The mediatization of Chilean political elites: Dynamics of adaptation, autonomy and control

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between Chilean political elites and the news media with the aim of better understanding how political elites in Chile have adapted to the process of mediatization of politics. Theoretically grounded within an institutionalist understanding of mediatization processes, this thesis uses a qualitative research strategy to identify the main drivers of mediatization among Chilean political elites, the operational logics structuring politicians' and journalists' interactions, and the dynamics of autonomy-control in the relationship between political and media actors.

Findings are derived from analysis of sixty semi-structured interviews with politicians, including current and former Cabinet Ministers, parliamentarians and political party leaders, press officers working with politicians, and journalists with experience covering politics in national media outlets.

This thesis identifies the core elements of a centralist, elitist and market-grounded political communication culture comprised of political and media actors that engage in routine and frequent exchanges. In doing so, it identifies cultural and structural elements moderating the process of mediatization. Additionally, this study critically examines political elites' understandings of news media logics, including dynamics of resistance and instrumental adoption of media languages, temporalities, and routines. This is reinforced by power inequalities in the politician-journalist relationship, organisational constraints, and a strong insider culture acting against the development of journalistic autonomy.

Overall, this study puts forward the idea that while the mediatization of political actors suggests constraints on political elites' behaviour, it should not necessarily be equated with loss of autonomy in the political sphere. Additionally, it advances a multi-level approach to mediatization research that enables observation of conflicting patterns of power relations between political elites and the news media, stressing how mediatization processes are open to multiple normative outcomes.

Key words: mediatization of politics, political elites, institutional logics, Chile, qualitative research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An expanding academic debate about the mediatization of politics has developed in recent years with the ambition of better understanding the complex linkages between media and political institutions, in a context of increasing media influence in politics (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Schulz 2004; Hjarvard 2008; Strömbäck 2008; Hjarvard 2013; Esser & Strömbäck 2014). This theoretical paradigm has provided a locus to revisit questions about the shifting relationship between media and political actors in various national contexts (Reunanen et al. 2010; Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011; Cushion & Thomas 2013; Downey & Neyazi 2014; Landerer 2014; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014) on the premise that greater institutional autonomy on the part of the media has resulted in greater political relevance thereof (Cook 2005; Hjarvard 2013).

In the case of the Chilean media, the premise of greater institutional autonomy has been sustained on the commercialisation process driven by the state that resulted in the modernisation of media industries during the 1980s and 1990s (Tironi & Sunkel 1993); the evolution of media languages towards less condescending forms of political coverage (Cordero & Marin 2006; Porath 2007; Mellado & Rafter 2014) and strong elite perceptions of the growing power acquired by the media in recent years (ICSO/UDP 2004; PNUD 2004; PNUD 2015[1]). While the mediatization of politics has been acknowledged as part of the landscape of contemporary Chile,

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[1] PNUD (*Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo*) corresponds to Spanish spelling for UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). References to PNUD within the thesis correspond to reports produced by the Chilean chapter of this institution.

the process has not been the subject of a systematic research program. Academic analyses of the intersection between media and political actors have mostly derived from studies on the political economy of the media (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Leon-Dermota 2003; Monckeberg 2009), yet the reactions and adaptations of political actors to a changing media environment have gone mostly uninspected. This is a significant failure considering that it is precisely in the dimension of actors that the implications of mediatization processes for democracy become more evident, as it has been associated with autonomy losses on political actors and organisations (Blumler 2014). For this reason, this study has been set out with the central aim of better understanding how Chilean political elites have adapted to the mediatization of politics.

Empirical research on the mediatization of politics has focused either on news coverage or on political actors (Strömbäck 2011b). This thesis focuses on the mediatization of Chilean political elites, therefore paying particular attention to the increasing dependence of political actors on communication resources for the everyday conduct of political activities (Hjarvard 2008), the extent to which they have adapted to media requirements and appear responsive to the media logic (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Strömbäck 2008), as well as the specific forms this process of adaptation has taken. In doing so, this study pays close consideration to issues of control and autonomy, a core theme to both theorisation and empirical enquiry about the mediatization of political actors.

It is usually argued that political actors adapt to media requirements because they need attention, constant public support and legitimation (Esser 2013; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014), and because the media has become a means to

pursue governance (Thompson 1995; Cook 2005; Crozier 2007). Hence, dependence on media-controlled resources translates into a permanent struggle to retain control over media content, and is proportional to the relevance mediated communication has acquired within political institutions.

When the instrumental drive of the mediatization of political actors is acknowledged, those assumptions about increasing media power often associated with the narrative of mediatization have to be carefully assessed and contextualised. I argue that these assumptions derive from early conceptualisation of media and political institutional logics as opposite forces that advance to the detriment of the other (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Strömbäck 2008). Using a neo-institutionalist perspective, this study understands the process of mediatization of political elites as one of, at least partially, selective adoption of media logics by political actors, which is bound to be determined by both social structures and cultural forms (March & Olsen 1995; DiMaggio 1997; Benson & Neveu 2005; Benson 2006; March & Olsen 2006; Thornton et al. 2012)

As a post-authoritarian society, the Chilean case allows for a unique inspection of these dynamics. Modernised by means of commercialisation (Tironi & Sunkel 1993), the journalistic field carries the traces of an authoritarian era (Bresnahan 2003; Leon-Dermota 2003; Otano & Sunkel 2003). This double dependency – on the market and on political authorities – has represented a challenge to the assertion of autonomous journalistic practice (Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011), similar to other transitional democracies (Örnebring 2013; Márquez-Ramírez & Guerrero 2014). In order to make sense of these dynamics in a context of increasing mediatization, this study pays attention to the political elites' understandings,

interpretations and adoptions of news media logics, while at the same time identifying spaces of autonomy and control in the relationship between these highly inter-dependant institutional domains (Sigal 1973; Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979; Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Manning 2001; Davis 2007b).

As a result, this thesis sheds light on current theoretical discussions in the field of mediatization of politics, particularly concerning the concept of autonomy. Even as the news media as an institution is perceived as increasing its power in society, how the notion of autonomy is best understood in the theory of mediatization has been identified by some of the main proponents in the field as in need of further clarification and discussion (Esser & Strömbäck 2014; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014). The data generated and analysed in this thesis lend support to the idea that only by incorporating the complementary concepts of institutional autonomy and control in analysis on the mediatization of political actors it is possible to appropriately factor issues of power distribution between these groups, as well as accurately account for the way cultural and political contexts might shape and colour these processes.

1.1 Problem statement

The commercialisation of the media has been the basis for claims of modernisation in the Chilean communications field. As argued by Tironi & Sunkel (1993), this process was characterised by a substantial decrease in the intervention of the state in the operations of the media, paired with a significant spread of infrastructure to receive broadcast media, growth in advertising spending, consolidation of private ownership of news media outlets and the dominance of television as the main actor in the cultural industries. Another consequence of this

shift towards the market was the increasing concentration of media ownership and the subordination of the media to corporate powers, which also resulted in great ideological homogeneity among the more relevant mass media outlets (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Mastrini & Becerra 2006).

The relationship between political elites and the news media in the early days of democracy in Chile has been characterised as one of cooperation and even submissiveness of journalists to the authorities in power (Bresnahan 2003; Leon-Dermota 2003). However, a shift in the attitudes of the press started to produce cracks in this initial status quo, particularly from 2000 and onwards when political scandals and cases of corruption started to surface in the public debate (Cordero & Marin 2006). This trend has increased in recent years, prompting historical levels of distrust in political institutions (COES 2015; PNUD 2015). In this scenario, politicians' perceptions of the news media have also changed. The 'centre stage' of the news media is judged with ambivalence by politicians. For example, although most of them recognise that empowered news organisations might favour greater transparency in politics, they are also perceived as trivializing politics and helping to create a negative image of this activity (ICSO/UDP 2004). Chilean political elites perceive news media as accumulating unprecedented power by introducing new rules of representation on political discourses that respond to their own operational criteria instead of political criteria (PNUD 2004; PNUD 2015). The latter justifies the need for greater resources and professional support in the management of press relations, making it common for politicians to recruit press managers or similar advisors, in order to facilitate relations with the media (ICSO/UDP 2004; Santander 2013).

According to the literature, there are elements that lend support to the idea that politics in Chile have become increasingly mediatized. The emergence of more adversarial press coverage of politics (Cordero & Marin 2006) accompanied by elites' perceptions of more powerful news organisations (PNUD 2004; PNUD 2015), makes plausible the idea that the Chilean news media started a movement towards greater institutional autonomy during the early twenty-first century, which boosted the adaptive behaviour of political elites. This script is consistent with core assumptions of the mediatization of politics, a research perspective that explains behavioural and procedural changes in political actors and institutions as a reaction to the differentiation of the news media institution[2], as long as they become increasingly dependent and shaped by the media, a process theoretically connected to a loss of autonomy of the political sphere (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Schulz 2004; Strömbäck 2008; Hjarvard 2013).

The relationship between Chilean politicians and the news media in democracy has been under-explored, despite the relevance that these processes of communication have had in the transition and establishment of democratic politics in the country. Inferences about this relationship generally derive from analysis situated at a systemic level. To date, however, the lack of research about the way in which Chilean political actors understand and cultivate their relationships with the media in an everyday context impedes empirically-derived

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[2] The aforementioned description of "mediatization of politics" has been categorized as the "institutionalist" variant of mediatization theory, and is the description to which this thesis refers, which builds on the work of authors such as Mazzoleni & Schulz (1999); Schulz (2004); Kunelius & Reunanen (2011); Hjarvard (2013); Esser & Strömbäck (2014). Within the "institutionalist" variant, the media are understood as a relatively independent social institution, functioning according to distinct norms (Cook 2005; Benson 2006; Sparrow 2006).

claims about the nature of these exchanges and the implications they have had for the quality of public communication.

Additionally, the Chilean case allows for an exploration of the way in which the mediatization of political actors has been theorised; in particular, to better understand and research the notion of media and political autonomy when using this analytical perspective. Two reasons can be presented to justify this emphasis; the first one fairly transferable to any context, and the second, somehow unique to this case. Firstly, when analysed from the perspective of everyday practice and the on-going negotiation for public attention in the news, the idea of a news media institution independent from political actors easily crumbles. A wealth of literature on political communication highlights the interdependencies generated in the politics-media trade-off and tends to describe political news making as a joint production between politicians and professional journalists (Sigal 1973; Gans 1979; Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Negrine 1996; Cook 2005; Davis 2009; Chadwick 2013; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014). Indeed, when analysed from the perspective of political actors, mass media are predominantly seen as reactive to political processes, building news agendas on inputs from political actors rather than the other way round (Gans 1979; Sparrow 1999; Nisbet et al. 2003; Wolfsfeld & Sheafer 2006). I argue that by incorporating some aspects of the mediatization of politics literature in conversation with literature focused on political news making, the conceptualisation and research on the mediatization of political actors can be nuanced and strengthened.

Second – and more specifically connected to Chile – is the matter of the uneven professionalisation of the Chilean journalistic field, which has been characterised

as greatly dependant on official sources (Leon-Dermota 2003; Faure et al. 2011) and struggling to achieve professional autonomy (Gronemeyer 2002; Mellado et al. 2012), as long as journalists have been found to be subjects of both economic and political pressures (Waisbord 2000; Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011). This context calls for a more nuanced understanding of the relationships of autonomy and dependence that shape the exchanges between politicians and the media, and an empirical assessment of the extent to which the framework of mediatized politics is appropriate to analyse and understand the relationship between politicians and the media in Chile.

1.2   Significance of the study

This thesis makes two core claims of originality, through which it contributes to knowledge about processes of mediatization of political actors.

