

***Trends in Reference Newspapers in Chile: The Art of Balancing Positions through the Framing of Political News Sources***

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**Abstract**

The study analyses whether, in the context of Chile's concentrated media ownership, the press shows trends towards a uniform framing of viewpoints in news about the actions of the government, political parties or civil society. A content analysis isolating positions of the sources and the media themselves regarding the framing of their quotes, will permit to establish the tendency towards a homogeneous or diverse behavior of six reference papers studied, especially the two leading newspapers, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*. The research is based on the perception of unfairness with their audiences, because the Chilean press is considered dramatically homogeneous and subject to monopolistic practices, which would reduce the social actors represented in it, and consequently limit the diversity of approaches and perspectives on important social events presented to the public. Our earlier studies with editorials detected that Chilean newspapers tend to be very similar when judging responsible parties, always balancing acceptance and rejection and always less critical of the government than of civil actors. Methodologically, the study also allows to test if the generic frames proposed by Semetko & Valkenburg (2000), which are already validated in other countries and cultural contexts, serve the purpose of empirically analysing Chilean media. Like numerous international studies on framing, the analysis of the data shows that when dealing with political news in Chile, journalists mainly use the frames of attribution of responsibility and conflict. However, the use of the generic frames analysed here is surprisingly low in the Chilean press as a whole.

Keywords: framing, news sources, Chilean printed press, political and governmental news

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## Introduction

There is a progressive repetition of the premise that the global phenomenon of concentration of media ownership is not only restricting the plurality of the media available, but is also generating a homogeneous treatment of journalistic content.

In Chile, this situation has been considered especially perceptible in the written press owing to the duopoly conformed by El Mercurio SAP and Copesa SA, the two companies that publish nearly 80 per cent of the newspapers in the country (Mönckeberg, 2009; Sunkel & Geoffroy, 2001; Couso, 2011), which has also been called an “ideological monopoly”, because their owners follow the neo-liberal economic model and believe in value-based conservatism (Sunkel & Geoffroy, 2001).

Should this homogeneity be confirmed, it would validate the current questioning of the press which, according to the majority of communication researchers addressing the issue, should empower citizens and contribute to democratic development, monitoring economic and political powers, especially in the government and in the political class<sup>1</sup>, through the diffusion of diverse representations that enrich public discussion on debatable political and government issues (Schudson, 2008; Aladro, 2013; Baum & Groeling, 2008).<sup>2</sup>

These antecedents validate the relevance of this project<sup>3</sup> that analyses the journalistic contents of six Chilean reference newspapers so as to establish the existence of the above mentioned homogeneity. In order to do this, it works with an approach that is still relatively unexplored in Chile, which is the analysis of the framing the media have used in political and government news, so as to detect if there is a persistent repetition of the approaches or perspectives used to inform public opinion of socially relevant events.

The methodological tools of framing and its definitions of generic frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Vreese et al., 2001; Elenbaas & de Vreese, 2008), are used in a content analysis of the following: *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, the flagship newspapers of the two principal media companies in the country, *Publimetro*, the free commuter newspaper, which is the only significant newspaper published in the capital that does not belong to these companies; the popular newspaper *La Cuarta*, and two reference regional media, Concepción’s *El Sur* and La Serena’s *El Día*.

The starting point here is that the frames analysed in this work have been outlined in previous studies as the most recurrent items in political news. The general objective is then to determine the frame that the medium attributes to the statements of each

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<sup>1</sup> Research Fondecyt Project 1110306, which precedes this one and studied the inter and intra media homogeneity of editorial stances, established that the most important social actors in terms of the criticism and responsibility attributed to them in socially relevant issues are government authorities and the political actors and political organisations.

<sup>2</sup> The following were consulted, among other authors: Sjøvaag (2010); Whitten-Woodring & James (2012); Ortega (2003); Hallin & Mancini (2008).

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source and to the contributions of the journalist in political news items in Chilean newspapers. This is done to establish the eventual existence of trends in the use of frames that might explain the perception of homogeneity in journalistic contents.

### **Theoretical framework**

This research investigates the Chilean press because the reference newspapers and the papers with largest circulation in the country, including their digital versions, are the most frequented spaces for accessing political and government news (Godoy & Gronemeyer, 2012). Lochard and Boyer (2004, p. 89) argue: “despite the enormous competition of the audiovisual media, the written press has known how to maintain a leading position in the media system, demonstrating its great capacity to adapt to extremely changing historical circumstances”. Porath’s studies of presidential campaigns (2007a, 2007b) also show the reference press’s capacity for agenda setting in this process, which goes far beyond that of television, where the human factor is predominant (Porath et al., 2009).

