The columnists are, in general, not career journalists and have worked in the public sector as politicians or officials. This reflects the source of expertise of columnists in Colombia, which is different to that of the U.S. For the 2008 Great Recession, the columnists are people who were involved in managing the Colombian End-of-the-Century crisis, a decade earlier, or have been public officials or worked as consultants in the public sector. They are not, as a group, brokers or career journalists.

The second way in which the crisis is read in a low mimetic mode, as something to be worried about in the future might be interpreted as really cautioning, telling the decision makers to prepare for it or as a strategy to diffuse it, to postpone it into the unknown future and not something that one needs to act upon (González Muñoz 2008; Revista Dinero 2008).

The low mimetic views, advanced by some columnists, are crafted using oppositions that are aligned with civic logics. The signifiers (calm, reasonable), for instance, that are used to understand the U.S. crisis and its potential effects in Colombia are aligned with the motives of actors in the discourse of liberty (Ávila 2008). This is the case even when, sometimes, the type of actors is not clearly specified (actors, organizations or institutions).

Ricardo Ávila, editor of Portafolio, advances a low mimetic view of the crisis. In September 17th, in the first editorial on the subject, explains that there was a “commotion” in Black Friday, but the calm has returned. The author quotes a (financial) analyst who argues: “…what looked like a hurricane was classified at the end of a 24 hour period as a tropical storm”
After the initial shock, a controlled and “more balanced” analysis of the events in the U.S. can be advanced (Ávila 2008). Similarly, Ávila argues in his Compass column, a week later in September 24th, that indeed “Colombia is receiving the impact of the crisis unfolding wave (coletazo).” One of the key effects is the increasing value of the dollar versus the peso (that is, the representative market exchange rate increasing). However, this does not mean that someone should immediately act. Ávila argues that the lower performance that Colombia seems to be experiencing could be explained away as a result of the latest data released on national growth. For the second trimester of 2008, figures were below analysts’ prediction.

There are other readings within this second category that move towards the pole of a high mimetic understanding. The U.S. crisis might have important effects in Colombia.

As an example can be considered the advice that a columnist, a former co-director of the Central Bank, gives to decision makers to prepare and face the threats coming from the U.S. (Junguito 2008). The columnist grounds his advice in his experience dealing with the End-of-the-Century Crisis. He is not arguing that the situation is unbearable but does give concrete advice that could be followed by the Administration to protect Colombia from the potential consequences.

In a third view, the U.S. crisis is understood as concerning; Colombia could be affected. There are two strands on this. In the first strand, the interpretation of the crisis as low mimetic is questioned. A high mimetic interpretation is advanced (Ulloa 2008). For instance, Santiago Ulloa a financial advisor argues in Revista Dinero, on the September 26th issue, that even when the global crisis is evident Latin American countries have been passive they remain “unmoved”:

The effects of the US recession are palpable in the street; and in Europe it can get worse in the coming months. *It is curious that most Latin American countries still act as if the problem was not theirs and continue on without taking drastic measures.* However, the
party may finish rapidly, and if we are not prepared, [the recession] can have quite negative consequences (Ulloa 2008).

In the second strand, the crisis is narrated by one of the opinion columnists as if he was not a local writer, but a syndicated one (Espinosa Fenwarth 2008). An example of this trend is the article, “The ghost of 1929” written by Andrés Espinosa Fenwarth, who is adviser to the Minister of Agriculture. The article compares the Great Recession to the Great Depression, discusses the fall of five investment banks and the shifts in this sector, and explains the causes and consequences of the 2007 subprime crisis. The author, for instance, compares the current crisis with the crash in 1929 singling out reasons for both falls. These reasons are tied to moral failure, in a similar fashion to some U.S. articles: Their “unsafe commercial practices” and “their contempt for risk” have brought their demise (Espinosa Fenwarth 2008). At the end, Espinosa Fenwarth calls for U.S. Congress and Federal Government to act, in order to prevent an event such as the Great Depression.

*Reading of the Crisis from the Perspective of the United States. Syndicated Articles.* 
*Character Structures.* The audience of Opinion articles in *Revista Dinero* and *Portafolio* is broader than what one would expect for a business magazine, and section. *Portafolio*’s audience involves actors such as business people and investors. However, the columnists are addressing citizens and decision-making elites when they are explaining or advocating the choices that public decision makers might be making.

To reiterate what was illustrated in the discussion of plots and genres above, in *Portafolio* the actors that are called to intervene in the crisis situation are not completely delineated; they are sometime implicit, and sometimes very generally or ambiguously defined. They may public
officials. This way of narrating, in which characters are more implicit, goes in line with the use of a low mimetic narration.

Discussion and Conclusions

For the Colombian coverage of The Great Recession, from the perspective of a fragmented media, the expectations were that in Revista Dinero (specialized public sphere), the main logics would be economic. If civic logics, or alternative civic logics, were present they would signal civic repair. These expectations were included in the Chapter on Methods and Data.

The analysis of this case indicates that this is, in fact, true. In the business magazine, economic logics are used dominantly in 11 out of a total of 15 articles: in most of the business/financial news (6 articles) and in half of the articles in the Editorial and Opinion sections (4 articles). The main Cover article, which covers the Great Recession, is organized primarily through economic logics. This dominance indicates that the business magazine is “at home” in the economic sphere, or put differently that the economic journalistic field lacks autonomy. In four Opinion section articles, were civic logics are mixed with economic logics; it indicates that civic logics are entering to civically repair. This is the case as well with one of the business/financial news article.

For El Tiempo-Portafolio (main public sphere), from the perspective of a fragmented media, for sections other than the business section, the dominant logics would be civic, or alternative civic logics. For the business or economic section of El Tiempo-Portafolio (which comes from Portafolio) one would expect that the economic logics were dominant. If civic logics, or alternative civic logics, were present they would indicate that civic repair is happening.
In this case, economic logics are indeed prevalent in about half of the sample, particularly within business/financial news. There are some articles from the International Section, which are written by agencies, and the syndicated articles coming from the WSJ, a business outlet, that are also written using these logics. This is consistent with a fragmented view of the newspaper, where economic logics are prevalent in economic news. In the business and International sections, neutral articles are also prevalent. These neutral articles are brief and written by Agencies.

Civic logics, as expected, were prevalent in a third of the sample, specially in the Opinion and Editorial Section. This is consistent as well, with the expectation for sections other than the economic.
NINTH CHAPTER: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the dissertation, which aimed to answer the question of how the media narrates events within two large scale economic crises (Colombia 1998, U.S. 2008) in two distinct countries, Colombia and the United States.

I will summarize the central findings of the dissertation in the first two sections. The first section is devoted to discussion of the general findings. In the second section, I will explain the distribution of institutional logics as a complete pattern for the four cases and describe it in each case. In the third section, I will discuss how these findings corroborate or expand on the literature, particularly the contributions of Alexander (2006b) and Suttles (2010). The fourth section addresses how these findings challenge the literature, particularly in relation to the contributions of the aforementioned authors. In the fifth section, I will analyze whether economic logics can be understood as ideology. In the sixth section, I describe findings of interest beyond the research questions. The seventh section outlines future research relevant to the questions that surfaced from these findings.

First Section: Summary of General Findings. Content of Logics.

With respect to the first objective presented in the introduction, the study of the four cases allows for certain conclusions to be drawn regarding the primary ways in which an economic crisis is debated and events are made sense of through narrative elements, such as characters, plot and genre.

One of the key findings of the dissertation is the unquestionable availability of two institutional logics. Economic logics and civic logics are indeed available in all four cases. This finding will be further detailed in the second part of this section entitled “Findings by Case.”
Civic logics are the same for the four cases as those theorized by Alexander and Smith in the discourse of liberty and repression (Alexander 2006b; Alexander and Smith 2003a). To recapitulate, the existence of civic logics has been explained in the literature through two arguments. According to the first argument, civic logics are universally available (Alexander 2006b). The second argument purports that the existence of civic logics in the Colombian public sphere might show a connection with the public spheres in the United States.

One of the key cases supporting and illustrating the existence of similar civic logics in the narration of economic crisis in both countries is that of Colombian coverage of the more immediate End-of-the-Century Crisis. The analysis reveals that civic logics are indeed universally available and are in fact used in Colombia. These civic logics are used to understand both the largely local unfolding of the crisis and the external components coming from the global crisis. The use of civic logics, particularly in the local unfolding of the crisis, suggests that civic logics are not diffusing from the United States during that particular period, but are instead present and available in Colombia for narration of the crisis when it started. There are no alternative civic logics to narrate these key local events, as will be discussed below.

Civic logics are also present in the Colombian coverage of The Great Recession, which, for Colombia, is a less immediate crisis. In this case, one sees the use of civic logics in arguments paralleling those of American actors, or in locally crafted arguments. One might thus infer that some of the arguments, as well as the use of civic logics, may have a stronger component of diffusion than in the local coverage of the End-of-the-Century Crisis.

**Competing Civic Logics**

Motivated primarily by Baiocchi’s work (2006, 2012), this dissertation hypothesized that economic crises in the media may be narrated through different civic institutional logics in the
Global North and the Global South. Ascertaining whether or not this is the case was the third objective of the dissertation, as outlined in the introduction, and the second explanation developed in the literature review.

The analysis indicates that there are no clear competing civic logics used in the debate about economic crisis in Colombia, whether in 1998 or in 2008. This finding is different than expected. It is Baoicchi (2006) who primarily theorized these civic logics through an empirical analysis of debate in Brazil prior to and following the country’s transition to democracy.