First, this is the first study that attempts to systematically identify how Chilean political elites have adapted to the mediatization of politics, addressing perceptions and practices and focusing on the exchanges between politicians and news organisations, incorporating the voices of these political actors, as well as those of press officers and political journalists. Research currently available on this topic is scarce, and where it appears it is scattered across academic and non-academic texts. In recent years there has been an increase in academic studies that look at the development of the journalistic profession in Chile, which has considerably enriched the local discussion within journalism studies and related disciplines (Mujica & Puente 2006; Mellado et al. 2010; Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011; Mellado et al. 2012; Lagos & Cabalin 2013). However, when it comes to locating politicians as research subjects and inspecting their relationship with mediated

communication from this perspective, the available scholarship decreases drastically. In recent years, some studies have looked into media content to evaluate mediated representations of politics (Dussaillant 2004; Porath 2007; Valenzuela & Arriagada 2011; Navia et al. 2013; Mellado & Humanes 2014; Mellado & Rafter 2014) yet empirical studies focusing on Chilean political actors and their relationship with the media are virtually non-existent[3]. In this regard, this thesis offers a novel contribution to the understanding of the way Chilean political elites have adapted to the news media in democracy, acknowledging that a nuanced understanding of the relationship between media and politics has to be culturally and historically situated (Hallin & Mancini 2004; Schudson 2004).

Secondly, this study contributes to wider debates on mediatization studies by locating research on political actors outside US and European contexts, and paying attention to how this process interacts with contextual features. Additionally, the thesis identifies the concept of autonomy as crucial to better account for the interaction between political actors and the media (beyond the dichotomy between media and political logics) and claims that a multi-level analysis of this dimension is a necessary condition to understand how processes of mediatization develop in specific contexts. Mediatization of political actors has been described primarily as the adoption of logics of action pertaining to the news media institutional field by actors that inhabit different institutional spaces. This thesis argues that any study of the mediatization of political actors should not only be able to identify the components of this logic of action but also how actors

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[3] A rare exception is a survey focused on politicians' perceptions of the media conducted by the University Diego Portales (2004) or a recent study that looks into the relationship between journalists and press officers in Congress (Santander 2013). Other works that have contributed to this area of enquiry are not strictly academic, but journalistic investigations (Cavallo 1998; Leon-Dermota 2003; Monckeberg 2009).

understand and interact with this institutional logic, and whether by doing so they actually suffer a loss of autonomy. As some of the leading figures participating in the development of this theory have stated, how the issue of media autonomy is to be understood in mediatization theory demands further development (Blumler 2014; Esser & Strömbäck 2014; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014; Van Aelst et al. 2014).

The findings of this study shows that although adaptation to the logic of the media may have unwanted consequences for political elites that could be equated to a loss of autonomy, they are also open to instrumental use, indicating that the mediatization of political actors may adopt multiple forms when the news media show different degrees of autonomy or a lessened capacity to resist external pressures. Ultimately, it will be argued that bringing the issue of autonomy into analysis, the all-important problem of power distribution between these groups, often absent within mediatization of politics discussions, is more appropriately incorporated.

1.3   Research questions, aim and scope of the study

This thesis explores the relationship Chilean politicians establish with the news media, through a consideration of the goals they attach to media exposure, an examination of practices regulating their daily exchanges with news professionals as well as their perceptions about their ability to get media exposure and influence media content. In doing so, this study addresses the on-going debate about the mediatization of political actors, paying special attention to the identification of prevalent practices within the local political communication culture and to the value attached to media visibility by Chilean politicians.

The guiding research question animating the study is formulated as follows:

RQ: *How have Chilean political elites adapted to the mediatization of politics?*

This general question is operationalised around three areas of enquiry that will be further established within a qualitative research design in Chapter 4. In summary, these areas of enquiry can be briefly described as: (1) goals of media exposure, discussed in connection to drivers of mediatization among Chilean political elites; (2) operational logics structuring political elites' media oriented-practices and their exchanges with the media; and (3) dynamics of autonomy-control in the relationship between political elites and journalists, discussing the discrepancies between a media institution that appears functionally autonomous and a journalistic field whose autonomy has been questioned during the democratic transition. The following sub-research questions emerge from these complementary areas of enquiry:

(1) Goals of media exposure- drivers of mediatization

SRQ1: What are Chilean politicians' goals when interacting with the news media?

SRQ2. To what extent is media visibility considered a valuable resource for political activity?

(2) Operational logics structuring media-oriented practices

SRQ3: How do political elites understand and interact with news media logics of action?

SRQ4: What are the prevalent media-oriented practices among Chilean politicians and how are they accommodated in their daily activities?

(3) Dynamics of autonomy-control in the relationship between media and political actors

SRQ5: What are the prevalent practices in the trade-off between Chilean politicians and journalists?

SRQ6: What are politicians' and journalists' perceptions of their ability to control media messages?

These questions are approached with an understanding of the news media and politics as interacting yet distinct social fields, each of them integrated by members that share patterned rules of behaviour, thereby drawing on a variety of theoretical approaches that offer relevant synergies with the study of mediatization of politics. Primarily, this study draws on institutionalist literature (Friedland & Alford 1991; DiMaggio 1997; March & Olsen 2006; March & Olsen 2009; Thornton et al. 2012) and their contributions within media studies (Sparrow 1999; Cook 2005; Benson 2006) and to research on the mediatization of politics (Esser 2013; Asp 2014; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014). Secondarily, this study adopts other theoretical traditions which are relevant to the discussion of specific points; namely, systems theory as developed by Niklas Luhmann (2013; 2000) and applied to the study of the media (Hallin & Mancini 2004; Görke & Scholl 2006; Kunelius & Reunanen 2012); and field theory as developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1990, 1998, 2005) and his associates (Champagne 2005), and later applied to Journalism Studies (Benson & Neveu 2005).

At an empirical level, this study is informed by data from semi-structured interviews conducted with Chilean politicians, political journalists and press officers working with politicians. These interviews have been systematically analysed using strategies of data collection and analysis pertaining to constructivist grounded theory and applied thematic analysis. The interviews were analysed as text through successive stages of coding, a process aided by the use of software for qualitative data analysis (NVivo 10). Grounded insights about the particularities of the local political communication culture have been developed as a result, together with a theoretical framework appropriate for the exploration of relationships among these groups.

1.4   Overview of the chapters

This study is organised in eight chapters. The first four chapters delineate the rationale of the thesis; locating the case in the Chilean context, discussing the theoretical foundations upon which the study is conducted, as well as explaining and justifying the chosen methodological approach. Findings of the study are presented and discussed in three separate chapters (5, 6 and 7) and finally, chapter 8 provides the conclusions of the thesis, as well as implications for further research.

An overview of the chapter is presented as follows:

Subsequent to this introduction, **Chapter 2** provides a necessary background to the study, describing and discussing the main features of the Chilean media and political systems, together with a characterisation of the political elite that has controlled the country since the recovery of democracy in 1990. The chapter examines the way in which the journalistic profession has developed during this

period, and identifies important democratic deficits in the way media and political institutions have interacted ever since.

Chapter 3 offers an appraisal of the relevant literature that informs the study and justifies the choice of an institutionalist approach to the mediatization of politics to better understand the changing relationship between political and media actors in Chile. Key dimensions of the mediatization of politics debate are critically discussed in order to provide a working definition of the mediatization process and advance the idea that political elites in Chile have undergone an increasing process of mediatization, which has been largely overlooked by the academia.

Chapter 4 explains the methodological framework and research methods used in the thesis. The chapter locates the study within a constructionist paradigm for the understanding of political institutions, and justifies an inductive and interpretive research design, as well as the choice of elite interview as the main research method. Strategies of data collection and analysis informed by grounded theory (Charmaz 2006; Strauss & Corbin 2008; Birks & Mills 2011) and applied thematic analysis (Namey et al. 2008; Guest et al. 2012) are explained and justified by the nature of the research problem and questions guiding the study. Additionally, this chapter offers a profile of the research participants and acknowledges the strengths and limitations of the chosen approach.

Chapter 5 initiates the findings section. This chapter locates political elites within a circuit of elite communication dominated by traditional media players and characterised by frequent and routine exchanges between political and media actors. Additionally, the chapter highlights the centralist character of the Chilean political communication culture by means of identifying structural features that

position some political actors in more advantageous positions than others to access this elite circuit, which appears skewed towards the executive power, the city of Santiago and media outlets of great significance within the elite. Finally, a typology of mediatization is developed, stressing how actors' adaptation to news media logics is greatly responsive to the institutional framework within which they operate, and appears aligned to other political resources.

Chapter 6 explores how political elites understand and interact with the institutional logic of the media and what the drivers guiding that relationship are. In order to do so, the chapter pays attention to politicians' goals of media exposure, their perceptions of the main components of the news media logic, as well as the identification of main domains of adaptation to the news media logic; that is to say, those extended practices through which the mediatization of political actors is generally expressed. Throughout the chapter, mediated visibility is characterised as a mobilising capability (March & Olsen 1995) within political institutions, a coveted yet risky form of capital that requires careful management, and control of which seems to become more difficult for political elites. This drive for mediated attention in a context of increasing media autonomy regarding how content is presented to the public prompts political elites to react by means of professionalising strategies of political communication; readjusting language, time and information subsidies to meet new media demands.

In **Chapter 7,** attention shifts to the backstage practices in the relationship between political and media actors by examining the routine trade-off of information in the political news beat. Additionally, role relations between politicians and journalists are inspected, paying attention to elements that

threaten autonomous journalistic practice, and how narratives of professionalisation are traded by journalists against organisational constraints and long-term relationships with elite sources. From this analysis, the gap between a more autonomous media institution and a journalistic field that struggles to assert its autonomy is acknowledged and discussed in connection to the concept of boundaries and the ability political and media actors show for navigating between logics of appropriateness regarding the own role and logics of expected utility in which compromises are accepted.

Finally, **Chapter 8** contains the main conclusions of the study. The chapter offers an overview of key findings of the thesis and discusses its normative and theoretical implications. Thus, it is stressed how the process of mediatization interacts with features of the Chilean political culture, which moderate the development of the process. Additionally, implications of wider reach are discussed; particularly, how the resistance and instrumental adoption of political elites to news media logics opens up questions about a loss of autonomy in political actors associated with mediatization processes. This argument is further developed by identifying conflicting rationales for behaviour in the relationships between political elites and the media, which are better understood by inspecting spaces of autonomy and control between media and political actors, as well as distinguishing between levels of analysis in this contentious relationship.

CHAPTER 2

LOCATING THE CASE:

CHILE AND THE DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGE

The objective of this chapter is to examine the main features of the Chilean political and media systems as a necessary background for discussing the mediatization of political elites in this national context. In order to better understand the current situation and how these institutions interact today, the chapter introduces key political and media actors within a historical perspective focused on the process of the transition to democracy, initiated in 1990.

Already 25 years after the recovery of democracy, political actors and institutions face important challenges connected with what has been described as an elitist political culture (Luna & Mardones 2010) whose representative nature continues to be questioned (Godoy 2003). The chapter exposes how the narrative of success that surrounded the process of democratisation in the country has been challenged on multiple fronts; the lack of attention to the development of pluralist media markets being one of them.

The first section (2.1) offers a mostly descriptive and succinct overview of the key players in the Chilean political and media systems. First, the main institutional arrangements defining Chilean politics are examined: the presence of a strong Executive power, a Congress with limited attributions, and two stable political coalitions that have led the process of the transition to democracy and have

dominated most public positions over the last 25 years. Secondly, an overview of the key players of the Chilean media system is provided, paying attention to broadcast, print and new media actors that have modified the national media ecology in recent years.

The second section of the chapter (2.2) develops a historical analysis of the transition process, stressing how complementary dimensions have evolved ever since: legal-procedural, actor-based and civic dimensions, which together shed light on the main challenges facing the current Chilean democracy, in particular the apparent fracture between political elites and civil society, which has been identified as one of the main drivers of the mediatization of politics in the country (Arancibia 2002; Silva 2004).

Finally, the third section (2.3) concentrates on recent developments in the media system in Chile, discussing competing understandings of the process, specifically what it is here called *the narrative of modernisation* vs. *the narrative of concentration*. This analysis is complemented with an overview of the role the journalistic field has played in the democratisation process.

With a GDP of US$277.2 billion and a population of 17.62 million, the World Bank regards Chile as a high income country (The World Bank 2015). From 2009, it has had full membership in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, with the aim of sharing policy experiences with thirty three other countries committed to democracy and market economy (OECD 2015). Chile has traditionally been well positioned in regional rankings, standing out for what has been regarded as an exemplary road to development, based on economic growth

and a steady reduction of poverty.[4] In matters of civil liberties and political rights, Freedom House has regarded Chile as a totally free country from 1990 onwards, granting the highest score possible since 2004 (Freedom House, 2014). Despite the prominent position occupied by the country in a variety of international measurements, the Chilean road to democracy and development has proven to be longer than anticipated, and the narrative of success built during the nineties and early noughties is starting to be challenged.