The press is expected to contribute to the “adequate understanding” of the environment, which implies knowing the preferences of politicians and their options regarding values (Schudson, 1995). Carpentier (2007) points out that news companies should influence the sociopolitical context with their discourse. And the majority of communication researchers agree with this requirement because they believe that the media are capable of influencing the prioritised social values, attitudes and aspirations of a community through the ideas, opinions and political stances they present to public debate (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009; Chia & Cenite, 2012; Harp et al., 2010; Javier Mayoral, 2005).

### **The relevance of sources**

The ascendancy of a journalistic text is related to its sources of information and the statements provided by these sources, but always subjected to selective editing in the news building process (Neuman et al., 1992).

In the case of controversial or debatable issues, sources of information can contribute to public debate with a plurality of voices and nuances. Apreza (2005, p. 66) specifies that media pluralism does not necessarily imply more information media, but rather “the greatest number of opposed sources of information available to the public or to different publics”. For this reason Casero and López (2012) conclude that the use of sources is a relevant indicator of journalistic quality, and as Carlson has stated (2009), “in epistemological terms, sources represent an essential form of evidence”. For Aller (2012), a newspaper with no sources is mere propaganda.

Nonetheless, the recurrent opinion is that the media mainly print official sources without contrasting them, reproducing their statements from the viewpoints and experiences of governments and the political class (Villamarín, 2013; Romero, 2013).

In this sense, Sunkel and Geoffroy (2001, p. 5) state that in Chile “the establishment of a society whose access to information guarantees pluralism and diversity has been scarce in these past decades” and María Olivia Mönckeberg (2009, p. 13) radically states “in few countries in the world does it acquire such extreme forms, where

diversity is conspicuous by its absence in the written press and is strongly limited in television”.

### **The frame as a tool of analysis of contributions from sources**

In order to provide empirical data to these perceptions of homogeneity in the Chilean press, this paper has its methodological base on the analysis of a frame given to a textual content, which Entman (2007, p.164) redefines as “the process of selection of a few elements of perceived reality and the editing of a narrative that enhances the connections between them to promote a specific interpretation”.

For example, research by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), de Vreese (2004), de Vreese et al. (2011) and Matthes (2012) has established that framing can increase or reduce the relevance attributed to the event when the audience forms its own political judgment. And Matthes (2007) proves that the recurrent repetition of a frame probably has an impact on the perception of an event.

The experience and accumulated knowledge examined leads us to believe that framing tools, which are described in detail in the chapter on methodology, are functional when it comes to establishing the eventual existence of a tendency to a homogeneous focus on the statements that sources of information have made on political issues, using the same frames to reproduce their interventions. And that this homogeneous trend could be replicated in the medium’s contribution to the news item.

This proposition applies the five categories of generic framing used and validated by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) in their studies on communication media and politics. Nevertheless, as opposed to the many studies on framing that analyse a key event, for example immigration or a military conflict, this work analyses trends in the use of these frames in political and government news in general, in different years, and in what are considered to be “normal” periods. It also innovates in the sense that the units of analysis are not complete articles, but the statements of each of the information sources quoted. This research looks for the frame that specifically contains the statements of each source quoted in a text as a way of establishing the tracks that they leave in the public sphere – it is understood that by the medium’s decision – so as to see if they cover the same pathways when passing from one source to another. This analysis contributes to determine if the media analysed tend to use the same frames for different sources, which, if true, might influence the public perception of uniformity in Chilean newspapers.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions arise from the discussion above:

Q.1. Which are the most frequent frames in the six newspapers analysed when reproducing statements by their sources in political and government news items? Are there any significant differences according to year?

Q.2. When comparing the six media analysed, is there a significant variation in the use of frames for statements issued by sources, according to type of source?

## Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, the following newspapers were selected for analysis considering the gravitation of their news spaces and their high levels of circulation: *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, the two principal papers belonging to El Mercurio SAP and Copesa SA, the two largest news companies in Chile; *Publometro*, the most read commuter paper from Monday to Friday<sup>4</sup>, independent from the two large news consortiums; *La Cuarta* one of the two tabloid or popular newspapers in Santiago that covers political events with a less spectacular focus and for which it could be compared with *Publometro*. In the regions, the choice was the two reference papers of the capital cities of their respective region: *El Sur*, published in Concepción (Region VIII in the south of Chile) and *El Día*, published in La Serena (Region IV in the north of Chile). *El Sur* and *El Día* permit the observation of a newspaper belonging to one of the two newspaper chains (*El Sur* belongs to the regional chain of El Mercurio SAP) vis-à-vis an independent newspaper.

The study sample was obtained from newspaper items published in two constructed weeks in 2007 and 2015, that go from the end of March to the beginning of May (to avoid the impact on the media of the presidential address of 21 May) and between October and November. These two constructed week samples, which consider “normal” periods, are the recommended sampling method for estimating the content of each year of newspaper editions (Riffe et.al.; 1993; Hester & Dougall, 2007).

The key events are relevant for forming public opinion, for which it is important to analyse the frames of topics with social impact (de Vreese, 2003). Although many investigations into frames have been circumscribed to a specific news event at a given time, in this work the choice was to measure trends in the use of the frames of events that have a social relevance in general. The key topics here were those which were given simultaneous news coverage in the two national reference newspapers. Furthermore, the way in which these events were covered by the other two Santiago newspapers was analysed.

The texts of the four Santiago media correspond to political and government news covered both by *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* in the days of the constructed week. By extension, these were also the notes selected from *Publometro* and *La Cuarta*. For the regional papers, all the news published in the chronicle section during the constructed weeks was analysed. The objective of this was to see which news items are being addressed by the regional media, provided that they have a different agenda from their counterparts from the capital.

By government and political news we mean the articles, reports, interviews and their corresponding boxes, published in the national or political news sections of the six newspapers under study that address information on and decision making regarding matters pertaining to the government or to the executive, the political class or political parties, or movements and social actors that apply pressure for changes in public policies.

A total of 866 chronicles was collected: 260 from 2007 and 606 from 2015. The practically twofold increase of 2015 chronicles is due to the fact that that was a year

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<sup>4</sup>Valid, 2nd semester 2013

in which important cases of corruption were discovered in political and government institutions, which received ample news coverage.

### **Unit of analysis and categories of analysis**

The unit of analysis for the study of the frames of source statements in the news sample was the quotation or set of quotations – both direct and indirect – of a same source within a same journalistic text.

Indexing of the material included context variables of the news articles, like date, medium, title of the news item, classification of sources and word count of the quotes, among others.

The 17 categories that had been used in source classification in previous research were used here, and they were later recoded into seven categories: government, official public, official private, political parties, testimonial / documentary / expert sources, unidentified, undefined and own medium. The “own medium” category was created for this study and all information contained in a news item that is not provided – directly or indirectly – by a source, was attributed to it. A total of 3,514 sources were indexed: 1,103 from 2007 and 2,411 from 2015. We should remember that the doubling of 2015 sources has been caused by the extensive media coverage of the cases of corruption exposed that year.

The analysis of the source content frames used five validated categories of studies on communication media and politics (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; de Vreese et al., 2001; Elenbaas & de Vreese, 2008). They correspond to generic frames, which are applicable to a wide range of topics (de Vreese et al., 2001): ‘attribution of responsibility’, is a frame that makes a government, individual or group responsible for an event or issue; ‘conflict’, alludes to controversies between individuals, groups or institutions; ‘human interest’, offers the human aspect or emotional angle of events or issues; ‘economic consequences’, approaches an event from its economic consequences for an individual, group, institution, region or country; and ‘moral judgment’ places the event or issue within a framework of religious acceptance or ethical mandate. Each category is accompanied by indicators or questions pertaining to the frames, which are measured by a dichotomous scale ranging from 0 (not present) to 1 (present). Igartua and Muñiz (2004) propose a Spanish adaptation of the Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) categories, which in this research was tested and adjusted to the Chilean context. This procedure does not compel the framer to decide which is the predominant frame, but only answers ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to all indicators. A subsequent statistical analysis determines the prevailing frames.

### **Coding processes and analysis of intercoder reliability**

As suggested by Krippendorff (1990), in order to improve the reliability of the instrument, the quantitative indexing was carried out by a team of three coders that are independent from the principal and co-researcher in this project. A code book operationalises the categories of analysis and, successive training sessions were held with the indexers prior to the indexing itself.