I advance some explanations about the absence of these alternative logics based on the literature review. First, the most plausible explanation for the absence of these logics in connection with the type of topics addressed in the coverage of the crises is that perhaps only one part of institutional life in Colombia is taken into account. Rodríguez-Garavito (2012) has demonstrated the existence of two intertwined institutional arenas in Colombia. He points specifically to niches of excellence at the center of institutions contrasted with areas of instability on the periphery. The institutional logics that shape the center of the institutional life of Colombia are similar to those of the United States. Thus, the prevalence of civic logics might be explained by the fact that the economy is discussed at its core, in the niche of excellence, and is taken as representative of Colombian institutional life. The logics that could emerge from an examination of areas of instability at the periphery are not present. They may be hidden from examination. Clientelism, for instance, is not discussed in the crises.

Second, the mainstream public sphere and the specialized business public sphere in Colombia may be more exclusive than the public sphere studied in Brazil. As discussed in the chapter about cases and journalistic fields, the elite nature of media audiences in Colombia, particularly for these types of outlets, may impede the inclusion of other potential democratic
codes. Dedicated to a smaller audience, the specialized business public sphere may be less diverse in terms of voices and logics.

Third, it is conceivable that the type of events studied shapes the prevalence of competing civic logics. This dissertation analyzes economic events rather than political transitions, as in the case of Baiocchi (2006). The alternative codes theorized by Baiocchi may be easier to identify, in issues deeply grounded in the political and civic sphere from the beginning. Baiocchi (2006) studied debates on national crises that are more political in nature. Regarding the events, one related to crime and punishment, and the other to the process of President Collor’s impeachment, Baiocchi (2006) argues: “Both were very clear crises of national scope where discussants throughout civil society attempted to identify and purge threatening elements from the national community, and are among the two widest-ranging public discussions in the period” (p. 286).

Fourth, the type of sources chosen for this dissertation differs from the sources selected and studied by Baiocchi (2006). Although Baiocchi (2006) does not specify which types of newspapers are sampled, the description of the sample offered suggests that it is broader than that considered here. Baiocchi (2006) systematically considers within the corpus materials other than media articles, e.g., Congressional Hearings. The type of sources used in this dissertation may obscure the diversity of logics existing in the country that might be used to discuss other issues.

This project makes a contribution to the literature by identifying the inexistence of alternative civic logics in the dominant public sphere in Colombia (as well as in the specialized business public sphere). A mainstream outlet indexes this dominant public sphere while suggesting that some voices, and perhaps some institutional logics, are absent but not inexistent. This is evident in the case of workers’ general strikes, a topic which has not been covered in its
richness by the outlets explored. In *El Tiempo*, there is no comprehensive coverage of why workers are (or might be) against neoliberal reforms and who might benefit from them. The treatment of these topics is more comprehensive in media outlets that index alternative public spheres, as in the case of union newspapers (of restricted circulation). This is inferred from the research of Ahumada (2002) about neoliberal reforms in Colombia.

**Economic Logics**

Economic logics are present in all four cases. This supports one of the contentions emerging from the literature review where, depending on the autonomy of journalistic fields, economic logics were expected to be present because of the nature of economic events.

Regarding the general outline of economic logics, one of the findings suggests they are constructed primarily from the patterns that constitute the market (or the market world, to use Boltanski’s and Thevenot’s term). This logic does not receive significant input from other arenas within the economic sphere, specifically the industrial world theorized by Boltanski and Thevenot (2006).

As expected, economic logics stand in opposition to civil logics in the discussion. For example, valued people in articles guided by economic logics are those who fulfill such criteria from the economic sphere as succeeding in competition, owning a particular (financial) expertise, and/or being wealthy. Articles following economic logics also demonstrate who is valued by not focusing on other affected groups, such as low-income borrowers, and by not taking into account what the actions taken by investment banks mean for these groups.

The way these logics are developed, however, differs from one case to the next. In the instance of Colombian coverage of the End-of-the-Century Crisis, for example, economic logics emphasize actors such as executives and anthropomorphized firms on a journey full of obstacles
they successfully surmount in order to achieve their goal. In the US coverage of the emerging market crisis and the Great Recession, economic logics include some narratives where executives and firms play the role of protagonists in (mainly) romantic quests. Nevertheless, the market article format is most prevalent.

The institutionalized market article is defined by the following characteristics. (1) The arena in which the news occurs is the market. (2) The events constructed as newsworthy are those which can be interpreted as happening within that market. (3) The characters are people chosen based on their role in the market, such as buyers and sellers (investors), and anthropomorphized entities, such as organizations, markets, stock indexes and stocks. Other actors, such as public officials, are worthy of mention by virtue of their impact on the markets. (4) The stories narrate the quest of animated objects, such as stock indexes, where actors are animated objects such as stock indexes or stocks. These protagonists are on a quest: they overcome many obstacles and ultimately achieve their goal. (5) Sources include those actors who can make sense of the events from the point of view of the market, e.g., financial analysts and business insiders. Market articles address the crisis in standard ways, reporting what has happened to the stock market or other markets, such as the currency markets, through the use of stories.

Second Section. Summary of General Findings

In this section I will explain the findings case by case, summarizing them in terms of distribution of institutional logics. First, I provide an overview of what the distribution of logics for the four cases as a group suggests. Second, I describe the distribution of institutional logics by case and outlet.

General Hypotheses: Fragmented Media
Analysis of the four empirical cases indicates that the media, as a whole the communicative institution of the civil sphere, is more accurately categorized as an ideal type than an empirical reality for coverage of the economic crises in the cases here studied. In this regard, the analysis lends support to the second set of hypotheses presented in the Methods and Data Chapter, where media is understood as differentiated by sections signaling distinct journalistic fields. Differences in the distribution of the logics in both the cases and the sections, however, point to the fact that not all of them signal lack of autonomy.

To illustrate, in the coverage of The Great Recession, sections of the NYT are constructed through varying proportions of civic logics and economic logics. This disparity is the product of differentiated journalistic fields. Economic logics are prevalent in the business section and in articles written by the business/financial desk appearing elsewhere. This phenomenon indicates that the economic journalistic field lacks autonomy. Economic journalists are more tuned to the logics of the economic sphere. The economic sphere is thus “at home” in the business section, as evidenced by the patterns detailed in the empirical chapters showing how the criteria or standards of the economic sphere dominate discussion of actors in the economic crises. For example, executives from investment banks are valued for successful achievement of profitability rather than for their civic qualities.

Civic logics coexist with economic logics, however, in the NYT articles written by the business/financial desk. From the perspective of the economic sphere lacking autonomy, which is part of the second set of hypotheses, this indicates that the civil sphere is repairing the economic sphere. This can likewise be gleaned from the content in the case of the 2008 Great Recession, where we see that Wall Street behavior is problematized from the point of view of its consequences for citizens. In the discussion of the approval of TARP, many of the usual
behaviors of Wall Street firms and executives are questioned along with the ethics of the rescuing firms and executives.

In the next section, I proceed to explain the distribution of logics for each of the cases and outlets, and what this means in terms of boundary relationships.

_Distribution of Institutional Logics by Case and Outlet_

_The End-of-the-Century Crisis and the Emerging Market Crisis (1998): Colombian coverage._ Two expectations were relevant to the dissertation. The first expectation considered media governed as a whole by civic logics while the second considered media as fragmented. Accordingly, the business/economic section of the mainstream newspaper and the business magazine will not be autonomous.

The most common pattern in two key sections, Cover and Opinion (10 of 22 articles, 45.5%) of _Revista Dinero_ is the mix of economic and civic logics. From the perspective of the hypothesis of the media as fragmented, these patterns indicate that for _Revista Dinero_, civic logics enter to civically repair, particularly in the discussion of the local crisis. From the perspective of more autonomy in the economic journalistic field, it would suggest more balance between the requirements of the subject at hand and closeness to the economic sphere, and autonomy as a field.

These sections approach the issues with attention to the interests of business people who constitute the magazine's main audience. That notwithstanding, the magazine also positions itself towards elite decision makers who need to have the public interest at hand. This is evident in Cover and Opinion articles discussing public policy, such as fiscal measures or currency policy. Civic logics enter the discussion of public policy to bring in actors who are not taken into account from a market perspective and for reasons that include the public interest, which is not
addressed in accounts employing economic logics. The articles printed in business/financial sections are briefer than those in the sections mentioned above and they use economic logics (7 of 22 articles, 31.8%). Economic and civic logics are also present in the International articles, which take into account and discuss the emerging market crisis (5 of 22 articles). These articles are not emphasized as, for reasons of scope, their analysis is not presented here.

In the case of *El Tiempo*, a dominant civic orientation was expected for all sections except business/economy. The nature of this civic orientation was anticipated to be civic logics and/or alternative civic logics, which, in fact, proved to be the case and is exemplified by such key crisis topics as workers' strikes, along with lesser topics, e.g., currency management. There are no alternative civic logics. In the case of the bankruptcy of Granahorrar and the subsequent government bailout covered in these sections, civic logics are employed alongside economic logics.

In the case of the business/economic section of *El Tiempo* (which comes from *Portafolio*), the expectation was that economic logics would be dominant. If available, civic logics were expected to be repairing (through civic criteria). This, in fact, is the case for Granahorrar’s bankruptcy, which is discussed in this section through economic logics.

*The End-of-the-Century Crisis and the Emerging Market Crisis (1998): U.S. coverage*. In the case of U.S. coverage of the emerging market crisis in 1998, in its most domestic components, the findings in relation to expectations where media is fragmented are as follows (H6). The WSJ shows dominant economic logics, as anticipated. Civic logics are present, albeit to a lesser degree. And in this case, civic logics enter to repair the economic sphere. The business/economic section of NYT shows a clear dominance of economic logics. Civic logics are present, although often mixed with economic logics—particularly in articles addressing issues of
public policy, such as the interest rate cut. In other sections of the NYT, civic logics dominate in relation to the same issues of public policy and economic logics are less prominent.

*The Great Recession: U.S. Coverage.* For the U.S. coverage of The Great Recession, the findings in relation to expectations where media is fragmented are as follows. In the case of the WSJ, economic logics are dominant in most sections and on certain topics, such as the behavior of the markets. Civic logics are dominant primarily in the case of topics such as the presidential campaign, or discussion of the responsibility of Wall Street. In these instances, civic logics enter to repair an economic domain.