On the one hand, the foundations and outcomes of the Chilean economic model have been questioned, especially on the basis of persistent inequalities in income distribution (Meller 2000; Murray et al. 2009; OECD 2014) and limited upward social mobility (Torche, 2005). Additionally, the quality of work and the wage structure also reveal a less successful panorama, with high levels of precariousness in work conditions (Durán & Kremerman 2015).

On the other hand, the legitimacy of institutional politics has been increasingly interrogated and expressed in all-time high levels of distrust and disapproval of political institutions such as Government, Congress and political parties (COES 2015; PNUD 2015). A strategy of democratic consolidation based on an elite power-sharing settlement (Cavarozzi 1992) and usually praised as the main explanation for political stability, has been questioned on the basis of persistent democratic deficits. Dubbed as a "restricted democracy" (Munck & Leff 1997) or "pacted democracy" (Godoy 1999) in the years immediately following the regime

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[4] According to the government-run survey CASEN, managed by the Ministry of Social Development, 38 per cent of the population lived in poverty in 1990. This figure decreased to 13 per cent in 2006. After a controversial debate, this survey changed its methodology to address new dimensions of poverty. As a result, numbers increased. In 2013, 20 per cent of Chileans were considered as living in poverty (more information in http://www.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/).

change, the political system appears to be experiencing an on-going process of democratisation, with traces of the authoritative tradition persisting to this day (Schneider & Schmitter 2004; Siavelis 2009; Garretón & Garretón 2010; Munck 2010; Huneeus & Cuevas 2013). The case of the news media system is emblematic in this regard, and shows the paradoxes of a modernisation process triggered by commercialisation (Tironi & Sunkel 1993) but nonetheless seriously questioned when assessed from the perspective of democratisation (McChesney 1999; Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Bresnahan 2003; Gonzalez-Rodríguez 2008; Monckeberg 2009; Couso 2012), a point that will be resumed and expanded in section 2.4.

2.1.   Mapping the key players: the institutional framework of Chilean politics

Chile has a presidential system that has been characterized as "reinforced" or "ultra-presidentialist" (Godoy 2003). This is a result of a set of exclusive legislative initiatives that favours a tight control of the legislative agenda by the Executive power, which becomes a de-facto agenda setter during the policy-making process (Aninat et al. 2006). Similar to the U.S. model, Congress is organised in a bicameral assembly (Deputies and Senate), and every legislative decision has to be mutually corroborated by the other chamber. Unlike the U.S. model, the President has exclusive initiative power in all matters of administration connected to the daily running of government, in addition to matters of legislation such as the political and administrative division of the country, taxation, labour legislation, social security, budgetary matters and, more importantly, any legislative initiative involving new allocation of resources or changes in public expenses (Aninat et al.

2006). As a result of these arrangements, the Chilean Executive power has been described as having the greatest "institutional power" among Presidential systems in Latin America, a key predictor of agenda control by the Presidency (Santos et al. 2014).

There is some disagreement among scholars about the efficacy of the checks and balances in place to counterbalance the power of the Executive. Godoy (2003) argues that the system lacks a proper balance due to the extensive legislative powers of the Executive and the limited oversight capacities of Congress. Others have contended that in spite of the President's strong ability to control legislative agendas, the system is protected by a series of veto players that prevent unilateral changes and push different actors towards strategies of cooperation (Aninat 2006).

2.1.1. Main political coalitions

Two stable coalitions have conducted politics in Chile since the recovery of democracy. These are the centre-left *Concertación*[5] and the centre-right *Alianza*[6]. These coalitions, praised for their high level of stability and institutionalisation, have dominated public representation, both in the Executive and Congress, making the participation of other political actors marginal. *Concertación* led four

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[5] *Concertación* is shorthand for *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*, a coalition formed to defeat Augusto Pinochet. It was located on the centre-left of the political spectrum and initially integrated four parties: *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* (PDC), *Partido Socialista* (PS), *Partido por la Democracia* (PPD) and *Partido Radical-Social Demócrata* (PRSD). The *Concertación* changed its name to *Nueva Mayoría* before running for the second term of Michelle Bachelet (2014-2018), incorporating three new parties: *Izquierda Ciudadana* (IC), *Partido Comunista de Chile* (PC) and *Movimiento Amplio Social* (MAS).

[6] *Alianza* is shorthand for *Alianza por Chile* and it is located on the centre-right and right of the political spectrum. Historically, it integrated two parties: *Renovación Nacional* (RN) and *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (UDI), the latter the party with the strongest links to Pinochet's legacy. The coalition changed its name to *Coalición por el Cambio* between 2009 and 2012 but later returned to its previous name. Early in 2015, the coalition incorporated two further groups to their ranks: *Partido Regionalista Independiente* (PRI) and *Evópoli* and was renamed in October 2015 as *Chile Vamos*.

consecutive governments, those of Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994), Eduardo Frei (1994-2000), Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) and Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010). *Alianza* gained office for the first time in 2010, with the election of Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014). Despite the disparity in their electoral success in presidential elections (see figures 1 and 2) both coalitions show stable and competitive voting patterns, capturing around 90 per cent of votes in parliamentary elections.
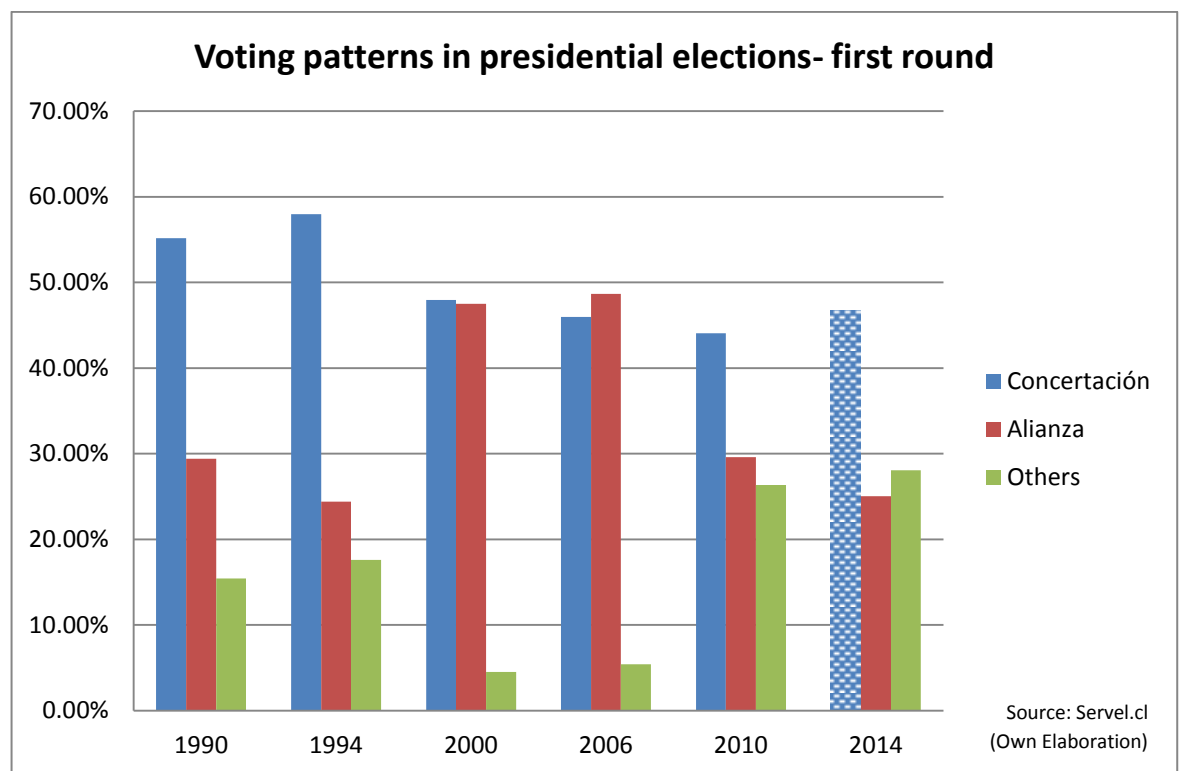
Figure 1: Votes obtained for both coalitions in the first round of presidential elections. The column "others" reflects the total share of voting obtained by independent candidates (when more than one independent candidate ran for office, their votes have been combined). The textured blue column in 2014 stands for *Nueva Mayoría*, the renovated version of *Concertación*.

Voting patterns in presidential elections- final results

Source: Servel.cl
(Own Elaboration)
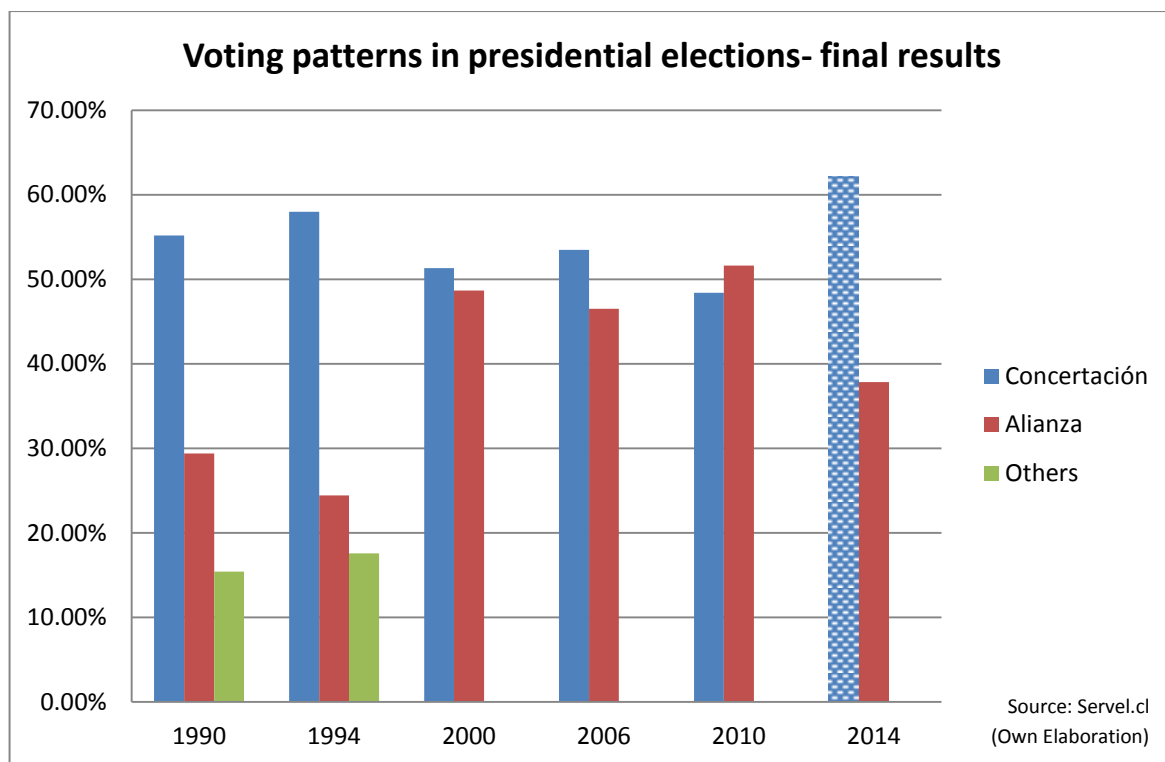
Figure 2: Votes obtained by both coalitions in the final round of presidential elections. From 2000-2014 no candidate obtained more than 50 per cent of votes in the first round, therefore a second election was held to decide between the two first majorities. Note that the centre-left coalition won all except one election (2010).

The stability of these two coalitions has been greatly encouraged by the so-called binomial electoral system, which was recently eliminated by President Bachelet following decades of discussions (Alvarez 2015). The system used lists of candidates who compete for two positions in each parliamentary district. In this system, each of the two lists garnering the most votes gets one of the available positions, unless the most voted list receives more than twice the votes of its nearest rival. The system introduced some distortions; in practice, both coalitions generally secured one representative per district, pushing their vote shares in Congress towards 50 per cent (Godoy, 2003). The system encouraged parties to remain organised in two coalitions, but offered high entry barriers for a third coalition or an independent party, reducing the number of relevant actors (Aninat

35

et al. 2006). Additionally, minority parties with significant vote shares – but located outside the main coalitions – often ended with no parliamentary representation (Godoy 2003; Luna & Mardones 2010).