During the coding process, a sub-sample was selected and subjected to an intercoder reliability test. In the case of the 2007 sample, a reliability test was applied to a sub-sample of 120 randomly chosen cases (10.9% of the total), with the participation of the three coders.

Considering the average of the five indicators that comprise the attribution of responsibility index, the index of coincidence (Holsti Index) was 0.832; 0.925 for the four indicators of the human interest index; 0.839 for the four indicators of conflict index; 0.920 for the three indicators of moral judgment index, and 0.943 for the three indicators of the economic framing index.

Similarly, for the measurement of the 2015 intercoder reliability, 257 cases (10.7% of the total) were selected and the average indexes of coincidence for each index were: 0.766 for attribution of responsibility; 0.909 for human interest; 0.868 for conflict; 0.895 for moral judgment and 0.931 for economic framing.

## Findings

If we consider the bibliography discussed above, the differentiated analysis of the statements made by each of the sources that comprises a complete chronicle shows a low level of application of the analysed frames on the part of the Chilean print newspapers (Table 1). Even the highest values observed here are far below the mean values reported in other researches, with the exception of the human interest and moral judgment frames (for example, Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). We must consider the fact that the frames studied here have been identified in international research papers as the most recurrent in political news. This is in fact an interesting point that might contribute to describe a particular journalistic treatment of political and government news in Chilean reference papers.

Table 1: Level of use of analysed frames in the Chilean press

| Year  |                    | Attribution of responsibility | Human interest | Conflict | Moral judgment | Economic | N    |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|------|
| 2007  | Mean               | ,231                          | ,063           | ,254     | ,050           | ,070     | 1103 |
|       | Standard deviation | ,202                          | ,134           | ,240     | ,131           | ,177     |      |
| 2015  | Mean               | ,218                          | ,088           | ,206     | ,053           | ,070     | 2411 |
|       | Standard deviation | ,210                          | ,166           | ,236     | ,137           | ,175     |      |
| ANOVA | F (1, 3512)        | 3,070                         | 20,365         | 30,602   | ,317           | ,001     |      |
|       | <i>p</i>           | ,080                          | < 0,000        | < 0,000  | ,574           | ,981     |      |

Even then, in this general Chilean context and coinciding with the findings of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) on political news, the frames that are most often used to frame statements by sources are those pertaining to conflict and attribution of responsibility. In Chile, the other three frames are used at practically insignificant levels. When observing changes from one year to another, we see that the conflict frame diminishes, while the attribution of responsibility frame remains unchanged, and therefore becomes the most important. Furthermore, the use of the human interest frame increases from 2007 to 2015.

## Analysis of frames separated according to media and years

The general trend in the use of frames is repeated in almost all the media in 2007 (Table 2). In five media analysed, the conflict frame is the most recurrent, followed by attribution of responsibility. The exception is the regional paper *El Sur*, where the order of priority is inverted.

In fact, of the six media analysed, this is the medium that makes less use of the conflict frame. *El Sur* is definitely the paper that differs most from the rest in terms of use of the other frames, although, as we have already said, the application of three of the five frames is, in general, scarce. *El Sur* tends to apply more human interest and economic frames than the rest.

Table 2: Frames separated according to media and year; 2007

| Media       |                    | Attribution of responsibility | Human interest | Conflict | Moral judgment | Economic | N    |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|------|
| El Mercurio | Mean               | ,251                          | ,046           | ,294     | ,054           | ,054     | 273  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,194                          | ,104           | ,241     | ,132           | ,155     |      |
| Publmetro   | Mean               | ,205                          | ,057           | ,270     | ,053           | ,031     | 163  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,205                          | ,122           | ,247     | ,133           | ,104     |      |
| La Tercera  | Mean               | ,227                          | ,046           | ,277     | ,058           | ,030     | 191  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,188                          | ,118           | ,242     | ,152           | ,117     |      |
| La Cuarta   | Mean               | ,218                          | ,063           | ,261     | ,061           | ,091     | 44   |
|             | Standard deviation | ,172                          | ,110           | ,241     | ,130           | ,220     |      |
| El Sur      | Mean               | ,264                          | ,109           | ,194     | ,037           | ,169     | 207  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,212                          | ,177           | ,220     | ,115           | ,248     |      |
| El Día      | Mean               | ,204                          | ,059           | ,228     | ,049           | ,058     | 225  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,211                          | ,136           | ,236     | ,122           | ,164     |      |
| ANOVA       | F (5, 1097)        | 3,058                         | 6,655          | 5,226    | ,656           | 18,864   | 1103 |
|             | <i>p</i>           | ,010                          | < 0,000        | < 0,000  | ,657           | < 0,000  |      |