Economic logics are dominant in the NYT articles written by the business/economic desk, particularly in the market format article. This finding indicates fragmentation of the media along with the existence of an economic journalistic field that uses similar logics in the business/financial section of the NYT and the WSJ. Civic logics are not common in the format market article. Here they exist chiefly to repair in order to deepen understanding of the actors.

Civic logics are dominant in NYT sections other than the business/financial. As in the case of the WSJ, these sections offer the most coverage of the presidential campaign, as well as discussion of the approval of TARP. Both the former and the latter are key topics in the coverage of the crisis. Employing a mix of economic and civic logics, these sections also cover discussion of the responsibility of Wall Street. The appearance of economic logics in these sections represents a destructive intrusion.
The Great Recession: Colombian coverage. For the Colombian coverage of The Great Recession, the findings with respect to expectations are as follows. For sections of El Tiempo other than business/economy, it was expected that civic or alternative civic logics would be dominant. The analysis in fact revealed a civic orientation. There are no alternative civic logics.

In this case, economic logics are indeed prevalent in about half of the sample, particularly within business/financial news. There are some articles from the International Section, which are written by agencies, and the syndicated articles coming from the WSJ, a business outlet, that are also written using these logics. This is consistent with a fragmented view of the newspaper, where economic logics are prevalent in economic news. In the business and International sections, neutral articles are also prevalent. These neutral articles are brief and written by Agencies. This is a pattern that is interesting to examine in future research.

Civic logics, as expected, were prevalent in a third of the sample, specially in the Opinion and Editorial Section. This is consistent as well, with the expectation for sections other than the economic.

For the business or economic section of El Tiempo (which comes from Portafolio), economic logics were expected to be dominant. This in fact held true. According to the hypothesis of fragmented media, if civic logics or alternative civic logics are present, this would indicate that civic repair is happening. The presence of civic logics, albeit to a lesser degree, indicates that indeed civic logics are repairing.

In Revista Dinero, economic logics are prevalent in most of the articles in the sample, including those most those grouped in the business/financial category (6), and half of the articles in the Editorial and Opinion sections (4 articles). In the rest of the articles printed in Cover and Opinion
(and the International section as well), civic logics are present together with economic logics but are less prevalent. This indicates that civic logics are entering to civically repair.

From the perspective of the hypothesis that considers media as fragmented, these patterns indicate that in Revista Dinero, particularly in the discussion of the local crisis, economic logics are “at home” within the magazine and civic logics enter to (civically) repair.

Third Section: How these Findings Reinforce Expectations Grounded in the Literature (Alexander’s and Suttles’ Work)?

In this section I discuss how the results of analysis of the two cases of economic crisis reinforce the expectations drawn from the existing literature, with an emphasis on the key contributions of Alexander (2006b) and Suttles (2010).

Reinforcing and Expanding Suttles (2010)

This dissertation contributes to the accumulate knowledge regarding cultural structures in economic issues. By studying U.S. coverage about two recent crises, it provides confirmation of the institutionalization of economic logics through certain formats within economic journalism—not only within the NYT but in other outlets as well, such as the WSJ. It also contributes to extend Suttles’ (2010) work by uncovering narrative patterns of economic crisis in Colombia, a country different from the United States and part of the Global South, and by examining two different crises.

This project finds there are, indeed, shared and widely used meaning patterns among economic journalists of the mainstream media and journalists of business-oriented outlets. Of these patterns, the most salient is the market format. The market format article, as previously observed, is robust. It is defined through several dimensions: arena, newsworthy events,
characters, sources and narrative elements, such as plots and genres. Thanks to Suttles (2010), several characteristics of the market format article can be traced at least as far back as to the Great Depression and to the Tribune and the NYT. It is not exclusive of a business outlet such as the WSJ. This dissertation finds the continuance of this pattern in the Great Recession and in coverage of the emergent market crisis.

By examining these shared meaning making patterns, one can identify an economic journalism community which both follows and recreates these patterns. In-depth analysis of the content also uncovers a specialized (imagined) business public sphere which differs significantly from a mainstream public sphere. The way economic journalists address their audience in certain spaces differs from that of journalists in other fields.

This dissertation also contributes to expand the repertoire of potential characters, narratives and genres uncovered by Suttles (2010) in his analysis of economic crises. One of the stories, which differs from those found by Suttles, is that in which the protagonists are executives or organizations in search of profitability or survival and they jump over many obstacles to arrive at their chosen goal. There is evidence that this narrative is institutionalized in the business section and now used to narrate other events. It is employed, for example, in profiles written on the occasion of the appointment or ousting of Fortune 500 CEOs. This suggests that writers are mobilizing common types of stories that did not emerge in the Great Recession. They are available formats, which journalists used to understand and report the crisis (see Milanes, 2011 for an analysis of CEO profiles in the WSJ and NYT from the 1990s to 2006). They were not part of the economic news studied by Suttles.

*Reinforcing and Expanding Alexander* (2006b)
One of the aims of this dissertation was to test the scope of cultural sociology, particularly with respect to the availability of civic logics narrating a different type of event, i.e., economic, in a country of the Global South. This dissertation corroborates the expectations that emerged from the work of Alexander and other cultural sociologists regarding the existence and relevance of civic logics in the media debate of economic events both in Colombia and the United States.

The research reveals that civic logics indeed belong to the group of institutional logics used in meaning making about economic events in the media. This project did not find any evidence of alternative civic logics, as will be discussed below. This was a hypothesis particularly relevant for the case of coverage of the crisis in 1998, which comprises the (Colombian) End-of-the-Century Crisis and the Emerging Markets Crisis. Thus, this gives credence to Alexander’s argument regarding the universality of the discourse of liberty and repression (civic logics).

Civic logics were found to be prevalent in narration of the impact of the crises on issues or topics which have long been part of the political life of the countries and are continuously covered by the media. This supports one of the explanations (or hypotheses) advanced in the literature review, according to which civic logics are universally available.

Fourth Section: How do these findings challenge what we know from Alexander (2006b) and Suttles (2010)?

Challenges to Alexander and other cultural sociologists

Media is not monolithic. The findings of this dissertation indicate that it is useful to analyze media as nuanced and fragmented rather than monolithic. Alexander (2006b) advances an argument according to which the media is the communicative institution of the civil sphere, and, as such, can be expected to be dominated by civic logics. Through a myriad
of examples, Alexander and other cultural sociologists have documented how the media has provided a forum for debate where these logics have contributed to realize civic ideals. The cases analyzed in this dissertation show how a model of media as fragmented might help us better understand why media, in many instances, does not act as the communicative institution of the civil sphere. Alongside Alexander’s consideration of civil spheres in real societies, it is important to consider how media might look outside of the ideal type.

By theorizing media through Alexander’s (2006b) model of boundary relationships between civil and non-civil spheres, we can better understand why other logics have taken hold to narrate key events. In the case of this dissertation, this approach is useful to understand economic crises as key economic events with societal consequences. Such an approach has significant implications for making sense of the actions and positions of actors in different spheres, and of the ethos of journalists. The present analysis of the coverage of two economic crises highlights the differences between journalistic fields. The requirements of expertise related to the issues covered by economic journalists move them closer to the economic sphere. Thus, it is important to recognize that economic logics would play a role in this coverage.

The examination of the two economic crises, with a focus on coverage in outlets that index different public spheres, also challenges the existence and importance of a unique trajectory in the construction of events as crisis. Cultural sociologists have focused on how events are constructed as social crises, such as Jacobs (2000b). These cases indicate the need to explore the possible ways in which crisis might be constructed in different arenas. By studying different types of coverage of the crises and diverse outlets (a general interest outlet indexing a mainstream public sphere and business outlets, newspaper and magazine indexing a specialized business public sphere), it became clear that The Great Recession was simultaneously
constructed as an economic crisis and a social crisis. An important issue for consideration is whether these constructions might co-exist in the long run, and what their consequences might be.

*Dynamics of economic logics in narrating economic crises.* The patterns of narrating economic issues, as uncovered in this project, challenge the narrative qualities of public debate theorized by cultural sociologists and documented in a myriad of social issues (Alexander, Jacobs, and Smith 2012). Public debate is generally thought to be structured through such elements as character construction, plot and genre. However, the narration of economic crises, as examined in this project, contests this structure. First, the meaning making patterns identified are actors who, in addition to people, include animated entities such as financial vehicles, organizations and markets. The existence of this type of actors changes the dynamics of character construction and consequences of action. The connections of past, present and future are not actionable when the media presents animated objects that cannot be held accountable. Second, in narrative terms, fully developed plots are often lacking. Some articles reveal conflicts between characters and their motives without presenting complete stories. Moreover, there is no full range of genres. The standard market article includes quest stories that are either romantic or tragic. However, the key narrative element in many articles is the distinction between low mimetic and high mimetic interpretations of the crises where the actors involved are fuzzy and consequences of action, even in stories tending toward the high mimetic, are less clear.

*Fifth Section: Discussion of Economic Logics and Capitalist Ideology*

The findings of this dissertation raise the question of whether economic logics can be understood as capitalist ideology. This is the fourth objective posed in the introduction.
In order to address this concern, I first present the key concepts coming from a Marxist tradition, as well as the response to this same question provided by Suttles (2010) with respect to economic news.

**Concepts of Ideology and Reification**

Marx, and other authors deepening his legacy, argues that the relationship between people who make up the market in a capitalist regime is replaced by a relationship between animated things. The relationship between producers and laborers is thus replaced by a relationship between money and commodities. The resulting relationship is between animated objects that are detached from those involved in producing them. Marx, as quoted in Lukács (1971), maintains that the bourgeoisie or capitalists detach themselves from their own action and come to understand it as "the action of objects which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them" (p. 49). In this way, exploitation is obscured to the benefit of capitalists.