In a context where both coalitions have increasingly moved closer in their programmatic definitions, one of the main cleavages that still distinguishes these groups and their voters has been their positions regarding the military regime (Luna 2008), even as recent efforts by a more liberal sector of the right pushes to disengage from this heavy legacy.

Several political analysts agree that both coalitions are showing signs of wear and disconnection from their voters (Godoy 2003; Luna 2008; Luna & Mardones 2010). As a result, the coalitions have initiated more or less parallel strategies of expansion and rebranding. In order to return to power for a second period (2014-2018), Michelle Bachelet was supported by a revamped *Concertación*, renamed *Nueva Mayoría*, and extended further to the political left by incorporating the Communist Party (PC), *Izquierda Cristiana* (IC) and *Movimiento Amplio Social* (MAS). *Alianza*, currently in the role of opposition, has embarked on a similar process and recently launched *Chile Vamos*, a group of four centre-right political parties (Canales 2015).[7]

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[7] *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (UDI), *Renovación Nacional* (RN), *Evópoli* and *Partido Regionalista Independiente* (PRI).

2.2. Mapping the key players: Description of the Chilean media ecology

The Chilean media system is fiercely market-oriented (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Couso 2012) and still dominated by traditional media players (Godoy & Gronemeyer 2012). It is, however, a system undergoing change. On the one hand, the penetration of online media and the imminent arrival of digital TV have forced traditional actors to adjust their approaches. On the other hand, the concentration of ownership has intensified across media industries, reviving concerns about the oligopolistic nature of the field, a concern that will be examined in greater detail in section 2.4.

The concentration of media ownership in Chile tends to be vertical (within each industry) and not horizontal (across industries). As a result, there are no big media conglomerates in Chile as occurs in other countries in the region (Mastrini & Becerra 2006), and cases of cross-ownership are limited and recent, such as those of the multi-media platforms owned by the entrepreneurs Andrónico Luksic and Alvaro Saieh (Fernández 2013).

Nonetheless, the media system as a whole has undergone some changes, which can be seen in the variations across historical data of advertising shares. As illustrated in Figure 3, using data from 2013, television is still the main media industry by advertising share, capturing 43 per cent, followed by newspapers (24 per cent), online media (9 per cent) and advertisements placed in public spaces (9 per cent). At the bottom of the table are radio (7 per cent), paid television (6 per cent) magazines (2 per cent) and cinema (0.3 per cent).

Advertising share by medium (2013)

- TV — 43%
- Newspapers — 24%
- Online Media — 9%
- Public Spaces — 9%
- Radio — 7%
- Cable TV — 6%
- Magazines — 2%
- Cinema — 0%
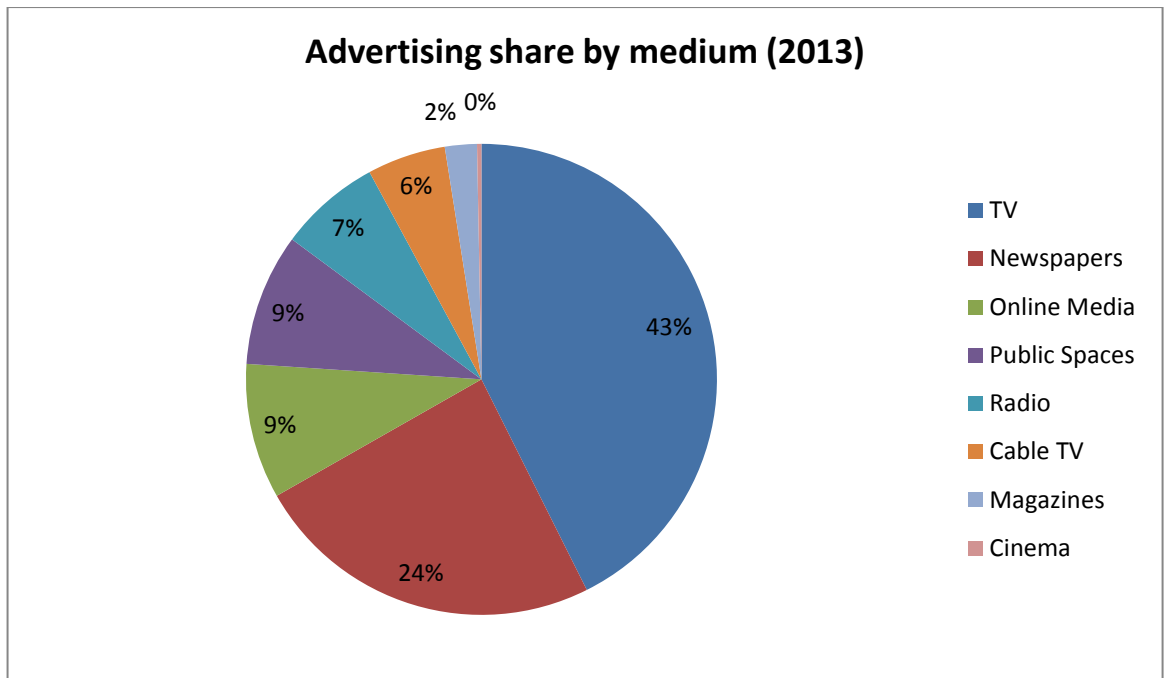
Figure 3: Own elaboration with data from ACHAP (*Asociación Chilena de Publicidad*), 2013.

This distribution has experienced change over the years. Notably, recent years have seen the steady and rapid growth of publicity in online media platforms, which has increased by a factor of ten in the last decade, from capturing 0.9 per cent of the total advertisement share in 2003 to 9 per cent in 2013. Additionally, it is possible to note the controlled yet steady decrease of advertising in newspapers, a process initiated already in the 1980s, and the more recent decrease of television advertising seen in the last five years. Figure 4 offers a visual representation of this evolution over time, based on data from 5 year intervals for the period 1978-2013.
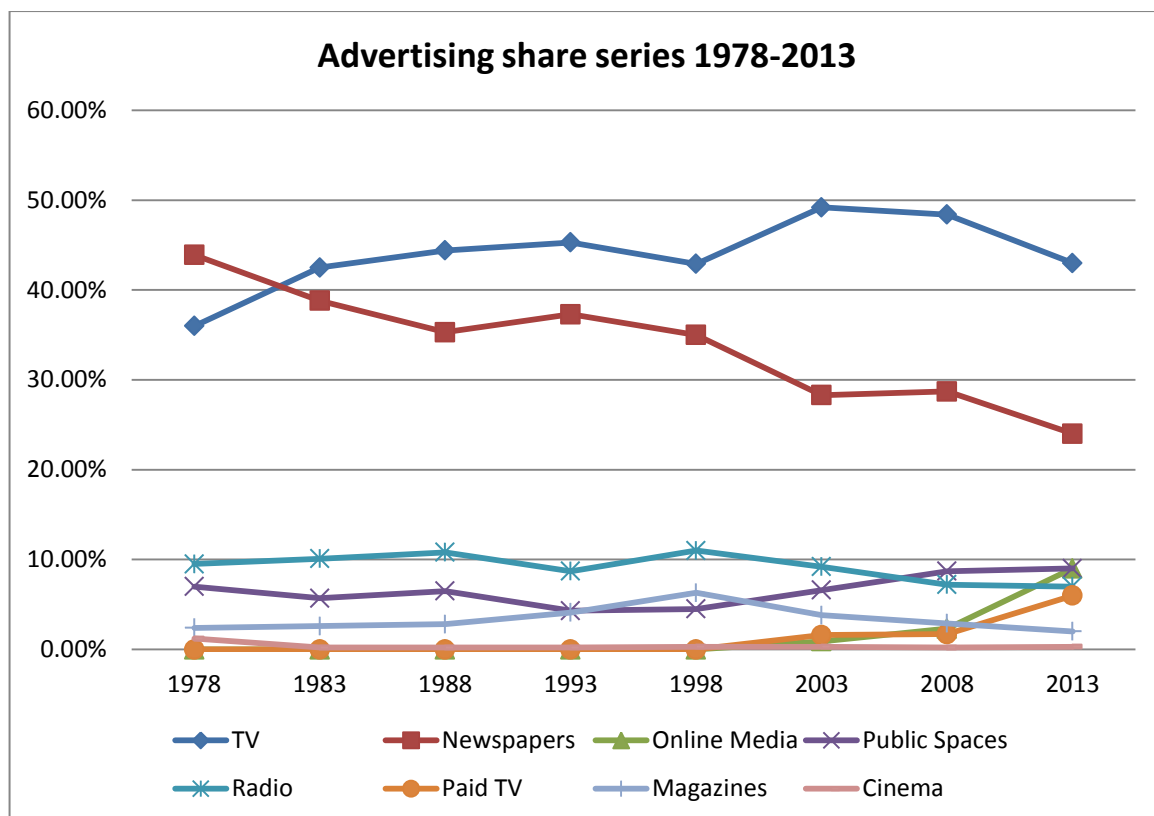
Figure 4. Own elaboration with data from ACHAP (*Asociación Chilena de Publicidad*), 1973-2013.

Below, the main players within each industry will be introduced, paying attention to major changes and trends in recent years. For the purpose of the analysis, three main areas will be discussed: broadcast, newspapers and online media.

Broadcast: With a penetration of 99.2 per cent and an average of 2.4 TV sets per household (Anatel 2014), the TV industry is still the most important player in terms of reach. The industry has certainly resisted the impact of several changes, in particular the spread of paid TV and the increase of online media consumption. More recently, after the approval of the Digital TV Law (Aguirre 2014), the industry is preparing for a general switch from analogue to digital transmission and reception, a process planned to span 5 years, which could significantly increase the number of free reception frequencies available to the public.

Ratings and national production are concentrated in five television stations, most of them privately-owned. The exception is TVN (*Televisión Nacional de Chile*), a public TV station with a *sui generis* organisation; it has a public mandate and a politically nominated board, although it is self-funded and subject to the same market rules as the rest of the industry (Fuenzalida 2002). Two other prominent players are owned by powerful family holdings. Since 2010, *Canal 13* has been mostly owned by Luksic Group, with minority participation by the Catholic University, and *Mega* has been owned by Bethia Group since 2011. The Luksic group belongs to the Luksic family, with prominent business interests in mining, banking, manufacturing and energy industries, among others; it is located among the top 3 national fortunes (Echeverría & Arce 2014). Bethia Group belongs to the Solari family, in possession of the third greatest national fortune (Echeverría & Arce 2014), with prominent interests in retail, water and private health sectors, among others. The other two channels are owned by international corporations. The U.S.-based Turner Broadcasting System (Time Warner) owns *Chilevisión* and the Mexican businessman Remigio Ángel González owns *La Red*.

TV programming is oriented towards entertainment genres, most of them nationally produced. According to a report by Anatel (2014), 74 per cent of TV consumption in 2013 was of nationally produced programming. When looking at genres, entertainment is prominent, although news products captured a respectable 27 per cent of all TV viewing. However, across all the journalistic programmes aired by TV stations, only 9 per cent are identified by Anatel as "politics", while subjects such as sports, crime and soft news are more prominent. Similar patterns of programming are found across TV stations, while the news

agendas of TV bulletins have been identified as highly uniform by empirical studies (Valenzuela & Arriagada 2009).

Concentration in the radio industry takes a different shape. More than 1,000 radio stations spread throughout the country, but ownership is concentrated in 5 relevant media groups with 80.8 per cent of national audience and advertising (Initiative 2011). The more important are *Ibero Americana Radio Chile,* owned by the Spanish group Prisa, together with *Grupo Dial* and *13 Radios.* The latter two groups represent recent examples of cross-platform property: *Dial* is owned by the media conglomerate Copesa, an influential actor in the newspaper industry, and *13 Radios* belongs to the Luksic Group, owners of *Canal 13* TV station. As argued by Ramírez (2009), the existence of numerous regional and local radio stations across the country tends to hide the fact that both profits and content production are heavily centralised in Santiago-based companies, which broadcast standard content nationally, and leave restricted space to local actors. Therefore in this case, concentration is less pronounced in terms of ownership distribution, but significant in terms of audience reach and power to attract advertising.