In 2015 (Table 3), *El Sur* continues to be the newspaper that shows the greater difference from the rest in terms of the more or less intensive use of the five frames. But some changes are seen in the general trend. This time, the two regional media (*El Sur* and *El Día*) stand out for their use of attribution of responsibility and human interest frames. Nonetheless, there is a difference as regards the use of the other three frames by these newspapers. *El Día* is the paper that applies the conflict frame less and *El Sur*, is the medium that uses moral judgment more.

The popular newspaper *La Cuarta* is also the most removed from the general model, as it presents its own profile. The frame it uses most is attribution of responsibility, followed, at a similar level, by conflict and human interest. In fact, this is the medium



that most clearly resorts to the human interest frame and that definitely does not make use of the economic frame.

The two national reference media, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, have a very similar profile, which is also partly shared by the commuter paper *Publometro*. These media tend to use the conflict frame, followed by attribution of responsibility. Despite the fact that in 2015 there was an increase in their use of the human interest frame, it should be pointed out that they are the media that make less use of this frame. The only difference between these three newspapers is the greater use that *Publometro* makes of the economic frame.

Table 3: Frames separated according to media and year; 2015

| Media       |                    | Attribution of responsibility | Human interest | Conflict | Moral judgment | Economic | N    |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|------|
| El Mercurio | Mean               | ,187                          | ,079           | ,220     | ,046           | ,068     | 592  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,198                          | ,170           | ,242     | ,128           | ,192     |      |
| Publometro  | Mean               | ,198                          | ,083           | ,227     | ,021           | ,105     | 111  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,197                          | ,179           | ,220     | ,093           | ,220     |      |
| La Tercera  | Mean               | ,196                          | ,064           | ,232     | ,046           | ,069     | 510  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,187                          | ,154           | ,234     | ,129           | ,173     |      |
| La Cuarta   | Mean               | ,186                          | ,136           | ,136     | ,045           | ,006     | 59   |
|             | Standard deviation | ,219                          | ,214           | ,209     | ,115           | ,043     |      |
| El Sur      | Mean               | ,242                          | ,103           | ,210     | ,073           | ,080     | 601  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,219                          | ,168           | ,242     | ,157           | ,176     |      |
| El Día      | Mean               | ,254                          | ,101           | ,166     | ,053           | ,062     | 538  |
|             | Standard deviation | ,226                          | ,158           | ,222     | ,137           | ,152     |      |
| ANOVA       | F (5, 2405)        | 9,064                         | 5,121          | 6,082    | 4,492          | 3,178    | 2411 |
|             | <i>p</i>           | < 0,000                       | < 0,000        | < 0,000  | < 0,000        | ,007     |      |

### Analysis of separated frames, according to type of source

This is a comparison of the six media in the years 2007 and 2015, to establish which are the most frequently used frames for the quotes of the seven categories of analysed sources. In general, it is seen that the trend is also repeated for each type of source for each of the years studied. The basis for 2007 (Table 4) reveals that in the sources classified, the conflict frame index has the highest value, followed by attribution of responsibility. The most notable exception is government sources, whose statements are reproduced with a higher value for the attribution of responsibility index and an evidently lower value for conflict.

On analysing the index variation within each frame –in other words, its use – between the categories of sources used, we observe that this changes significantly in each case. In other words, the same frame is used to a greater or lesser degree for each type of source. For example, attribution of responsibility is used more in government sources and less in testimonial sources. The conflict frame is used far more when reproducing

statements issued by official public sources and political parties, and far less in the case of government sources.