As part of the economic logics presented in the dissertation, one identified trend sets financial firms and executives up as protagonists in romantic plots. Northrop Frye (1957: 186) contends that "[i]n every age the ruling or social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of a romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy" (referenced in Suttles, 2010: 105). Following this argument, the romantic plots would be the creation of a "ruling or social or intellectual class" casting itself in a positive light. Both Marx and Frye indicate intentionality. The bourgeoisie is the producer of that content.

Suttles (2010) addresses the question of ideology directly. The author explicitly identifies the economic patterns he uncovered regarding The Great Depression as ideological in nature.
“[C]apitalistic papers,” he states, are expected to have a positive view of a capitalist regime. Of greater importance than the issue itself, Suttles (2010) argues, is the need to understand how this ideology is crafted: What are the patterns one finds in which the news are discussed and what does this mean for the construction of a “collective memory” (p. 6)?

Suttles (2010) is careful to point out, however, that the “rhetoric, ideology or political persuasion” one sees in the discussion of the crisis is not “mere deception” (p. 5) He highlights the critical role played by media in providing a “…worldview….in times of uncertainty and ambiguity.” This worldview is broader than one would expect a purely deceptive, scheming, economic view might be. Ideally, such a worldview will facilitate a view of the future and for this it must be “…a rhetoric that brings together morality and reasoned argument into a language that can reach a general audience” (Suttles, 2010: 5). He emphasizes that “mere deception” could not make that leap forward into the future. Likewise, a capitalist ideology could not express issues in such a way as to reach a general audience.

_Economic Logics as Ideology_

To examine whether the economic logics uncovered in the examination of two economic crises can be understood as a capitalist ideology, several elements must be considered: 1) Are plots and other meaning making patterns consistent with reification as understood by Marx? Is the market described as a relationship between animated objects and are actors obscured? 2) Are plots within economic logics benefiting capitalists? What is the source of these logics?

Regarding the first question, I consider that some of the patterns regarding economic logics uncovered in this dissertation could be described, at their core, as showing the relationship between animated objects. In this regard, they can be viewed as congruent with what Marx
conceived. Stocks and indexes, for example, are indeed reified. They are animated objects that account for what happens in the markets. This represents a classic economic view against which economic sociologists have been arguing for some time.

Regarding the second question, the findings indicate that Marx’ theory of the bourgeoisie as the source of these patterns is not altogether clear-cut. On the one hand, answering this question requires some exploration of journalistic autonomy and the source of economic logics. If the field of economic journalism is not autonomous, then logics coming from other fields will dominate (Benson and Neveu 2008). This argument is consistent with the expectations of boundary-relationships between spheres posited by Alexander (2006b): it would imply an intrusion of the economic sphere in the civil sphere. On the other hand, answering this question would necessitate discussion of intentionality: Are the intruding logics in fact created and diffused by the bourgeoisie for its benefit?

Another way to approach the second question is to analyze where economic logics come from depending on the type of autonomy existing with respect to the economic sphere. Media can be balanced within the same media outlet or within the journalistic field as a whole (Croteau and Hoynes 2006). If one considers the argument that balance can be obtained within a given media outlet, the mainstream outlets provide balance in the case of the economic crises examined in this project. As discussed previously, each mainstream outlet is characterized, broadly, by two distinct orientations: The orientation following economic logics is more focused on the markets and/or the economy, while the other, which follows civic logics, is more focused on political/civic life. Each of these orientations is, generally, dominant in different sections. Balance within individual outlets is facilitated by the existence of these different orientations and
sections. The reader is given opportunity to understand the economic crises from different points of view and to see their consequences for different actors.

If one considers the argument that balance can be obtained not within but across outlets, then the existence of a variety of mainstream and business outlets having different logics creates balance (Croteau and Hoynes 2006). Economic logics are often more prevalent in business outlets while civic logics are usually prevalent across sections in mainstream outlets. This phenomenon underscores the need for a variety of media outlets, including mainstream outlets, to narrate events.

**Sixth Section: Interesting Unexpected Insights of the Analysis**

*Intertextuality and Syndicated articles.* In the cases examined here, I found no indication of any direct discussion between the Colombian Opinion columnists and those writing abroad, or between them and international and political syndicated news. There were no clear signs of intertextuality in the corpus at hand. Connections between these contributions were expected, and thus, the lack of them is an interesting (negative) insight. Similarly, the role of the content written by Agencies was more important in proportion than expected within the Colombian coverage of the Great Recession. A relevant part of the content was provided by Agencies, in standardized brief articles.

**Seventh Section: Future Research**

*Syndicated articles and wired content.* The existence of syndicated articles and wired content written by agencies featured in the coverage of the economic crises, both in the emerging markets crisis (1998) and in the Great Recession, and their disconnection with other sections, as aforementioned, points to the need for further examination of the dynamics between syndicated
content and the articles produced by local writers. For instance, a portion of regular content within the Colombian coverage of the U.S. Recession comes from syndicated articles (a permanent WSJ Americas section in 2008 and syndicated Op-Ed columns from Forbes Global in 1998), and from wired content authored by press agencies such as EFE and AFP.

The issue of the interconnection between journalistic fields, and the potential diffusion of institutional logics through syndicated articles and wired content merits further examination. This is an interesting avenue of analysis particularly in light of the scarcity of analyses of the crises that have taken into account the role of permanent syndicated articles on their narration.

Consideration of how local readers interpret the news when it is produced in and for an international context, and how they link it to their local reality, is also of interest. Syndicated articles are printed exactly as they appear in the original outlets, bringing to the national context foreign understandings of and concerns about the issues at hand. The task of interpreting and translating the foreign contexts would fall to local readers. Thus, future research might evaluate this with readers directly.

*Emerging Market Crisis Coverage in Different Countries*

For reasons of scope, as mentioned, analysis of coverage of the emerging market crisis in Colombia and U.S. has been removed from the dissertation. This analysis will be the subject of future research.

Preliminary analysis of the aforementioned coverage, however, reveals that coverage of a less immediate crisis is often organized through civic logics or a mix of logics where civic logics are prevalent. The breakup of coverage by sections suggests that, for journalists, evaluating an external crisis involves the inclusion of issues considered relevant to the public interest. It also
shows that these sections configure a distinct journalistic field (which might be that of foreign correspondents), from the economic journalistic field.

Examination of the coverage of the Russian crisis, which was part of the emerging market crisis and key to the period studied in this project, suggests additional avenues for inquiry. The Russian crisis is important in that it allows us to pinpoint differences between U.S. and Colombian coverage: the contrast between an emphasis in the U.S. coverage on Russia versus the relative neglect of the subject by Colombian media is stark.

This contrast suggests that themes and meaning-making patterns relate to prior themes and patterns such that the narrative is, in a sense, path-dependent. Some of the building blocks of the narratives used to make sense of a crisis in a foreign country can be identified as they relate to the existent narrative patterns of the country making sense of it. The comparison is important in that it underscores, in the case of the U.S., the relevance of issues previously discussed in the public sphere and remembered currently by media writers and editors. In this way, the meaning-making patterns of previous discussions shape the coverage of the current crisis.

The Russian economic crisis is an exemplar case because of a long-term coding of Russia in opposition to the United States in various realms of U.S. public life. The emergence of this coding can easily be traced to the Cold War period. Well-known binaries include communism/democracy and planned economy/capitalism, among others. Communism, from an economic and political perspective, is profane, while democracy and capitalism are sacred. Communism, for instance, is restrictive to the individual liberties of citizens and consumers alike. Actors and policies tied to the old regime are thus cast as anti-civil while those embracing democracy and capitalism are deemed civil.
U.S. coverage within the broader context of the emergent market crisis provides an instance where one sees a focus on civic life and the link between economic and political development. The Russian crisis and its various components receive ample attention. In contrast, the scarce Colombian coverage of the Russian crisis is closely tied to an economic logics or market view of a profound systemic crisis.
APPENDIXES


In this appendix presents an extended description of the romantic and tragic narratives about Granahorrar.

Romantic Narrative

*El Tiempo* places Granahorrar, as an organization, at the center of one of the narratives. This narrative explains how Granahorrar arrived at the point of facing a bailout after navigating a path riddled with obstacles. The romantic story line in this case suggests that turmoil always passes and Granahorrar will transition to a happy stage in its history (González P. 1998) (Portafolio 1998g).

On Sunday, October 4th, *El Tiempo* reports the nationalization of Granahorrar for the first time (González P. 1998). “The troubles of Granahorrar” is a long article—1313 words—detailing how Granahorrar faces “problems hovering at every corner” and overcomes them every time to get back on track. As in the past, Granahorrar will overcome the current obstacles through nationalization. The article closes as follows: Granahorrar “…will have, starting this week, a new owner. The State guarantees the protection of savers and Granahorrar thus begins a new chapter in its history” (González P. 1998).

A more detailed version of this story develops as follows: The article opens with an idealized description of the CAV’s origins in the seventies: “They were times of plenty and the …[CAV] enjoyed the backing of the powerful Grancolombiano [Business] Group of Jaime Michelsen Uribe.” Although this Group meant “…security and progress” for the organization (González P. 1998), Granahorrar first experienced difficulties when Grancolombiano Group “ran
into misfortune” and Granahorrar “changed owners” (González P. 1998). After being acquired by the Carrizosa family, who was in the construction business, Granahorrar regained its good standing: “The CAV came back into its growth path, becoming one of the largest in the system along with Davivienda, CONAVI and Colmena” (González P. 1998).

Later, in the 1990s, Granahorrar was thriving, even at a time when the CAV sector lost its monopoly on the mortgage market. CAVs entered the credit card market just as the Colombian market was in a “consumption boom”: “Granahorrar was there [‘in the consumption boom’] and the financial sector began to rebound quickly. New credit institutions appeared daily and existing ones consolidated their market presence. Banking profits grew faster and Colombians spent more and more to the complacency of financial institutions [that were] offering credit cards with both hands” (González P. 1998).