Newspapers: The market structure of the newspaper industry shares some commonalities with the radio market. There are 109 registered periodicals in the national territory, including daily newspapers, weeklies and publications of various periodicities (ANP 2012). Of this total, the members of the so-called duopoly of the Chilean press own 23 newspapers, in the case of *El Mercurio*, and 5 newspapers in the case of *Copesa*. In spite of this relatively disaggregated ownership structure, the power of these two players -in terms of influence and advertising capture- is widely recognised, actually configuring a newspaper

market frequently described as oligopolistic and politically hegemonic (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Monckeberg 2009; Couso 2012). Newspapers with national reach are the elite-oriented *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, political evening newspaper *La Segunda*, tabloid newspapers *LUN* and *La Cuarta*, free distribution newspapers *Publimetro, La Hora* and *Hoy x Hoy,* and three business-oriented publications (*Estrategia, Pulso* and *Diario Financiero*). All but three[8] of these titles belong either to El Mercurio SA (*El Mercurio, La Segunda, LUN, Hoy x Hoy*) or Copesa (*La Tercera, La Cuarta, Pulso, La Hora*). In practice, these groups control around 80 per cent of readership and advertising in the national market (Monckeberg 2009), maintaining an unchallenged dominant position.

El Mercurio SA is the oldest news media company in Chile and a prominent actor within the public debate in contemporary times. Owned by the powerful Edwards family, *El Mercurio* was founded in 1900 with a mission of exerting political influence in the tradition of the greatest European newspapers (Herrero 2014). As noted by Waisbord (2012), *El Mercurio* has often represented the prototypical case of a newspaper closely identified with authoritarianism, given the close ties between the newspaper owners and the dictatorship. Despite connections with the latter, the Edwards family initiated the editorial business with the aim of being "the guardian of the Republic" (Herrero 2014) and on repeated occasions have declared their intention to represent institutions above political allegiances. This certainly contentious assertion has been, nonetheless, at least partially endorsed by studies that suggest the political coverage of *El Mercurio* as less biased than that of *La Tercera* (Navia et al. 2013). For decades, *El Mercurio* was the only elite-

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[8] *Publimetro* (Metro International Group), *Estrategia* (Editorial Gestion) and *Diario Financiero* (Claro Group) are the three national titles published outside the groups Copesa and El Mercurio. The first one is a free distribution newspaper with limited production of original journalistic content; the other two are financial publications.

oriented newspaper in the country. This changed in the early 2000s when the then middle-market *La Tercera*, now the property of the Saieh Group (Monckeberg 2009), decided to rebrand itself and compete for elite audiences, initiating a successful transformation. Both newspapers have been described as a two-headed monopoly (Gonzalez-Rodríguez 2008) for their similar views on political and economic subjects.

In terms of readership and circulation, the market leader is the tabloid LUN (see Figure 5). In the elite-oriented segment, *El Mercurio* has sustained its leadership, closely followed by *La Tercera*, and, as argued by Couso (2012), the relevance of these newspapers should not be underestimated, as long as a high proportion of politically relevant news is generated in their pages.

Newspapers readership
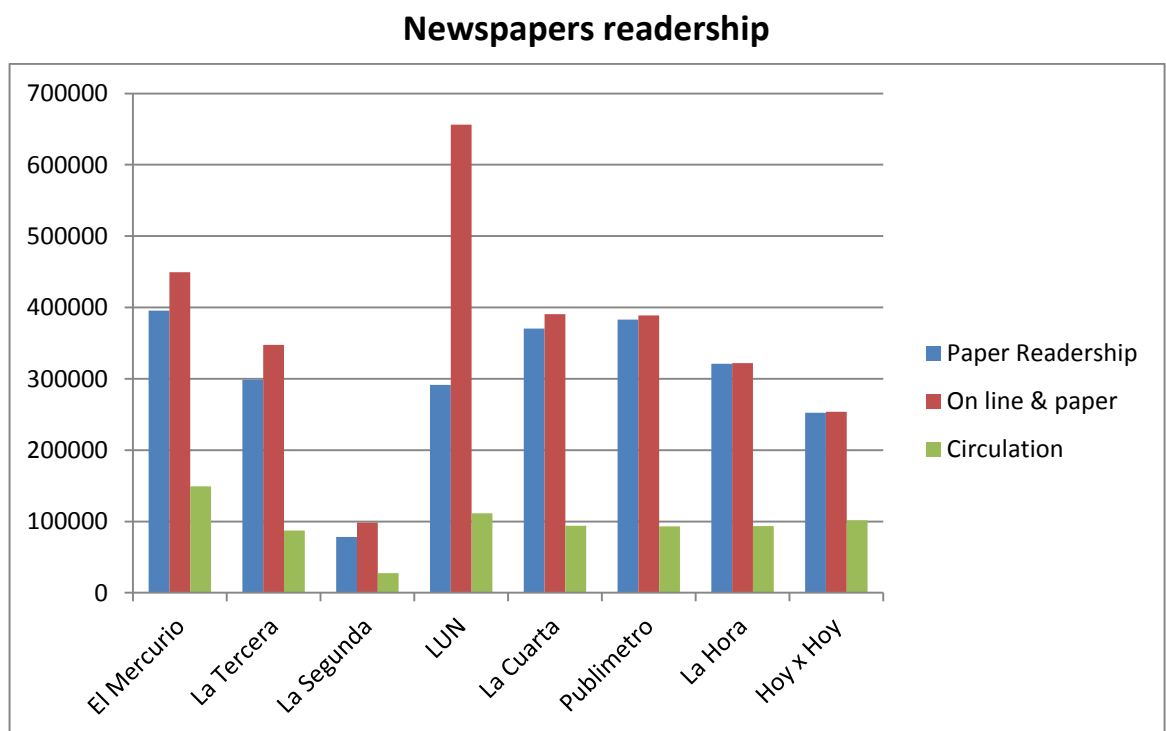
Figure 5: Own elaboration (data from Achap, 2013)

New media: A discussion of the Chilean media system would not be complete without mentioning the impact new media have had, at least partially, in injecting dynamism to an otherwise rigid market structure (Franco 2009; González-Bustamante & Soto Saldías 2015). On the one hand, most traditional media outlets have expanded into the digital world, either duplicating their contents or generating complementary platforms. On the other hand, and relevant to this analysis, a new array of actors have appeared who function on online media platforms only (Godoy & Gronemeyer 2012).

According to Alexa.com, in the top ten of the most visited websites in Chile there are three news websites: *BioBio.cl*, associated with an independent radio station of the same name; *LUN* (the online version of El Mercurio SA-owned tabloid) and *Emol* (the main news website associated with *El Mercurio*)[9].

In the realm of news, it is worth noting the development of a few journalism projects that have successfully opened up spaces for media diversity (Gonzalez-Bustamante & Soto Saldias 2015; Godoy & Gronemeyer 2012). Particularly relevant to politics are the online newspaper *El Mostrador*, founded in 2000, and the investigative centre *Ciper*, created in 2007 and sponsored by Copesa. In a press environment with very limited resources for investigative journalism, these projects were started with the aim of filling information gaps, addressing topics normally absent in traditional media outlets (Skoknic 2013). As noted by Couso (2012), once news is broken online first, many of these stories are later incorporated into traditional media output, widening the news agenda with stories that more openly question political and economic power. Telling in this

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[9] *BioBio* was 5th, *LUN* the 6th and *Emol* 7th, according to the ranking elaborated by Alexa. This information was consulted in www.alexa.com in February 2015.

respect is a study about the use of the social media platform Twitter among Chilean politicians (Fábrega & Paredes 2013), which shows that although traditional media keep feeding the political conversation, historically powerful media outlets, such as *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera,* are not necessarily those most frequently mentioned in social media political networks. Instead, other web-based news organisations such as *El Mostrador, The Clinic* or *El Dínamo* or news websites associated to radio stations, such as *BioBio, ADN*, or *Cooperativa* are more frequently mentioned. The latter lend support to the idea that a greater number of actors are intervening in the elaboration of the mediatized political agenda, drawing power away from traditional media players.

2.3. The endless transition: from authoritarian to transitional enclaves

The democratic transition in Chile began in 1990 when the first democratic government assumed power after defeating Dictator Augusto Pinochet in a plebiscite held in late 1988. There is no agreement as to the date when the end of the transitional process can be marked, and both politicians and academics differ in their assessments. Patricio Aylwin, the first president elected following the military regime, ventured to suggest in a press conference held on August 9th 1991, only a year after he took office, that the transition had come to an end, a polemic assertion even at the time (Walker 1992). Ricardo Lagos, who was President from 2000 to 2006, made a similar declaration in 2005 after passing a series of reforms that removed from the constitution a number of non-democratic elements inherited from Pinochet. Some academics have accepted the latter

milestone as the formal beginning of a post-transition era (Siavelis 2009). Others tie the transition to the first democratic government only, but claim that authoritative vestiges remain in place, and that Chile experiences an imperfect (Garretón & Garretón 2010) or semi-sovereign democracy (Huneeus & Cuevas 2013).

One of the obstacles to a clear definition of the end of the transition derives from the way in which the idea of transition is understood. As argued by Godoy (1999) limiting the idea of transition as a transfer of command from old authorities to newly elected ones is overly simplistic. On the other hand, though, it can be argued that all democracies are perfectible, or even more, that the ideal of democracy is different from the way in which democracy is actually realised (Dahl 1998). Therefore, a society could be indefinitely transitioning towards that ideal moment in which full democratisation is achieved.

Looking at some of the more commonly used definitions of transitions to democracy can illuminate the conundrum. Munck and Leff (1997) defines transitions as follows:

> Transitions are periods of regime change [that] are formative or founding moments. As such, they set a society on a path that shapes its subsequent political development. (Ibid: 343)

Godoy (1999) expands the notion of regime change to include a minimum of procedural conditions that have to be met, over a period of time:

> So, in conclusion, our answer to the question 'what is the transition' is as follows: It is the process through which the minimum procedural conditions for democracy to enter the phase of consolidation and deepening are realised. (Ibid: 88)

What both definitions have in common is a process-oriented approach to the concept of transition. Taken together, it is possible to understand transition to democracy as a process, or rather multiple processes, conducive to the moment in which democracy enters a phase of consolidation. At the same time, the mode of transition defines the main features of the resulting democracy. For the purpose of analysing contemporary democracy in Chile and better understanding the institutional space where political elites are currently located, three main spheres of the transitional process will be discussed below: (1) legal-procedural; (2) actor-based dimension, concerned with the composition of political elites, and (3) civic dimension:

2.3.1. Legal-procedural dimension

Within the academic community, the legal and procedural framework has been, by far, the most discussed dimension of the transitional process. This is not, however, the result of the disciplinary fixations of political scientists but a natural consequence of the way in which the terms of the Chilean transition to democracy was negotiated and, in great measure, defined by the military regime.

The Constitution of 1980, approved in a fraudulent[10] plebiscite (Garretón & Garretón 2010), remains in force and is the main stumbling block to claiming a complete overcoming of authoritative vestiges. This Constitution sets the tone, terms and the timeline of the transitional process, with the explicit goal of creating a "protected democracy", in which the Armed Forces acted as "guarantors" of the institutional order (Godoy 1999). This explains why an intense management of

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[10] The Constitution of 1980 was approved in what is widely recognised as a fraudulent plebiscite held under dictatorship, where political opposition was virtually invisible and had no resources to campaign, while the official position was widely disseminated, even with the acquiescence of the news media (Huneeus 1999).

civic-military relations was necessary during the first transitional governments (Cavallo 1998).

This institutional framework inherited by the military regime has been commonly referred to as "authoritarian enclaves", which have proven difficult to remove due to the conditions required for reform, according to the same Constitution. Among the more controversial points derived from this legal framework was the placement of Dictator Augusto Pinochet as a non-elected member of the Senate for 8 years. He was one of 9 (out of 38) designated Senators identified in the Constitution, including 4 members of the Armed Forces. The Constitution also imposed military tutelage on representative institutions and established a system of supra-majorities that assured minimal changes to this design. This was reinforced by the introduction of the binominal electoral system that has left parties with significant vote shares without representation (Garretón & Garretón 2010; Luna & Mardones 2010; Huneeus & Cuevas 2013).