Table 4: Frames separated according to type of source and year; 2007

| Type of source                   |                    | Attribution of responsibility | Human interest | Conflict | Moral judgment | Economic | N    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|------|
| Official private                 | Mean               | ,213                          | ,099           | ,234     | ,075           | ,075     | 76   |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,197                          | ,148           | ,243     | ,160           | ,177     |      |
| Unidentified / Undefined         | Mean               | ,187                          | ,035           | ,238     | ,023           | ,057     | 200  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,171                          | ,106           | ,233     | ,085           | ,154     |      |
| Testimonial/ Documentary/ Expert | Mean               | ,157                          | ,132           | ,203     | ,041           | ,050     | 74   |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,163                          | ,224           | ,214     | ,123           | ,119     |      |
| Own medium                       | Mean               | ,202                          | ,071           | ,213     | ,006           | ,113     | 260  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,194                          | ,138           | ,206     | ,054           | ,231     |      |
| Government                       | Mean               | ,310                          | ,043           | ,182     | ,057           | ,044     | 158  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,230                          | ,110           | ,222     | ,131           | ,120     |      |
| Official public                  | Mean               | ,257                          | ,074           | ,335     | ,092           | ,080     | 213  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,192                          | ,129           | ,252     | ,163           | ,193     |      |
| Political parties                | Mean               | ,275                          | ,031           | ,367     | ,098           | ,027     | 122  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,222                          | ,088           | ,259     | ,180           | ,110     |      |
| ANOVA                            | F (6, 1096)        | 10,367                        | 8,122          | 13,905   | 14,233         | 4,868    | 1103 |
|                                  | <i>p</i>           | < 0,000                       | < 0,000        | < 0,000  | < 0,000        | < 0,000  |      |

In 2015 (Table 5), the situation is in general similar to what has been described up to now. The use of the conflict frame is reduced in various types of sources, such as unidentified, testimonial, government, official public and political parties, originating the general reduction that has already been described in Table 1.

As regards the research question on the variations in the use of frames according to type of sources, the reply is that, in effect, their application varies significantly according to type of source, and that the 2007 pattern is partially repeated.

For example, attribution of responsibility is more used in government sources and to a lesser degree in testimonial / documentary / expert sources, and also in unidentified sources that year.

The conflict frame is used much more when reproducing statements by official public sources and political parties, and much less in the case of government sources, and this year, once again in testimonial / documentary / expert sources. As regards the human interest frame, its most visible use is in testimonial / documentary / expert sources and it is practically not used for political party sources. Regarding the economic frame, in a context of reduced use, it is most frequently seen in contributions from the own medium, and less frequently seen in political party statements.

Table 5: Frames separated according to type of source and year; 2015

| Type of source                   |                    | Attribution of responsibility | Human interest | Conflict | Moral judgment | Economic | N    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|------|
| Official private                 | Mean               | ,237                          | ,115           | ,294     | ,089           | ,075     | 286  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,209                          | ,172           | ,257     | ,176           | ,174     |      |
| Unidentified / Undefined         | Mean               | ,169                          | ,054           | ,178     | ,023           | ,047     | 391  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,178                          | ,138           | ,225     | ,088           | ,144     |      |
| Testimonial/ Documentary/ Expert | Mean               | ,165                          | ,148           | ,158     | ,051           | ,073     | 277  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,177                          | ,242           | ,218     | ,133           | ,186     |      |
| Own medium                       | Mean               | ,193                          | ,114           | ,190     | ,013           | ,119     | 549  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,181                          | ,183           | ,208     | ,068           | ,222     |      |
| Government                       | Mean               | ,305                          | ,066           | ,142     | ,081           | ,054     | 354  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,259                          | ,116           | ,204     | ,169           | ,146     |      |
| Official public                  | Mean               | ,253                          | ,064           | ,265     | ,084           | ,048     | 407  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,217                          | ,133           | ,258     | ,161           | ,144     |      |
| Political parties                | Mean               | ,200                          | ,039           | ,257     | ,066           | ,034     | 147  |
|                                  | Standard deviation | ,209                          | ,091           | ,262     | ,139           | ,139     |      |
| ANOVA                            | F (6, 1096)        | 21,465                        | 17,540         | 20,649   | 21,346         | 11,289   | 2411 |
|                                  | <i>p</i>           | < 0,000                       | < 0,000        | < 0,000  | < 0,000        | < 0,000  |      |

### ***El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* frames according to type of source**

As seen in tables 2 and 3, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* are similar in the index values of the five frames, and in our theoretical discussion we addressed the generalised criticism made in Chile to their uniformity. For this reason, and for the fact that these are the two most relevant national media, we analyse the sources used by both in 2015, the most recent year of our study.

A general overview shows that *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* apply different frames to the statements of different types of sources. Not all sources have the same index value. This 2015 analysis (Table 6) refutes the central presumption that these two reference Chilean newspapers tend to a homogeneous approach to the statements of those sources in political and government news, using the same frames to reproduce their direct or indirect quotations in a same timeframe.