After this short-lived period of calm, Granahorrar, along with other CAVs, again ran into trouble. Discussion of the turmoil in the financial system reveals it was understood to be rooted in elevated interest rates, the problems with the UPAC system that began in 1996, and difficulties in the housing sector. According to El Tiempo, the slowdown or recession of the economy and the financial sector (“threats to the sector”) was a foretold tale that did not take hold among people—while some saw warnings, others did not since for a while the economy kept growing. Some (“lonely voices” dubbed “prophets of doom”) had already warned that the “economy might be overheated” and the fiscal scenario might suffer complications (González P. 1998). Ultimately, the turmoil hit close to home for Granahorrar and other institutions, but, according to the romantic narrative, Granahorrar should be able to recover.

The same plot line—the CAV running into trouble only to overcome it and arrive at a happy ending— is employed in another article printed on October 5th. “Marching through the
path of the crisis” focuses on the same recent troubles in the trajectory of Granahorrar but is every bit as romantic as the article of the previous day, though with a more historic view: the sun may shine in the end (Portafolio 1998g). The article opens with a statement suggesting that the CAV’s situation is becoming increasingly difficult: “Ten days ago things that were already hard for Granahorrar became harder.” This was true both for Granahorrar’s majority shareholder, Julio Carrizosa Mutis, and for Granahorrar as a whole: Carrizosa Mutis reached a “dead end” when forced to pay 130,000 million pesos in loans from banks; Granahorrar was under obligation to FOGAFIN, the government agency that had loaned 320.000 million pesos against the CAV’s unpaid loans (cartera), and to the Central Bank, “which had given support through ordinary and extraordinary credit” (Portafolio 1998g).

Despite this seemingly insurmountable situation, “there was a glimmer of hope.” Jorge Enrique Amaya, Granahorrar’s president, sought help from the government. “He called President Andrés Pastrana directly to inform him of the CAV’s delicate situation and informed him that the entity was unable to pay its obligations unless the government lent a hand” (Portafolio 1998g). The Administration “…promised to look for ways to rescue (‘sacar adelante’) the CAV and the finance minister sought bankers [creditors] who would also engage in the rescue operation” (Portafolio 1998g).

Creditors felt pressured by the government to come up with a solution. This was difficult to achieve because Carrizosa Mutis objected to selling his shares in the CAV to pay his debts at a rate acceptable to its creditors—the banks. Moreover, the creditors were not interested in the CAV shares since they were not liquid resources. The entire financial system was riddled with liquidity problems, and if the creditors received the shares in Granahorrar as payment, they
would have to further invest in the CAV from their own liquid resources to meet the capital requirements.

On the other hand, if the government alone rescued Granahorrar, its creditors would be left empty handed since their shares would be valued at zero (Portafolio 1998g). That is what in fact happened on October 5th, as *El Tiempo* further explains in terms similar to those used by FOGAFIN (2009): “…the Fund [FOGAFIN] proceeded to make what is technically known as a capital reduction to nominal values of the [CAV], which, in turn, opened the door to capitalize it on an amount close to 160,000 million pesos and left [FOGAFIN] with 99 percent of the capital Granahorrar shares” (Portafolio 1998h).

Nevertheless, the Government was pressuring creditors to arrive at a solution because of the threat posed to the entire financial system. Comparing this case with the recent rescue of Corfivalle, a leasing organization, *El Tiempo* argues that “…in this case there was an additional ingredient”—“[the g]overnment exerted pressured to save Granahorrar, one of the most traditional financial institutions in the country… in order to prevent further panic in the public, given the nervousness that already exist[ed] in the financial market” (Portafolio 1998g).

*Tragic storyline*

The romantic storyline of these two articles stands in stark contrast to “The man of Granahorrar,” which is tragic (Portafolio 1998d). In the first five paragraphs of the article, 333 words, a rather dire picture is painted: “At the end of last week one of the most unusual transactions to have occurred in the financial sector was carried out: the nationalization of Granahorrar. Unusual because …[as a result of] negotiations whereby everyone should have won, shareholders, creditors and even the government itself have lost. The only ones rescued were their savers” (Portafolio 1998d). This statement is unpacked in the paragraphs that follow:
“Julio Carrizosa Mutis, the majority shareholder of the CAV, watched as the company to which he had devoted twelve years of work and in which he had deposited much of his personal wealth, was slipping out of hand. Meanwhile, creditor banks not only saw 130 billion pesos drawn out of their coffers [as these will be resources that they would not get back], but also lost the opportunity to take control of an entity that, despite liquidity problems, was consolidated as one of the most representative financial institutions of the country” (Portafolio 1998d).

Echoing the romantic narrative of other articles, this article argues that the organization was able to surpass the obstacles of the 1980s and, in part, continue on. “[W]ith new owners [i.e., Carrizosa], the CAV returned to a path of growth, the company overcame the crisis, and unlike what happened in most companies, where (the banker) Michelsen had participation, [Granahorrar] was not taken over”(Portafolio 1998d). However, in the 1990s the outlook of the whole financial sector and the construction sector changed due to a myriad of factors: “The former currency board opted for a restrictive policy and interest rates began to grow beyond the level at which the debtors where able to pay [their loans]. The entire financial system felt the impact” (Portafolio 1998d). In the midst of this turmoil, Granahorrar was hit: it “began to face liquidity problems, which, combined with the differences that arose between its shareholders, [gradually] changed the face of its future” (Portafolio 1998d).

The crisis the CAV encountered as a result of the turmoil of the entire financial sector consisted of disagreements between its shareholders and a bank run inspired by rumors amplified by the media. When the liquidity gap increased, majority shareholder Carrizosa was forced to put his shares up for sale, though without results (Portafolio 1998b).

In this article, it is nationalization as the tragic outcome that marks the end of the story: “In the end, and [with] time pressure as another factor against him, the attempt at negotiation last
week was frustrated. The efforts (buenos oficios) of President Andrés Pastrana and the conciliatory experience of Banking Superintendent Sara Ordoñez were to no avail. The end was nationalization” (Portafolio 1998b).

Following this explanation, the article shifts to the hurt suffered by Carrizosa. Underscoring tragedy in the case of its heroic character, from paragraph six to 27 the article veers towards a personal profile (Portafolio 1998d). Here Carrizosa is described as a self-made entrepreneur who is tenacious, ambitious, focused and determined. He is the classic entrepreneur who puts forth effort and seizes opportunities, who is practical, commonsensical and not easily defeated. Nevertheless his fate is tragic: he did not get a good result in the end.

Appendix 2. Workers’ General Strike. Sixth Chapter: Colombian Coverage of the End-of-the-Century Crisis and the Emergent Market Crisis

One of the events included in the El Tiempo-Portafolio coverage is the strike that was motivated by various government actions and policies implemented in an attempt to address the economic problems. Columnists and writers highlighted those actions and policies aimed at reducing the fiscal deficit. The strike enjoyed coverage in El Tiempo-Portafolio. Revista Dinero, however, published no articles covering the strike in the time window analyzed.85

Many actions and policies of interest to journalists fall within the framework of the so-called austerity measures. Two different instances of the protests took place or were expected to take place in the sampling window examined. A national strike was called on September 22nd    

85 In Revista Dinero, only two articles were found when searched for using the key word “strike.” between 1997 and 1999.
and 23rd, and the expectation that it would occur was captured in the first two weeks of September included in the sample.

The eighth of October saw the start of another strike involving public workers. This strike, as explained by Consuelo Ahumada (2002), was important in the context of protests against the austerity measures. Ahumada (2002): 155) writes: “In October 1998 … [there was a] public sector strike, which lasted 21 days. … [It] clearly was a political strike against the government-announced neoliberal measures.”

The strike occurred for a number of reasons. One factor was a low minimum wage increase and the elimination of withholding tax exceptions, which affected salaries. This aspect of the strike is emphasized in one of the articles in El Tiempo-Portafolio and will be discussed below. Additional factors, as Ahumada (2002) explains, included the reduction of public funds allocated to health and education, privatizations, the closing of public companies, and “disregard of collective agreements,” among others (p. 224). These issues were not covered by El Tiempo-Portafolio, as the minimum wage increase failed to reflect the comprehensive and complex nature of labor demands. Ahumada (2002) insists that a significant portion of public workers during this period actively participated in the strike, including workers from “…key State companies: the media and oil companies, employees from Caja Agraria and banks, teachers and health workers, judicial branch employees, those working at the Comptroller General’s Office and numerous other official entities” (p 224). Ahumada (2002) conveys the intensity of the strike with these words: “The daily mobilizations, the marches towards the capital cities of the departments, and the demonstrations in the main cities were a marked feature” (p. 224).

El Tiempo-Portafolio criticized the workers’ protests in two complementary articles. The first of the two articles maintains that the requested percentage wage increase had already been
granted in the case of various entities and trade unions that took part in the strike and, for this reason, the strike was not justified. The second contends that the workers should not have been protesting given the difficult economic situation of the time and the consequences that could result from the strike.

An article entitled “Labor Consciousness,” dated October 5th, explains and justifies the president’s call for public sector workers to exercise “consciousness” with respect to the economic situation and the viability of their demands, and, in that conscious mindset, to accept a 14% increase in all cases (Portafolio 1998a). The workers are portrayed as irrational people who must be called upon to exercise “common sense” and “consciousness,” as suggested by the title of the article. The same characterization is made in another article, dated October 6th, according to which continuation of the strike was deemed irresponsible and senseless: “There is a total absence of responsibility in terms of the implications of this strike, given the country’s difficult economic conditions”; the strike “is equivalent to no less than the protocolization of the greatest senselessness, contrary to the most elemental national conventions” (Portafolio 1998c).