Together, these distorting factors have shaped a *sui-generis* form of restricted democracy, even as elections were held regularly in the country. As argued by Munck and Leff (1997), the democratic authorities opted for maximising their chances of gaining power acting within a legal framework designed by the dictatorship. As a result of this "accommodationist strategy" the transition inherited a "constrained pattern of elite contestation that obstructs democratic consolidation in Chile" (Ibid: 347).

Many of the authoritarian enclaves designed by the military regime have been eliminated through subsequent processes of negotiation and reform that nonetheless have taken decades. In 2005, designated senators were eliminated

and the President regained authority over the military. In 2015, the controversial binomial system was finally replaced by a proportional system, though the effects of this change are yet to be seen.[11]

As can be appreciated from this description, most of these so called enclaves have been gradually removed – with the exception of the 1980 Constitution itself, which has been reformed and therefore continuously legitimised by democratically elected authorities. This difficult change has been identified as one of the pending challenges for the Chilean democracy in the twenty-first century (Munck 2010; Huneeus & Cuevas 2013).

2.3.2. Actor-based dimension

A second entry point to understanding the process of the transition to democracy with particular relevance for this study is to look at the composition and main features of the political elites that have led the public sector during the past 25 years.

The recovery of democracy in 1990 was greatly facilitated by an agreement reached between elite factions that purposely reorganised their relationships, and willingly entered into a bargaining process leading towards democratisation – a process that has been described in the literature as an 'elite settlement' (Higley & Gunther, 1992). This pact between the main political leaders of the country, both those who supported the dictatorship and those who opposed it, delivered

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[11] The Law 20050, promulgated in August 2005, introduced changes such as the end of designated and life Senators (the latter was the case for former presidents) and improved the representative nature of Congress. In relation to the military role in the political institutional design, this law ended the role of "institutional guarantors" for the Armed Forces, restricted the makeup of the National Security Council (COSENA) and the composition of the Constitutional Tribunal, as well as ended the non-removable status of military chiefs. In turn, the law modifying the electoral system was promulgated in April 2015 (Alvarez 2015). This ended with Law 18.799 (1989), which modified Law 18.700 (1988), both promulgated by Augusto Pinochet.

political stability and has long been praised as the key for success in the Chilean transition process. Cavarozzi (1992) argues that "elites' bargaining predispositions became a political resource that helped bring about the successful settlements of the late 1980s" (Ibid: 235).

Because the incoming centre-left coalition had very little ground for agreement with the centre-right political parties in matters of economic and social policy, this settlement was mostly focused on procedural matters (Cavarozzi 1992). In other words, the pre-democracy efforts towards transition were oriented to defining the rules of the political game that would come afterwards, rules that – as discussed previously – seriously hampered the reformist abilities of the new authorities, and enabled a tight control of the process for the old elites, even if they were out of government (Munck & Leff 1997).

As described above, the party system has been structured around two stable coalitions (*Nueva Mayoría*, former *Concertación*, and *Chile Vamos,* former *Alianza)*. Together, they have formed a fairly small group of decision-makers who frequently interact, facilitating cooperation in policy-making processes (Aninat et al. 2006). An additional contributing factor for elite cooperation is the social homogeneity showed by elites in power (Espinoza 2010). Joignant (2009) conducted a study that aimed to identify the main features of governmental elites during the period 1990-2010, surveying actors who served in the four governments of the *Concertación*[12]. His findings showed that 60 per cent of the group came from the Metropolitan Region (Santiago and surroundings), the vast majority had a university degree (97 per cent) and postgraduate studies were

[12] The governments of the *Concertación*-era were led by Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994), Eduardo Frei (1994-2000), Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) and Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010).

mostly conducted abroad (67 per cent). Maybe most revealing is the fact that more than 60 per cent of the group attended private schools, mostly Catholic (while only around 10 per cent of the general population is enrolled in primary and secondary private education). Additionally, women held only 19 per cent of key positions during the period analysed. As stressed by Joignant, this socio-demographic information reveals a strong presence of shared cultural patterns among the governmental elite: attached to Santiago, university-educated, male-dominated and mostly affluent.

Two strong features define the character of the Chilean polity. The first is a deeply-rooted aversion to conflict, epitomised in the "democracy of agreements" (*la democracia de los acuerdos*) and expressed in an on-going discourse on consensus (Godoy 1999; Silva 2004; Aninat et al. 2006; Siavelis 2009). The second is the sensitivity towards economic policy (Aninat et al. 2006), expressed in actions that reinforce the untouchability of Pinochet's economic model (Siavelis 2009; Huneeus & Cuevas 2013), and a conservative fiscal policy based on international trade. As a result of the latter, it is possible to understand the prominent role played by the so called 'technopols' within the political elite, a group of politicians often educated in U.S.-based universities that played a crucial leadership role, bridging political parties and economic elites (Joignant 2009) and invoking technical knowledge to legitimise their leadership (Delamaza 2013).

The points previously discussed lend support to the idea that the political culture developed during the transition has successfully served the end of generating consensus among factional elites (including economic elites), as well as providing a framework for political and economic stability. However, this set of institutional

arrangements has also been conducive, according to some scholars (Siavelis 2009; Luna & Mardones 2010) to establishing an elitist political culture that may be analysed as a contributing factor to the disconnection between elites and citizens.

Siavelis (2009), who considers the end of the transition in 2005, develops a persuasive argument for what he calls the "transitional enclaves", a post-transitional configuration, derived from the previous political cycle and which would impede political transformation. What is striking in his analysis is the fact that these new enclaves are not formal or enforced by law, as most authoritarian enclaves were, but are instead replicated through practices and beliefs shared by political elites. Besides the previously mentioned tacit pact of avoiding fundamental changes or even discussions of change on the pillars of the economic model, the other transitional enclaves identified by Siavelis point to tight party control of politics through the allocation of public positions by party-mongering, centrally-controlled candidate selection, as well as informal strategies of policymaking outside Congress involving opaque agreements with extra-institutional actors.

These practices unfold in the context of decreasing citizen identification with the party system, a lack of popular support that seriously weakens political parties' representativeness, together with candidate selection processes, allocation of positions in the public system and policymaking (Godoy 2003; Siavelis 2009; Luna & Mardones 2010).

As Godoy (2003) argues, political parties have had great difficulty in properly exercising their role as intermediaries between civil society and state bodies. Instead, they have invested their power in recreating the system through which

privileges and resources are distributed among the same political elite, becoming self-referential institutions. Luna and Mardones (2010) pose a similar hypothesis, stating that the "milieu of elitism and exclusionary practices that shape the inner workings of the coalition's major parties" (Ibid: 110) have led the country to a "competitive oligarchy" scenario, in which the party system is competitive but not representative of a citizenry increasingly estranged from institutional politics.[13]

Another important contributing factor shaping the Chilean political culture is the strong centralisation of the country. The Metropolitan Region, whose main urban centre is the city of Santiago, accounts for around 40 per cent of Chile's national population[14] and it is the political and administrative centre of the country. Historic demands for political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation have increased in recent years, and although some progress has been made in this direction, political control remains strongly rooted in central authorities (PNUD 2014).

The fact that most of these practices are informally enforced does not make the process of overcoming them any easier. On the contrary, most of these implicit arrangement emerged and were justified against a difficult process of transition to democracy, during which certain compromises were accepted for the greater good and long-awaited political stability. Today though, these justifications fade in the

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[13] According to the CEP survey, in November 2014, 57 per cent of the population declares not having identification with any of the main political coalitions; 12 per cent does not know and only 32 per cent declares sympathy for some of these groups (the *Alianza* gets 10 per cent and the *Nueva Mayoría* 22 per cent).
[14] According to INE (National Institute of Statistics), the projections of population for the Metropolitan Region during 2015 are 7+ millions of inhabitants, out of 18 million estimated for the national population.

face of a new political cycle, during which the citizenry have started to actively criticise the political elites and their arrangements.[15]

2.3.3. Civic dimension

Deactivation and depolitisation of civil society was one of the trademarks of the transitional process in Chile. Silva (2004) contends that this process answered primarily to the repressive nature of the dictatorship together with the economic policies enforced during the period. Indeed, during the military regime the public discourse favoured individual over collective efforts. While politics were invisibilised, and any form of collective action was actively discouraged and repressed, a neoliberal discourse promoting individual work as the main tool for social mobility was successfully established. The privatisation of the citizen was therefore actively pursued, together with the encouragement of consumption as an alternative to social participation (Silva 2004; Delamaza 2013).[16] This deactivation, nonetheless, continued with the arrival of democracy and not only by inertia. It was, again, promoted from above although with a different justification. This time, governing elites embraced the discourse of consensus in the name of national reconciliation, social peace, political and economic stability (Silva 2004).

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[15] Multiple surveys conducted during 2014 and 2015 confirm a trend towards decreasing levels of trust in political institutions and politicians. Among others, a survey conducted by GFK Adimark in April 2015 shows a downward trend that situates the Government with 64% of disapproval and Congress with 79% of disapproval. Another study published by the Conflict and Social Cohesion Studies Centre (COES) in March 2015 shows that only 2.7% of the population declares trust in political parties and 8.6% in Congress.

[16] There was a brief yet relevant exception to this process of deactivation that occurred in the period 1983-1986, when the deep economic crisis experienced by Chile sent people to the streets clamouring for democracy. According to Delamaza (2013) this was a spontaneous and not strategic encounter between the social and the political spheres, which created space for the emergence of opposition leaders.

Delamaza (2003) contends that wide social participation was not realised after 1990 because the transition was conducted within the existent institutional framework and never challenged the previous socioeconomic order.

> Thus, the expectation of broad popular participation was not met after 1990, resulting in the prominence of political and economic elites who negotiated the terms of the transition (with participation of the armed forces). The anti-dictatorship social movement was deactivated and not replaced with participatory forms of a new type (Delamaza, 2003: 14).

Different analyses concur, stating that with the arrival of the new century, Chilean society diversified and atomized, and traditional spheres for social and political conflict became privatised (health, pensions, education, etc.). At the same time that society embraced consumerism– despite the deep and persistent economic inequalities and precarious work conditions of wide sections of the population – it moved away from politics, which maintained a distinct elitist bias (Delamaza, 2003, 2013; Godoy, 2003).

The distance between politics and civil society derives from what has been widely recognised as a representation crisis, in which party politics lose contact with the civic sphere and, therefore, their popular foundation (Godoy, 2003; Silva, 2004; Luna & Mardones, 2010). The Chilean chapter of the United Nations Development Programme refers to the crisis of representation as "a failed link between society and the political system" (PNUD, 2004: 258), reflecting both the lack of representativeness of electoral mechanisms and the elites' lack of empathy with rapid social change.

Political parties in particular are, therefore, questioned on their ability to mediate between society and the state, which can be correlated to a decreasing participation in electoral politics (Luna & Mardones 2010). Godoy (2003) argues

that this has inverted the traditional process of political legitimation: instead of becoming channels for the transmission of social demands towards higher political spheres, political parties would receive a retrospective legitimacy at the polls.

> [...] what is happening in reality is that decisions are taken at the level of the Presidency and political and economic elites, and descend through political parties to receive an *ex post factum* legitimation. (Godoy, 2003: 27)

There are different signs that lend support to the thesis of failure in the intermediation role played by the political party structure consolidated during the transition process. The first is the recurrent use of anti-elite party messages in political campaigns. In 2005, Michelle Bachelet won the presidency with the (only partially fulfilled) promise of a citizen government that would bring into power a new generation of people (Valenzuela & Dammert 2006; Luna & Mardones 2010). Similarly, Sebastián Piñera won office for the centre-right in 2010, with the slogan of "*el gobierno de los mejores*" (the government of the best ones) and a cabinet only loosely linked to political parties and populated, instead, by people with professional trajectories in the private sector.