Depending on the type of source, both *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* present different index values in each of the five frames analysed. Nonetheless, the most interesting observation is whether their pattern is relevant.

For example, in 2015, in *El Mercurio*, the attribution of responsibility frame is used significantly more often in direct quotations and indirect references by the government sources, and much less often by testimonial / documentary / expert sources.

Similarly, in this same medium, the human interest frame is used more frequently in interventions by the own medium, and practically never in the statements of official public sources and political parties. On the other hand, the conflict frame is applied when reproducing the statements by official public sources and partly, in the case of private sources, and very rarely in the case of testimonial / documentary / expert sources. Moral judgment maintains low levels of use in all types of sources, with official public sources using it most and the own medium being the source that less uses this frame. Finally, the economic frame is used most by *El Mercurio* in its own texts, and to a lesser degree by official private sources. It is almost never used when reproducing statements by official public sources and political parties.

This permits the establishment of a profile of the frames provided by each type of source. In the case of *El Mercurio*, government sources stand out above the average by their contribution to the attribution of responsibility frame; official public sources for their greater contribution to conflict and moral judgment frames and for their absolute lack of contribution to the human interest and economic frames.

Political party sources tend towards an average contribution, although they also contribute practically nothing to these last two frames. The own medium contributes significantly to the human interest and economic frames, and almost not at all to the moral judgment frame. In general, the other three kinds of frames tend to an average contribution, although testimonial / documentary / expert sources contribute less to the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames, while official private sources tend to contribute to the conflict and economic frames.

Table 6: Frames according to type of source in *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*; 2015

| Media              | Type of source                   | Attribution of responsibility |                    | Human interest |                    | Conflict |                    | Moral judgment |                    | Economic |                    | N   |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|-----|
|                    |                                  | Mean                          | Standard deviation | Mean           | Standard deviation | Mean     | Standard deviation | Mean           | Standard deviation | Mean     | Standard deviation |     |
| <i>El Mercurio</i> | Official private                 | ,185                          | ,203               | ,087           | ,139               | ,269     | ,231               | ,060           | ,159               | ,085     | ,211               | 78  |
|                    | Unidentified / Undefined         | ,149                          | ,182               | ,077           | ,178               | ,165     | ,242               | ,028           | ,102               | ,049     | ,156               | 130 |
|                    | Testimonial/ Documentary/ Expert | ,133                          | ,152               | ,110           | ,222               | ,154     | ,231               | ,035           | ,115               | ,070     | ,170               | 86  |
|                    | Own medium                       | ,181                          | ,178               | ,137           | ,218               | ,234     | ,209               | ,004           | ,034               | ,144     | ,278               | 95  |
|                    | Government                       | ,284                          | ,239               | ,039           | ,102               | ,168     | ,223               | ,063           | ,131               | ,068     | ,189               | 64  |
|                    | Official public                  | ,224                          | ,196               | ,038           | ,109               | ,318     | ,252               | ,091           | ,164               | ,020     | ,115               | 99  |
|                    | Political parties                | ,195                          | ,242               | ,038           | ,090               | ,250     | ,272               | ,067           | ,155               | ,025     | ,158               | 40  |
|                    | Total                            | ,187                          | ,198               | ,079           | ,170               | ,220     | ,242               | ,046           | ,128               | ,068     | ,192               | 592 |
| ANOVA              | F (6,585)                        | 5,271                         |                    | 4,437          |                    | 6,396    |                    | 5,031          |                    | 4,304    |                    |     |
|                    | p                                | < 0,000                       |                    | < 0,000        |                    | < 0,000  |                    | < 0,000        |                    | < 0,000  |                    |     |
| <i>La Tercera</i>  | Official private                 | ,197                          | ,192               | ,087           | ,159               | ,308     | ,272               | ,097           | ,190               | ,082     | ,156               | 69  |
|                    | Unidentified / Undefined         | ,189                          | ,185               | ,024           | ,098               | ,199     | ,210               | ,014           | ,068               | ,065     | ,179               | 93  |
|                    | Testimonial/ Documentary/ Expert | ,141                          | ,146               | ,110           | ,223               | ,159     | ,206               | ,061           | ,149               | ,081     | ,193               | 82  |
|                    | Own medium                       | ,209                          | ,182               | ,099           | ,192               | ,304     | ,224               | ,007           | ,049               | ,133     | ,231               | 93  |
|                    | Government                       | ,225                          | ,233               | ,038           | ,091               | ,131     | ,203               | ,046           | ,130               | ,026     | ,107               | 65  |
|                    | Official public                  | ,238                          | ,174               | ,041           | ,102               | ,274     | ,235               | ,072           | ,149               | ,018     | ,076               | 74  |
|                    | Political parties                | ,171                          | ,185               | ,015           | ,060               | ,257     | ,242               | ,039           | ,109               | ,039     | ,159               | 34  |
|                    | Total                            | ,196                          | ,187               | ,064           | ,154               | ,232     | ,234               | ,046           | ,129               | ,069     | ,173               | 510 |
| ANOVA              | F (6,503)                        | 2,273                         |                    | 4,686          |                    | 7,291    |                    | 5,030          |                    | 4,315    |                    |     |
|                    | p                                | ,036                          |                    | < 0,000        |                    | < 0,000  |                    | < 0,000        |                    | < 0,000  |                    |     |