According to an article published October 5th in the Editorial-Opinion section, in order to maintain the workers’ real income, particularly in the case of those earning the lowest income, it was just as crucial to achieve an adequate level of inflation as it was to obtain a specific percentage increase.86 Emphasis is thus placed on managing inflation rather than on worker

86 The beginning of Portafolio (1998a) provides context with the mention of the importance of handling inflation to the stability of economic “variables.” It then discusses the role of the Central Bank. It explains the behavior of cost-of-life statistics over the previous two months
demands. If inflation were under control, there would be no need to demand a wage increase. Another objection to the strike is articulated as follows: “sacrifice” is important if the “country’s economic situation is going to improve in the mid-term.” Everyone needs to make this sacrifice; it is a “general goal.” Yet the only specific people called to make a sacrifice are the public sector workers; they are encouraged to stop striking and stop demanding a wage increase. Public workers, according to the article, are privileged in that they have a job in a country with such high unemployment rates; they should therefore help in times of crisis (Portafolio 1998a).

Similarly, the article dated October 6th and entitled “The fight is no longer about pay” discusses the strike called by the workers’ unions for the end of the month (Portafolio 1998i). The article details wage increases and other benefits signed or agreed upon by public sector workers representing different entities and occupations. The newspaper considered the strike unjustified and expresses its views along this line in a 995-word-long cover story (Portafolio 1998i).

The paper deems the strike unjustified given that the current or agreed upon wage increase for that year was similar to or even exceeded the level of increase workers were demanding for the following year. As in the previous article, it is clear that the demands were viewed as unjustified, and that the demand for a salary increase was seen as the only or primary motivation for the upcoming strike (planned for the 7th of October) (Portafolio 1998i). The bulk of the article is dedicated to examining how many official employees representing which

during which inflation was almost zero. The role of the monetary policy in achieving this level of inflation is recognized and justification of the increase requested by the workers is discussed.
professions and entities would receive an increase in excess of what the workers were demanding for 1999, and how many would not (Portafolio 1998i). Only in the last of twenty-six paragraphs is the idea introduced that the wage increase for that year was not the only element justifying the strike. This notion, however, does not carry the same weight as the previous portion of the text that argues to the contrary.

Two examples of accounts given include the agreements reached by workers at the National Institute for Social Services, which provided health services (ISS by its initials in Spanish) and teachers (Portafolio 1998i). Regarding the 24,000 ISS workers, the article specifies that they had signed a three-year collective agreement the previous year for a wage increase consistent with the inflation rate plus 1.5 points. Another article questions the legitimacy of workers who were subject to labor conventions, such as ISS workers, supporting the strike: “they have no reason whatsoever to think about striking; their allocations are set through collective agreements” (Portafolio 1998c).

It is for this reason that the paper considered the strike unjustified. Additionally, “This sector, was among those that most affected the country during the last statewide strike of the 23rd and 24th of September” (Portafolio 1998i).

As for the teachers, the 250,000 who ceased activities were criticized for “…leaving seven million students with no classes to attend despite the fact that they agreed upon … an increase of eight-points above the inflation rate” (my emphasis) (Portafolio 1998i).

87 The article discusses some of the measures being adopted to achieve a fiscal adjustment.
The position of the public employee unions in this respect is cited at different points throughout the article. Initially, the workers’ unions stated that “the sacrifice must be everyone’s, but should fall more heavily on [those in] higher positions and not on mid-level employees who earn, on average, COP $ 1,200,000” (Portafolio 1998i). The end of the article examines inequalities among the groups of workers who were or would be covered by the increases. This differs from the emphasis made earlier: “What the experts and unionists are asking themselves is about the criteria based on which more than 490,000 state-level workers were excluded from this package by the government.” The article then consolidates the total employees to which the demanded increase applied: “The weighted fourteen percent will only apply to 316,000 workers [of 800,000], of which over half (224,851) will receive increases of more than 17 percent.”

However, these figures were far below the figures specified at the beginning of the article, which showed that most of the 800,000 public employees would be covered and only 10% (91,800) would not be granted the maximum increase of 14% (Portafolio 1998i). The article also quoted public employee unions stating that the increase must serve to compensate the “losses they have suffered [in wages] over the past 13 years.” They contended that the workers’ compensation had lost around 44.33% of its purchasing power during those years (Portafolio 1998i).

Midway through the article, after characterizing the demands of the different groups of workers as unjustified given the above-inflation-rate increases they had received or would receive, the writer poses the following question: “Under these conditions, both the government and labor analysts ask themselves how such a large scale strike can be justified in the midst of a financial and fiscal crisis.” This was the same objection raised in the October 5th editorial. In both cases, it is suggested that the workers are to sacrifice themselves for the greater good of society. This article does not examine how the workers’ contribution was situated within the
broader panorama of the adjustment, nor does it look into who was responsible for the economic and fiscal crisis (Portafolio 1998i). It also cites Labor Minister Hernando Yepes, who, reinforcing the analysis presented, opined that the strike “is not justified,” “there are not weighty reasons for it” (Portafolio 1998i). Yepes, who expressed the same opinion in another article within the sample, is quoted as saying, “[I]t makes no sense and it is not justified that the strike persists in making greater demands that are impossible to satisfy”—particularly in light of the fact that the government already considered adequate two increase levels: one of 18% for “those who earn less” and another of 14% “for those who earn more” (Portafolio 1998c). The Labor Minister’s opinion was consistent with the main idea of yet another article entitled “The absurd strike.”

Speaking for Colombians, the newspaper opines: “[W]e are waiting for the strike [in September] to be declared illegal; it interrupted classes in official schools and caused the loss of five billion pesos in social security, and nothing happened.” Thus, according to the authors of the article, Colombia did not become solidarity with the protesting teachers and civil servants. Rather, it was aligned with the “victims” of the strike, and it agreed with the strike being declared illegal (Portafolio 1998i). Citing in general, the “experts in the topic of labor” urgently advocated for “drastic measures” to “stamp out recurrent strikes that do not lead to real changes in society and that, on the contrary, harm the population and discredit union movements” (Portafolio 1998i).

Another article published on the 7th of October, the day the strike began, focuses on the “[Government’s] effort to stop [it].” Entitled “Government struggles to stop the national strike,” the article looks at the consequences of the strike, stating that it “… threatens to reduce the production of crude oil by 10%, and to leave seven million students with no class to attend.” It
also puts forth the argument that other sectors would be affected, namely “… health, telecommunications, the administration of justice, and the services provided by public entities” (Portafolio 1998e).

The article alternately presents opinions of the government and unions, and the government of Andrés Pastrana and the Labor Minister Hernando Yepes are cited. The latter, for instance, is quoted as saying “…[Y]esterday the government opened the door to dialog and hoped to reach an agreement to stop the state workers’ strike” (Portafolio 1998e).

The article also cites Wilson Borja, President of Fenaltrase, union “leaders” in general and CGTD President Julio Roberto Gómez. The union leaders state that the government had been unwilling to negotiate and enter into an agreement before the strike was initiated: “‘The government knew of the strike beforehand and called a negotiations meeting at practically the same time,’ said the President of CGTD…” (Portafolio 1998e).

The article reviews the eight points on the list of demands presented by unions, some of which were mentioned in previous articles: the wage level with respect to inflation and opposition to privatizations. Other points that had not been broadly discussed include “the opening process,” “parallel pay” in public entities and their impact on the budget, and adequate funding for health and education at the regional level. Additional points in the list of demands include: “the fulfillment of agreements by entities such as Sena, Telecom, and the health sector, union guarantees, and changes in procurement laws that result in administrative corruption” (Portafolio 1998e). The article also reports on meetings that took place with ministers and were in the works with the worker unions (Portafolio 1998e).

Finally, the progress made by the strike was discussed in an article appearing October 9th that predicts, “…[N]either side will give in while the negotiations are in progress.” This article
focuses on two central aspects to be discussed by the two sides: salaries and the consequences of government measures. Most of the information provided, however, relates to pay. According to this report, the unions demanded that wages should correspond to the inflation rate plus five points. The government is intimated to be open to dialogue: the Ministry of Finance “…is willing to fix the problem.” However, little is specified in terms of any possibility that the government would grant the requested pay increase. Despite an explicit indication of willingness, there were no resources available: “According to Juan Camilo Restrepo, Minister of Finance, the list of demands will cost the government four tax reforms; that is, four billion pesos (Portafolio 1998l). The publication communicates that new groups of workers, such as those of the DIAN, equivalent to the IRS, and the Civil Aeronautics Administration, joined the protests and informs the reader that the Unión Sindical Obrera (USO) has reduced oil fuel pumping by the state oil company Ecopetrol by 50% (Portafolio 1998l).

Regarding the impact and relevance of the strike, Ahumada (2002) (states the following: “In terms of its objectives, magnitude, and duration, the state workers’ strike was the most extensive of the 1990s. When the strike was called off, the government was faced with a series of commitments, the strengthening of Caja Agraria and increased resources for the health sector among them” (p. 224-225). The author opines that the public workers were those who confronted “…[the] agenda [of] President Pastrana in a timely and decisive manner, and this trend was maintained throughout the quadrennial.” Ahumada (2002) viewed the impact of the protests as significant, emphasizing that “[the] political capital of the new government collapsed very soon, as corroborated in the opinion polls” (p. 224).

Appendix 3. An In-Depth Description of the patterns of Opinion and Editorial Articles. Eight Chapter: Colombian Coverage about the Great Recession.
First and Second Low Mimetic Views

Low Mimetic From an editorial perspective: Nothing to worry about. Ricardo Ávila, editor of Portafolio, advances a low mimetic view of the crisis, which is typical of the approach of other columnists. He is one of the few career journalists writing the Op-Ed pieces, but has had some positions as a public and multilateral official. He writes editorials as well as short opinion pieces in a column called Compass. During window of the two weeks in October he writes several editorials and columns, on the crisis and what is going on in the U.S. economy.