The second sign of failure in the intermediate function of political parties has been the re-articulation of social demands expressed in massive street mobilisation, especially during 2011.[17] These demands have been articulated outside and against traditional party structures around issues including public and free education, civil rights, the relationship between development and environmental conservation, and abuses of the bank system, among others. As argued by Segovia

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[17] 2011 was the year in which the student movement took to the streets clamouring for the end of profit in all levels of the education system and demanding a greater role for the state, sustaining strikes and massive protests for most of the year. According to Segovia and Gamboa (2012), during 2011 a variety of social movements reconnected with the tradition of street rallies in a scale not previously seen during democracy.

and Gamboa (2012) these mobilisations reveal the increasing autonomy of civil society and party politics' inability to understand and lead the political process (Segovia & Gamboa 2012). They indicate, as well, that Chilean civil society is regaining confidence in its ability to influence collective and political organisation, positioning policy issues in the national debate, and on the agendas of political elites. Mayol (2011), contends that because the transition to democracy was designed and implemented at an elite level, society did not experience the process as such. Instead, social mobilisation was, for long, either repressed or sublimated. When finally expressed during 2011, Mayol argues, social unrest surpassed the boundaries of the institutional dam that protected the political class. In doing so, this process could indicate the realisation of a long-awaited social dimension to the democratic transition.

This new politicisation of civil society cannot, however, be equated to a trend of increasing participation. That process is still unravelling, and the outcomes of the protests have not always been successful (Segovia & Gamboa 2012), with a lingering risk of a return to the comfort zone of passivity (Mayol & Azocar 2011). What seems more permanent, though, is the questioning of political elites that has come through these movements, and a deep distrust towards politics and political institutions (PNUD 2015).

2.4. Modernisation vs. concentration: two tales on transitional media

This section will pay attention to two competing narratives that have dominated analysis on the development of the Chilean media in democracy, that of modernisation and that of concentration. This analysis is paramount to

understanding the context for the process of mediatization of political actors in the Chilean context.

The liberalization drive triggered by the commercialisation of the media provides the basis for a hypothesis of the early modernisation of the news media in Chile. This hypothesis contends that the military regime indirectly promoted the modernisation of the communications system (inadvertently undermining the authoritarian tradition) by means of increasing its coverage, leaving the industry open to private agents and boosting advertising (Tironi & Sunkel 1993). This position recognizes the interdependency between the media and the political systems, and highlights the role played by the media in the "process of forming a basic consensus on pluralist democracy and open market economy" (Ibid: 216). Because the commercialization and modernisation of the media happened before the arrival of democracy, the argument follows, the system did not experience great alterations with the regime change.

> In short, the transformation of the communications media – their modernization and emancipation from political control – had already taken place prior to changes in the political scene, so that the political transition did not bring about an abrupt break with the past. (Tironi & Sunkel, 1993: 294)

Thus, the tale of modernisation stretches to state that before the transition the media were already emancipated from political control, a contentious point that requires careful assessment. During democratic governments, the structure of the media was indeed not greatly altered by the state, as a result of a policy of non-intervention that encouraged the incorporation of new private actors into the system, particularly big business groups (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002). This does not mean that the media system remained static or untouched. Instead, it became increasingly dependent on market forces. Some of the more vocal critics of the

modernisation tale, in the Chilean case, state that the evolution of media markets in democracy reveals the extent to which the *Concertación*'s governments conflated democracy with market choice, actually debilitating the public sphere (Bresnahan 2003), and erroneously expecting that the market would guarantee pluralism and free speech (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002).

In order to critically analyse the tale of modernisation from the perspective of democratisation, two dimensions identified by Voltmer (2013) as standards to judge the performance of transitional media systems will be further analysed in the local context: diversity and independence. As noted by Voltmer, both of these concepts are pillars of normative media theory. As such, they tend to be elusive and teleological, in the sense that, rather than being ends in themselves, they serve broader ends for the correct functioning of democracy (Ibid). These concepts, particularly the idea of media independence/autonomy, will be further discussed in the next chapter as crucial to the debate about the mediatization of politics. For the purpose of this analysis, media diversity will be understood as the availability of multiple media channels delivering multiple contents to multiple audiences (McQuail 2010), therefore encouraging the circulation of a plurality of voices (Voltmer, 2013).[18] Independence, in turn, will be understood as the ability of the news media to act according to their own standards, and therefore free from political pressures, including proprietorial pressures (Stromback 2008; Voltmer

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[18] Media diversity is recognised as one of the pillars of normative media theory and usually discussed in connection to the expectations placed upon the media within democratic systems. McQuail (2010) discusses diversity as a neutral concept referring to variety, choice and change; and distinguishes between external diversity (media systems where multiple potentially polarised communication channels coexist) and internal diversity (media systems where communication channels embrace values of neutrality and balance and commit to articulate multiple voices). Karppinen (2013), in turn, warns about the risks of conflating abundance of media channels and greater consumer choice with the achievement of a plural and equal agora where opportunities of communication are equally distributed. As such, media diversity becomes a necessary quality of pluralistic democracies, yet how to assess the achievement of the principle of diversity remains a contested matter in media policy.

2013). Finally, the contested nature of the Chilean journalistic field will be reviewed.

2.4.1. On media diversity in democratic Chile

One of the paradoxes resulting from the Chilean democratic process was that cultural momentum did not arrive with the regime change. As highlighted by Voltmer (2013), it is usual to see an outburst of advocacy media during transitional processes, under the assumption that relegated social and political groups will be eager to seize the opportunity of press freedom after overcoming authoritarian environments. This was not the case in Chile. On the contrary, the oppositional press that had developed under dictatorship[19] came to an abrupt end, and community and local media were seriously debilitated (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Bresnahan 2003; Leon-Dermota 2003). This apparent contradiction has been explained as the convergence of numerous causes, including the end of foreign subsidies, the movement of some media owners into government, the loss of readership, poor business management and a strong official discourse on consensus enforced by incoming political elites, who considered an adversarial press a threat to the transitional process (Leon-Dermota 2003).

What did happen during democracy was an increasing concentration of media markets, as outlined in section 2.1. This happened first as a result of legal changes to TV ownership structures.[20] As a result of these regulatory changes, the industry mutated from being state and university-owned to incorporate private capital. The

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[19] Prominent political magazines performed important roles as opposition voices to Pinochet during the '80s, especially *Hoy, Cauce, Análisis, APSI* and the short-lived newspaper *La Epoca* (1987-1998). Already during democracy, at least three print newspapers have failed to sustain a viable editorial and commercial project: *Fortin Mapocho, El Metropolitano* and *Diario Siete* (for more details see Sunkel and Geoffroy, 2002 or Gonzalez-Rodriguez, 2008).

[20] TV Law of 1989.

radio industry experienced a similar process with the arrival of international

conglomerates, while the press remained captured by the duopoly integrated by

the Edwards family and Copesa, companies that were financially supported by the

dictatorship (for an overview of this process see Sunkel & Geoffroy, 2002;

Gonzalez-Rodríguez, 2008 or Monckeberg, 2009; for a regional analysis see

Mastrini & Becerra, 2006; for a description of concentration in radio markets see

Ramírez, 2009).

Although the process of concentration has been identified as a global trend

(McChesney 2010), a notorious feature particular to Chile is the ideological

homogeneity of the more relevant media outlets as socially conservative and

economically liberal (Otano & Sunkel 2003). Together with a strong centralisation

(where Santiago-based media become national media) this has prompted serious

concerns about the uniformity of the media offer, on the one hand, and the sub-

representation of social and political sectors of the population on the other

(Gonzalez-Rodríguez 2008; Couso 2012). Concentration of media ownership

together with ideological biases become, therefore, an actual threat to freedom of

expression. A recent report on Human Rights in Chile develops the idea in the

following way:

> Whether the media are concentrated by the state or by a small group of
> individuals, the damage caused to the exercise of freedom of expression is the
> same. In both cases society sees violated the quantity and quality of
> information it receives, which according to inter-American standards implies
> an affectation of social, collective and democratic dimensions of freedom of
> expression. Subsequently, the state has the obligation of guaranteeing the
> plurality of voices. (UDP, 2010: 157)[21]

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[21] Own translation from Spanish.

2.4.2. On media independence

When analysing the issues surrounding the implementation and practice of independent news media, the first problematic feature of the Chilean media system during the transition is the existence of regulations that seriously hampered the exercise of an independent press. In 1998, Human Rights Watch elaborated a report which states that, despite Chile's return to a democratic regime, some of the country's laws, institutions and practices were below expected standards.

> One of the fields in which this deficit is critically expressed is the state and protection of free speech. In fact, this report concluded that such freedom is subject to restrictions that perhaps do not have an equivalent among Western democracies. (Human Rights Watch, 1998: 12)

Leon-Dermota (2003) contends that the Chilean political and media systems do not derive from the radical free speech British model but from the continental version. As a result free speech is not seen as an absolute value, and in this conception honour might legally precede public interest. As highlighted by González-Rodríguez (2008), a legal framework that restricted journalistic practice, contrasted with the absolute freedom reigning in media markets. Before the promulgation of the Law on Freedom of Opinion and Information and the Practice of Journalism (2001), generally known as the Press Law, the damage to the honour of a public authority was considered not a civil but a criminal offence. The Press Law of 2001 ended the special protective status granted to the President, ministers, members of Congress, judges and commanders of the Armed Forces, used both under dictatorship and during democracy to prosecute journalists.[22]

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[22] Some of the more notorious cases were those of the banned book *Diplomatic Impunity* (Francisco Martorell, 1993), and *The black book of the Chilean justice* (Alejandra Matus, 1999). For the latter, Chile was sued in the Inter-American Human Rights Court.

Despite this, there are other provisions within the Chilean regulatory framework that still criminalise insults under the penal code, discouraging adversarial coverage (Bresnahan 2003; Cabalin-Quijada & Lagos-Lira 2009).

Having a vocal policy of non-intervention, the Chilean state has actually played a role in shaping the media environment, both by actions and omissions. A well-known case is the financial support received by newspaper chains El Mercurio SA and Copesa under the military regime. In the early 1980s, during times of severe financial crisis in Chile, both companies were rescued by the state through the acquisition of debt. These debts were repeatedly renegotiated, with very favourable terms for the companies, and finally were sold to private banks during the last days of the dictatorship for a fraction of the original amount. The regime's allies orchestrated these transactions in order to "safeguard" these news organisations from possible state-interventions, causing fiscal damage worth US$25 million. Additionally, the regime secured a flow of public advertising towards these companies, since part of the previous debt was alleviated through an agreement of future public advertising exchanges[23] (for a detailed description of these events see Leon-Dermota, 2003; Monckeberg, 2009; Herrero, 2014). During the *Concertación* years, around 50 per cent of public advertising kept flowing towards El Mercurio SA, a policy defended on the basis that decisions on publicity allocation were made specifically over circulation criteria (Herrero 2014). Thus, state policies have favoured two politically influential media outlets with open allegiance to the political right and neoliberal economics, to the

[23] According to Monckeberg (2009), just before the new elected authorities entered into government, Copesa alleviated the debt with the State Bank through 71.447 UF in agreements of state publicity, an amount that in the case of El Mercurio went up to 112.600 UF. In current exchange values, this exceeds 2 and 4 million US dollars respectively.

detriment of independent actors that have called, in vain, for state support over the past decades.

In addition to state regulations and financial aid, there is a third intervening factor in the relationship between politics and the media in Chile in recent times, one that is certainly more difficult to measure, but equally prominent in recent analysis. The effective discourse on political consensus that permeated institutions during the nineties and early noughties might have had an additional impact on the political disengagement of news organisations. Otano and Sunkel (2003) suggest that after the recovery of democracy various topics, ranging from human rights violations to economic policy, were placed off limits under a tacit agreement between news organisations and stories were only considered "journalistically correct" if they did not jeopardise the fragile political stability. The notion of what is "journalistically correct", the argument continues, was enforced through direct political pressures on news organisations, as well as acts of naturalised self-censorship (Otano & Sunkel 2003; Leon-Dermota 2003).

Other scholars go further, arguing that the deactivation of an adversarial press was the result of a conscious policy of abandonment of the media to the rules of the market. Robert Mc Chesney (1999) notably elaborates on the Chilean case as an emblematic example of neoliberal policies "hollowing out" democracy, contributing to political apathy by depicting social demobilization as a desirable outcome and a sign of social peace and economic progress.

In sum, by creating an environment highly responsive to investors on the one hand, and restrictive conditions to the development of the press on the other, the state has not played the neutral role it has claimed, but actually contributed to the

impoverishment of the media and the prevailing lack of diversity in editorial projects (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Leon-Dermota 2003; Bresnahan 2003).