In the case of *La Tercera*, in 2015, the attribution of responsibility frame is used significantly more in direct and indirect quotations by official public and government sources, and much less by testimonial / documentary / expert sources.

In that same medium, the human interest frame is used more in quotes from testimonial / documentary / expert sources, although it also has an important impact

on the texts included by the own medium, and is practically not used when reproducing the statements of the political parties. The conflict frame is clearly used in the text supplied by the own medium and also in the case of official private and public sources. Finally, the economic frame is most often used in its own texts, and is almost not used when reproducing the statements issued by official public sources.

When comparing *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, in general there is a greater similarity between both media in the greater or lesser use of a same frame applied to the same types of sources, but with some significant differences. For example, if we consider the attribution of responsibility frame, both assign it a lower value when quoting testimonial / documentary / expert sources and a high value in the case of contributions by the own medium. But, in *La Tercera*, the highest value is seen in official public sources. Both assign a higher value to the conflict frame in the statements of official public and private sources, but *La Tercera* stands out because it gives great weight to this frame when it provides its own comments on an event. In the case of the conflict frame, there are definitely significant differences between both media. In the case of the human interest frame, both *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* assign it a low value in the case of government, official public and political party sources; in fact, this is the lowest value in the case of *La Tercera*. Besides, *La Tercera* uses this frame less in the case of unidentified sources.

In *La Tercera* the most frequent use of the human interest frame is seen when it quotes testimonial / documentary / expert sources and, in *El Mercurio* when the contribution comes from the own medium. The moral judgment frame is similar in the sense that it is practically not used in texts provided by the own medium, and there is a more intensive application in the case of quotes by official public sources. But *La Tercera* makes an even greater use in the case of official private sources. As regards the economic frame, both media are similar in that they make little use of it for official public sources, but *El Mercurio* also uses it less for political party sources. And another similarity in the use of the economic frame occurs when both newspapers frame the texts supplied by the own medium.

## **Discussion**

In general terms, from the findings shown here, the first thing we notice is the scarce use made in Chilean political news of the five frames analysed, and which, according to the literature, are recurrent in international studies on communication and politics. It should be remembered that, as opposed to those works that focus on specific studies, in this study the focus is the general journalistic coverage in the political and government area over a period of two years, and that the use of frames is measured from specific elements in the text: the direct and indirect quotations of each source of news.

There were changes in the years analysed - 2007 and 2015 – but they did not have a dramatic influence on the general trend observed, which shows that the most frequently used frames in Chile are also conflict and attribution of responsibility, although there was an increase in the human interest frame. Despite the fact that Chile saw extremely mediatic cases of corruption in 2015, there was no change in the general tendency to use the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames, although there was a reduction in the use of the human interest frame.

The use of the five frames acquires more or less intensity according to type of medium. In 2007, the application of frames in the regional media is clearly distinguishable from that of the Santiago newspapers. And in 2015 there are also news media in Santiago that differ from *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, especially the popular newspaper *La Cuarta*.

Finally, there is a significant variation in the value of the frame according to type of source. The sources analysed in seven categories tend to provide different frames. For example, there are clearly frames that give more value to the human interest index, while others give more value to the economic index. In addition, these differences are reproduced when making a detailed analysis of *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, the two national reference papers that are supposed to be very similar. It is this suspicion that sustains the thesis of homogeneous content treatment in both media. This paper reveals that in spite of being similar, there are also significant differences between them.

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