In September 17th, Ávila opens up the editorial, his first piece on the subject, arguing for “a more balanced analysis” of the events in the U.S. There was a period of “commotion” in Black Friday, but now the calm has returned. Now, a controlled and more rational analysis of what happened can be advanced. Presumably, this indicates that the Government or other actors do not need to jump into action. The journalist says that it is not such a colossal catastrophe, as suggested by some pessimistic observers. Quoting a (financial) analyst assessment, the editorialist closes the first paragraph arguing: “…what looked like a hurricane was classified at the end of a 24 hour period as a tropical storm” (Ávila 2008).

Ávila, nevertheless, points out that there are key events that merit attention such as the demise of three of five main investment banks, the acquisition of their assets by other organizations, the change in the regulation of the financial sector, and the stock market fall. However, the description continues to be somehow low mimetic for some of these events. He describes the stock market fall, occurring in the main stock markets in the world, as relatively unimportant in the long term: they had a hiccup (traspies).

However, the journalist highlights that “the effects (coletazos) that may be worth looking for Colombia are not the same as those from the U.S. perspective. Why? Ávila argues that
locally, there are no investments in the shares (*titulos*) that are in trouble for the organizations that operate locally such as AIG. For the author it does not seem feasible either that Colombian operations would be affected if the headquarters of these American organizations need to file for Chapter 11 (“if they decide to file for legal protection of their creditors”).

What is really important for Colombia are “the new circumstances in exchange and in the commodities markets.” The editor argues that despite the fears about the fate of U.S. markets, is a known fact that investors will flight to safety, which they would still think is mainly Treasury bonds. This is a reassuring and low mimetic view of the consequences of the crisis for the U.S. and globally. The narrative forwards to the future rather than concentrating on the present.

Thus, the dollar will be strengthened in reference to other currency. Also, he argues liquidity will drop. The assets of the main banks worldwide will be reduced due to the losses. He points out that these circumstances “… generate, bluntly, a new scenario for which we should be ready.” This latter argument is in a higher mimetic mode than those before.

Ávila closes the article arguing that a strong dollar might not be as bad as many may think, because exporters have been hit by a lower exchange rate and industry has been competing with cheap imports. However, it does have negative effects in the ability to payment the sovereign debt and the external (foreign) debt for private sector, and may increase prices of imports.

Ávila highlights that the relevance of foreign investment flows for the budget should be identified. This has implications not only from a currency market point of view but also from the developmental model that is followed: If the model chosen posits that is justifiable to deal with the turmoil by having a generous tax stimuli to attract national and foreign investment, or not: “Thus, it would be worth it, that the technocrats in the [Treasury] start analyzing scenarios to
avoid, if the winds are blowing elsewhere, to leave empty handed (*quedarse con el pecado y sin el género).*”

Similarly, Ávila argues in his Compass column, a week later in September 24th, that indeed “Colombia is receiving the impact of the crisis unfolding wave (*coletazo*)”. He mentions that this wave is comprised of two key effects: the increasing value of the dollar versus the peso (that is, the representative market exchange rate increasing) and the setback of the local stock market mainly due to the behavior of the share of Ecopetrol, the main Colombian (public) oil company which debuted in the New York Exchange on Black Monday. The valuation of the share does not seem fair: “This [poor performance] happens when the company benefits from the strong increase registered in oil prices and the higher exchange rate.” However, this does not mean that someone should act.

Ávila argues that the lower performance that Colombia seems to be experiencing could be explained away as a result of the latest data released on national growth. For the second trimester of 2008, figures were below analysts’ prediction. Nevertheless, he argues nowadays the situation is different in reference to the stock market: “the majority opinion is that due to the lack of clear signals, the volatility and speculative trends are more influential now than the strength (*solidez*) of the companies whose titles are traded.” The moment is perceived as unusual: “rumors are stronger than balance sheets, another reason for abstaining from turbulent water, those who prefer being prudent.”

*A Low Mimetic View from a Political Perspective.* Simón Gaviria Muñoz, a U.S. trained economist, elected politician for the House of Representatives and son of former President Gaviria, also dismisses the relevance of the crisis. He argues, in a September 25th article, that the U.S. mortgage crisis and the recent events are important “in theory” not reality. Few sectors will
indeed suffer. Only the effects of the collapse of the building or housing sector are relevant. Commercial banks have been injured by their own practices and by rating agencies that supported them with a favorable rating. The changes in the industry should not be a cause for concern: “Needless to say that none of the big commercial banks has gone bankrupt. The only thing that has happened is that they got capitalized and now the main shareholders are Arab, Chinese, or Singaporeans.”

Every time something happens in the international financial system, in theory, the hecatomb arrives. The mortgage crisis in the U.S. has not been the exception. Many have started already to compare it with the Great Depression of 1929. Needless to say none (of this) is true. Who will have to take the brunt of it are most of all the financial intermediaries and consultants of the financial system, a small part of the commercial banks and less so the real economy. The only exception is the U.S. construction sector, which contributed to the crisis. But this (one) as the crisis of (19)87, the Tequila (crisis) of 95, Long-Term Capital +emerging markets 1998, Argentinean crisis of 2001, and the crash of the .com 2002, they have always a lot of roar and then they burst. Sound and fury and ends up meaning less. (Gaviria 2008)

Gaviria Muñoz argues that the crisis is not significant because investment banks who have gone into bankruptcy are not the core of the system, as they are service-oriented and not doing the central job (i.e., capturing savings from the public). “What had to happen, happened, the commercial banks bought the investment banks.” He does not address the systemic risk that was posed on the system (Gaviria 2008).

A Low Mimetic View From the Market. A Stock Exchange’s President View. Juan Pablo Córdoba, president of the Colombian Stock Exchange, argues that the crisis does not pose a serious threat to Colombia. The interview is featured in an article in September 24th in Portafolio. He says: “Even when the Colombian Stock Exchange (BVC, in Spanish) is not escaping to the volatility regarding the international financial crisis… the blow was not as strong
and that there are elements [that will serve] to cope with the situation. Nevertheless, [he recognizes] there will be a secondary effect in the medium term”

In September 26th, quoted by Revista Dinero, however, he backpedals a little bit arguing that there might be a slowing of U.S. economy with its consequences. He argues that the “U.S. financial sector is truly global” thus there will be a “global impact.” Córdoba argues that the effect of the crisis at a global level would depend on “how long it takes the [financial] system to effectively restore these credit channels will be decisive in determining the impact of the financial crisis on the global economy (Revista Dinero 2008:36).

A Low Mimetic View. Not Preparing A Local response: Actors are abroad. González Muñoz, an economist with a trajectory in the public sector,88 argues in his article on September 17th “A new trip of the pendulum” that there is uncertainty about the future. He posits that it “is too risky to anticipate what will happen” and highlights two relevant issues at a “global scale”: production and employment. He states that it is expected that the real economy: “would (soon) receive the surge that is coming full force (González Muñoz 2008). He is worried, as many U.S. commentators, about the contagion of the crisis from the financial sector to the real sector.

González Muñoz, as other writers, it is not explicit about who is going to handle the crisis in the international arena, it is rather a passive formulation. (González Muñoz 2008:2) The

88 González Muñoz had been Banking Superintendent during Samper Administration (1994-1998) and a programmatic director for the presidential campaign of Horacio Serpa (Liberal Party) in 2006. As of 2008, he had been columnist for a regional newspaper, Vanguardia Liberal, for a decade.
responsibility of action does not fall in Colombian hands. González Muñoz argues that the health of the global and local economy would be better (or not) depending on how the critical financial juncture not yet a crisis is handled.

Two executive branch officials are quoted downplaying the threat that the global turmoil might pose for Colombia. On September 26th, Oscar Iván Zuluaga, Finance Minister of Colombia, is very confident and positive on the current and future performance of Colombian economy in the face of these global events. As a result of establishing capital controls in the recent past “the real sector is not indebted abroad”, which he considers as “very positive.” (Revista Dinero 2008:43). Equally, “[i]n terms of access to funds, the Finance Minister Zuluaga also sees no trouble on the horizon, as the government is already funded for this year”89 (Revista Dinero 2008:43). Zuluaga further considers that the country is in very good shape to face the crisis because it has a well-capitalized financial system (encajado) with a high level of provisions or financial reserves, good profitability and high solvency margin. (Revista Dinero 2008:42).

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89 Similarly, Zuluaga considers as very positive the fact that the real sector (real economy) is not indebted abroad. In this regard, he emphasizes the importance of having imposed capital controls at the time. In terms of access to financing, the Finance Minister Zuluaga also sees no trouble on the horizon, as the government is already funded for this year and needs for 2009 of US $ 2,600 million, are not difficult to achieve, even if markets were to close since the government has contingent credit lines already approved, argues the minister. (para. 43) (Revista Dinero 2008:43)
Zuluaga posits that “Compared to the magnitude of the international financial crisis, it can be expected that Colombia will emerge relatively well [unharmed] from the situation” He does moderate the message arguing that “[Colombia’s relative stability] does not mean that the scenario allows declaring victory. The difficulties of the environment will contribute to depress [Colombian] economic performance and, as already known, growth will be lower than this year. It is a time for caution…” (Revista Dinero 2008)

Similarly, Juan Mario Laserna, co-director of the Central Bank, sees as very positive the steps taken by the US government and considers that Colombia is in relatively good shape compared to [its situation] in previous external shocks. ‘Now my mantra is [acknowledging or communicating] the benefits that having established capital controls have provided,’ says Laserna. ‘This allowed private debt in dollars not shoot up,’ he adds. In the future, however, growth might decrease: Laserna points out that, overall, 2009 will be weaker than 2008 in economic terms and the evolution of Venezuela is one of the critical factors in the landscape. (Revista Dinero 2008:44)

An In-Depth Description of the Third View: High Mimetic

Crisis in high mimetic: Questioning a Low Mimetic View of the Crisis From a Local (Colombian) View. There are some observers that have indeed warned about the potential effects of the U.S. crisis on the Colombian economy. Santiago Ulloa, a financial advisor90 argues in

90 Ulloa is described two years later (2010 and 2011) as a “Top 20 Independent financial advisor in the US by Barron's” in the “25 top Spanish Leaders Group” by Poder magazine in 2010; and
September 26th, that even when the global crisis is evident, Latin American countries are passive, they remain “unmoved”:

The effects of the US recession are palpable in the street; and in Europe it can get worse in the coming months. *It is curious that most Latin American countries still act as if the problem was not theirs and continue on without taking drastic measures.* However, the party may finish rapidly, and if we are not prepared, [the recession] can have quite negative consequences. *If global demand slows, it will clearly affect the region, both due to lower exports of raw materials, and due to the cooling of sales of their products.* Moreover, *the fall of the construction sector in developed countries will cause that many Latin Americans are temporarily unemployed and remittances to the region curb (Ulloa 2008).*

The lead article in *Revista Dinero* (in the cover section) “External crisis affects us how?” examines the crisis in three parts. It is a prominent article of 3,914 words, printed on September 26th, 2008. First, it recounts the crisis echoing some of the arguments already made for the U.S. [include examples]. Second, it mentions the potential effects of the crisis in the U.S. and globally. Third, the effects on Colombia are mentioned and then countervailing points of view are presented.  

contributor to financial magazines such as *Dinero, América Economía, Semana Económica, Poder,* and other business publications” (Anon n.d.).

91 The article, at 44 paragraphs, spends up to paragraph 34th discussing the crisis from a (seemingly) U.S. perspective. From paragraphs 34th up to 38th discusses the possible development of the crisis globally, and then from 39th to 44th goes on to assess the impact that the crisis might have for Colombia, first showing opinions that it might have a significant impact (39th – 41st ) and later on that it would not (41st up to 44th).
The first paragraph sums up the overall idea of the article: “The financial fragility of the United States has been exposed and the government of that country has to bear the largest bailout in history. Colombia is well grounded to face this hurricane, but cannot let itself to be caught off guard” (para. 1) For example, Juan Pablo Córdoba, president of the Colombian stock exchange, who is quoted again, and Luis Oganés, managing director and head of Latin American Research in JP Morgan assess the possibilities of slowdown or recession in the U.S. (para. 37 and 38), pointing out that “In Colombia this may result in a slowdown in its economy, negative effects on the volume and price of its exports and lower credit availability, among others” (para. 60).

Crisis in High Mimetic: Local Columnists. Narrating the U.S. Crisis From a U.S. Vantage Point. There are some columnists, on the other hand, that use a similar logic to that of articles written in the U.S., either the ones that are published in the U.S. or syndicated also for Colombian newspapers. Some of these columnists echo the tone of U.S. coverage of the crisis: a dramatic, high mimetic tone. They, however, do not seem to be amplifying the importance of the crisis in the Colombian context as they generally do not draw direct implications for its economy or society.

“The ghost of 1929” is written by Andrés Espinosa Fenwarth, who is adviser to the Minister of Agriculture. The article compares this crisis to the Great Depression, discusses the fall of five investment banks and the shifts in this sector, and explains the causes and consequences of the 2007 subprime crisis.

92 The opinion of Luis Oganés from JP Morgan is not placed in context. The journalist does not ask how is JP Morgan fit to speak or not about the crisis being an actor in it.
Similarly to the examined articles in the U.S. media, the author discusses, for instance, the fate of five “independent” investment banks, describing them as previously “reigning” actors. Of the powerful five only two are still standing: JP Morgan Chase & Co. and Bank of America. They are described as two powerful commercial banks, perhaps because they are the absorbers.93

Barclays and Nomura are described as “picking up the pieces that were left after the resounding bankruptcy of Lehman” (Espinosa Fenwarth 2008:1).

Also, the author compares the current crisis with the crash in 1929 singling out reasons for both falls. These reasons are tied to moral failure, in a similar fashion to some U.S. articles: Their “unsafe commercial practices” and “their contempt for risk” have brought their demise (Espinosa Fenwarth 2008:2) (para. 2.) Another reason is related to the conditions of leverage and reserves in which the commercial banking operate in comparison to investment banking. He argues that investment banking which was “profitable and supposedly safe”: didn’t turn out to be (Espinosa Fenwarth 2008:3) (para. 3).

At the end, Espinosa Fenwarth calls for U.S. Congress and Federal Government to act, in order to prevent an event such as the Great Depression (last paragraph). He argues that the crisis has not ended as “five million of Americans …are on the brink of losing their homes” and “financial organizations… [are] illiquid …which delays granting credits” (para. 6)

Crisis in Middle Mimetic Mode: Op-Ed Writers Interpreting the Crisis and Giving Advice to Elites. Some columnists, writing about the U.S. or international financial crisis suggests courses of action for Colombian elites (Government or the Central Bank).

93 Similarly to syndicated articles.
One of the columnists is Roberto Junguito Bonnet, a well-versed economic analyst with a Ph.D. from Princeton University, and who has been a former high ranking public official (Junguito 2008). In his September 24th article, he is writing from an authoritative/expert position, talking directly to the Administration and the Congress.94

Junguito, argues that the international financial crisis reminds us the problems that Colombia faced when previous global crises unfolded. He shows his insight on the crisis probably stemming from his experience as co-director of the Central Bank at the time of the Colombian end-of-the-century crisis. Thus, he intends to use the current financial crisis to point to the changes that Colombian decision makers ought to make.

The columnist describes four lessons that derive from the global crisis. Through these ________________

94 At the time that he is writing he is credited as being Executive President of Fasecolda, Federation of Colombian Insurers, a business association (he was appointed to that position in 2005). Junguito’s profile is broader, however. He is a respected economist, with a Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton University, and an undergraduate degree from University of Los Andes. Recently he was co-director of the Central Bank from 1991 to 1999. He held the position of Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund from September 1999 to October 2002. Afterwards, he became Minister of Finance and Public Credit, from 2002 to 2003, during Alvaro Uribe’s first presidential term. During Junguito’s term as Minister, a new tax reform took place in Colombia. Previously he was Minister of Agriculture and Treasury during Belisario Betancur’s administration (1982-1986), ambassador in France during Barco’s administration (1986-1990).
lessons he suggests courses of action for elites. He identifies, for example, key organizations that should be active in facing the international threats: First he points to the Central Bank and later he identifies the Ministry of the Finance (the analogous to the FED) and the Congress.

Junguito argues that the first lesson to follow is that the financial sector needs to be well leveraged. His assessment is that now (in 2008) the financial sector is stronger than in the eighties and nineties. At that time, when the Latin American crisis of the debt hit and the crisis of the end of the century (Colombian) CAVs and savings and loans (cooperativas financieras) were affected.

The actions that the columnist suggests should be taken, in order to achieve a healthy financial sector, are directed towards increasing the effectiveness of the Financial Superintendence, by improving its independence. He suggests that some of the changes that should be authorized are giving the organization the required autonomy to be able to exercise an effective supervision and establishing the period of Superintendent as fixed.

This can be done through a bill that is being discussed in the Congress. Junguito does not single out specific legislators, but points out that they should be responsible.

César González Muñoz, an economist of National University of Colombia with a public trajectory, also gives some lessons for elites but in a slightly different style.

“A new trip (swing) of the pendulum” he starts by describing the crisis as concerning. He voices a common concern regarding the downfall of production and employment and it close-future impact on the real economy. He argues that the economy could be badly hurt if the crisis is not well addressed. The columnist explains also what is going on as the end of an era and of the model of investment banking and the dawn of a new one, similar to what some U.S. journalists describe. The weekend of September 14-15 is described as disastrous and
extraordinary for financial analysts given the events regarding Lehman, Merrill and AIG. These events are described as unusual. In the case of Freddie and Fannie conservatorship is unusual given that is [described as] the largest nationalization in the U.S, depicted as the land of the private property.

The article analyzes the current effects of the crisis and wonders about the future ones. After such a disastrous week: What is next? The columnist also describes that the employees are victims. In Lehman they were 25.000, of whom 30% shareholders, and in Merrill, given the sell to Bank of America, they have gloom perspectives for the job.

The author also describes how Bear Stearns case was very differently from Lehman’s. JPMorgan Chase bought Bear Stearns. Chase paid a very low price for Bear (“miseros”), the author highlights, but doesn’t point out that the organization was about to be bankrupt. Differently from Bear Stearns, Lehman did not have access to resources from central bank. As Lehman did not find a buyer it had to go Chapter 11 protection (Ley de Quiebras).

In the previous to last paragraph he argues that flows “close to so-called emerging markets” could flight to safety, looking, for example, for Treasury bonds. This will reverse the trends from emerging markets. Thus, “…the …direct investment …of countries like Colombia could suffer a fall” (González Muñoz 2008:9)

“In any case, as a result of these forces, around here the price of the dollar will continue to go up, and will be harder to gain international funding. A responsible, well advised government would be fastening the fiscal belt, now more than ever” (González Muñoz 2008:10)

Another columnist is César González Muñoz, who is an economist of National University of Colombia, the most prestigious public university. Before writing his column in Portafolio he has had experience in the financial (public?) sector. He was president of Financiera Energética
Nacional (FEN) from 1989 to 1992, which was created to fund energy programs and of Asobancaria, the business association of the financial sector (1992-1998). In 2008 he had been columnist for a regional newspaper, Vanguardia Liberal, for a decade. He was also professor and dean of Universidad Nacional, College of Economic Science. In 1995 he was appointed Banking Superintendent during Samper Administration. In 2006, he was programmatic director for the presidential campaign of Horacio Serpa.
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