2.4.3. Chilean journalism: in search of professional identity

As a natural correlate of the political deactivation that characterised the transition to democracy in Chile and the disappearance of politically active news organisations, the transitional press has been described as mostly submissive and respectful towards political elites (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Leon-Dermota 2003). Studies based on surveys and interviews with journalists warn of an uncritical stance towards sources (Santander 2013), conformism and a serious lack of confidence. These are signs of a weak professional culture that would give way to political and economic pressures (Gronemeyer 2002). This is, of course, a situation with variation across the whole Chilean journalistic field. Investigative journalism has played a limited but important role in recent years, particularly after the turn of the century and with the exposure of a number of political scandals (Cordero & Marin 2006).

Three lines of analysis stand out in the existing literature about prevailing journalistic cultures in Chile, which directly inform the relationship media professionals have established with political elites in recent years: a tendency to "officialism" in reporting, permeability to political and economic pressures and precarious labour conditions within the profession.

The first line of analysis identifies some practices that are constitutive of a certain professional inertia that remains relatively unchanged and resilient to changes. This line of analysis does not look for answers outside journalism, but rather inwards in order to highlight the "officialist" nature of the trade, a situation that

has seen little if any variations over the years. This thesis finds support in a study conducted by Faure et al. (2011), where randomly selected news articles are analysed in periods of ten years starting in 1971. The study highlights the high stability of professional practices in Chilean journalism over the last decades, despite deep political and social transformations experienced in the country throughout that period. In the different periods studied, the average of sources per news is slightly above one, and 80 per cent of the total sources are official. Thus, frequent complaints about the passivity of the transitional press (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Leon-Dermota 2003; Otano & Sunkel 2003) can at least be partially explained by well-rooted practices of socialisation in newsrooms that have existed for generations, such as a high dependency on press conferences and other information subsidies, and relationships of cooperation within competitors news organisations, both leading towards uniformity of contents (Otano & Sunkel 2003). Leon-Dermota (2003) emphasises that Chilean journalists do not see themselves as advocates of public interest, which explains a non-adversarial journalistic practice. Additionally, there is little sense of the profession as a collective. This would be expressed in the very low participation of journalists in professional organisations (Otano & Sunkel 2003; Mellado 2012).

The second line of analysis points towards high political and economic pressures that would limit the autonomous practice of journalism. The Worlds of Journalism project, in which Chile was one of the surveyed countries, positioned Chilean journalists as those who perceived the highest economic pressures of the whole sample (Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011), above countries such as China and Russia. Political pressures also ranked highly, a finding that the authors explained by the

fact that in Chile "politics and the media are heavily intertwined" (Ibid: 418). Consistent with the previously discussed point, Chilean journalists ranked low for professional influences. According to these studies, pressures would be expressed through different routes, frequently through the commercial or managerial section of news organisations, as well as from politicians, authorities or other third parties (Otano & Sunkel 2003; Sapiezynska et al. 2013). Connecting this permeability to external influences, a common finding in recent studies is the naturalisation of such pressures. These are internalised as normal aspects of the work in news organisations and lead towards practices of self-censorship or self-regulation, a defensive reaction of journalists anticipating possible negative reactions (Gronemeyer 2002; Otano & Sunkel 2003; Lagos & Cabalin 2009; Faure et al. 2011; Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011; Lagos & Cabalin 2013). This situation further contributes to a low professional consciousness about the risks of instrumentalization (Santander 2013).

Finally, the third line of analysis highlights the precariousness of journalistic labour in Chile. Low salaries, low professional status and limited job opportunities[24] contribute to an adverse scenario for the normative demands placed upon journalists from academic circles, as eloquently put by Lagos and Cabalin (2013):

> (...) the figure of the reporter linked to public affairs, to concerns about the processes of democratic construction and the development of a certain intellectuality, is overwhelmed by low salaries and precarious work conditions; the vertigo of scale news production in a framework of brutal competition for advertising and audiences, in addition to the gradual loss of prestige of the media in general, and the profession, in particular. (Ibid: 11)

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[24] Journalism became a popular career choice around the turn of the century, which encouraged the increase of related degrees. According to Lagos and Cabalin (2013), they counted 30 Journalism Departments in Chile in 2011, and more than 40 programs of study for the training of future journalists.

A survey carried out among journalists working at the national level between 2008-2009 shows that among journalists working full-time, 39 per cent received salaries ranging between US$1000 and US$2000 per month, with 31 per cent of journalists earning less than US$1000. In addition, 35 per cent supplemented their income with additional part time jobs in corporate communications or university education (Mellado 2012).

The three lines of analysis outlined above are often found together. It is not difficult to see how they mutually reinforce each other, configuring a political, social and organisational environment, reinforced in well-rooted practices that had hindered rather than promoted the role expected from the field in the process of democratisation.

2.5.   Conclusions

This background chapter has outlined the status of the political and media systems in Chile, paying particular attention to dimensions of the democratisation process that are relevant to understanding the local political culture.

Central to this analysis is the recognition that the quality of the political and economic model built over the last two decades is currently being called into question. This questioning transcends the legal-procedural dimension, where it is certainly possible to evidence how authoritarian enclaves have been progressively removed in order to offer greater guarantees of representativeness to the population. Still, political elites who have guided the process and who still populate the public sector appear deeply questioned in their ability to mediate between the state and society at large. In addition, recent events lend support to

the idea that civil society has regained a vocation to impact political processes, mainly by challenging the elite and their arrangements.

With regards to news media institutions, the diagnosis is similar. Important regulatory changes such as the Press Law of 2001 or the Transparency and Information Access Law of 2008 have created a regulatory framework that formally protects access and dissemination of public information. Nonetheless, these changes have not necessarily translated into a better assessment of the democratic performance of news organisations. This is initially explained because of structural conditions: a prominent commercial orientation and patterns of media ownership that have not favoured political diversity or pluralism. Additionally, while the journalistic field has experienced a process of professionalisation, at the same time it appears responsive to pressures and a professional group with feeble working conditions.

The analysis of the transitional process evolves, therefore, to incorporate second-generation problems of democracy, highlighting democratic deficits that pose new challenges. Crucial in this regard is recognizing that the configuration of the news media system, together with the ways in which political elites communicate with the public, is also one of these challenges, one that is usually overlooked.

The relationship between politics and the media appears therefore as a relationship between two institutions under scrutiny, particularly in terms of their ability to represent the interest of the majority of Chileans. In this context, how can research better understand the process of adaptation of political elites to the centrality of mass media? In the next chapter, the theoretical foundations of the

mediatization theory will be discussed, in order to define an argument about the mediatization of political elites in Chile.

CHAPTER 3

MEDIATIZATION OF POLITICS:

LOGICS OF ACTION, AUTONOMY AND CONTROL

As already stated in the Introduction Chapter (sections 1.1 and 1.3), this thesis adopts an institutionalist understanding of mediatization. The institutionalist approach is a variant within a wider debate on the idea of mediatization, an emergent theory that conceptualises and studies the media as vectors of social change (Hjarvard 2008; Schrott 2009; Hepp et al. 2015). The institutionalist variant of mediatization pays particular attention to journalistic news media as institutions with more or less stable sets of rules, interacting with political institutions that operate according to different sets of rules.[25] In this vein, this study focuses on how the mediatization of political elites has developed in Chile, understanding this process as the result of the interactions between actors inhabiting both institutional domains. This chapter develops a theoretical framework to understand this relationship.

In order to advance the argument about the mediatization of political elites in Chile, the first section of the chapter (3.1) establishes the theoretical foundations of the mediatization of politics process, paying special attention to the process of emergence of the news media as a social institution (Thompson 1995; Hallin & Mancini 2004). Later, it argues that an institutionalist perspective appears well suited to the inspection of relationships between the news media and political

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[25] Some of the main proponents identified within this tradition and regular contributors to current scholarship are Mazzoleni & Schulz (1999), Schulz (2004), Strömbäck (2008), Kunelius and Reunanen (2011), Hjarvard (2013), Esser (2014), Asp (2014).

actors, by paying attention to the institutional frameworks or logics of action that inform actors' interactions (Friedland & Alford 1991; March & Olsen 2006), as well as bridging micro, meso and macro levels of analysis (Thornton et al. 2012; Hjarvard 2013).

The second section of the chapter (3.2) discusses four key dimensions of the mediatization of politics debate: (1) institutional logics of action, (2) the concept of institutional autonomy, (3) institutional resources and (4) the adaptive responses of political actors and institutions. Out of this discussion, a working definition of mediatization of politics will be formulated as:

> Mediatization of politics is the process activated within political institutions as a result of increasing institutional autonomy of the news media (1) and the necessity of mediated visibility (4), in which the actions and decisions of political actors, organisations and institutions are adjusted (3) to news media logics (2).

Using this definition as a baseline, the third section (3.3) of the chapter will argue that there are elements lending support to the idea that the communication practices of Chilean political elites have become mediatized. Nonetheless, some under-explored areas will be identified, in particular those related to the adaptive practices of political elites, activated as a result of this process. This is the specific research gap this thesis will address.

The main contention of the chapter is that the framework provided by mediatization theory is useful to understand recent changes in Chilean politics, and to analyse political elites' relationships with the media as a subject that has been seriously under-explored.

3.1   What is the mediatization of politics: theoretical foundations

Mediatization has emerged as a theory about the transformative power of the media in different spheres of social life. As such, mediatization research is focused on the interrelation between changes in media and communication, on the one hand, and changes between and within societal fields, on the other hand (Hjarvard 2008; Schrott 2009; Hepp et al. 2015). At a general level, mediatization is an integrative concept that offers a guiding analytical framework for looking into the relationship between media and social change (Couldry & Hepp 2013).

The extensive theoretical debate about mediatization developed with particular intensity over the past decade has recognized at least three emergent approaches to understanding this societal process. They share some general assumptions about the way the media transform social interaction. However, they differ from each other in terms of how they understand 'the media', as well as in their reliance on distinct theoretical frameworks. These approaches are the culturalist perspective, the material perspective and the institutionalist perspective, the latter more commonly used within Political Communication and Journalism Studies (for a discussion of these approaches, see Couldry & Hepp 2013; Lundby 2014). This thesis adheres to an institutionalist understanding of mediatization theory, which sees the media as an institution that has acquired increasing centrality and autonomy in society, triggering changes in their interactions with other social institutions. Stig Hjarvard (2008, 2013) defines mediatization as follows:

> By the mediatization of culture and society we understand the process whereby culture and society to an increasing degree become dependent on the media and their logic. This process is characterised by a duality, in that the media have become integrated into the operations of other social

institutions and cultural spheres, while also acquiring the status of social institutions in their own right. (Hjarvard, 2013: 17)

This emerging theoretical framework allows for an observation of what Schrott (2009) defines as "the mechanism of institutionalization of media logic in other societal subsystems" (Ibid: 42). A similar concern is expressed by Thompson (1995), when discussing the process of '*mediaization*' as one concurrent with modernity and conducive to aesthetic, organisational and technological operating forms of the media to shape social interactions between institutions.

When this framework is applied to the intersection of politics and the media, mediatization of politics refers to the process by which political actors and institutions become increasingly dependent on the media and their logic, a process based on dependence on communication resources that would bring about changes in the way politics is organised and conducted (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Bennett & Entman 2001; Meyer 2002; Strömbäck 2008; Hjarvard 2013; Esser & Strömbäck 2014).

The development of the debate about the mediatization of politics is relatively recent and often associated with the work of Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) and their thesis on mediatized politics as "politics that has lost its autonomy, has become dependent in its central functions on mass media, and is continuously shaped by interactions with mass media" (Ibid: 250). As such, the *mediatization* of politics should be clearly distinguished from the *mediation* of politics, the latter referring to the media as a nodal point, bridge or conduit between sources, events and audiences. Mediatization theory, instead, acknowledges that the media institution is not ineffectual but imposes rules of representation on politics and, in

doing so, produces some "spill-over effects on political processes, institutions, organizations and actors" (Esser & Strömbäck 2014: 6).

It is important to recognize that core questions posed by the debate about the mediatization of politics stem from a longer tradition in Political Communication research that seeks to understand how political practices and processes are modified through interaction with communication processes. Already in 1965, Douglass Cater discussed what he understood as a shift in the way power is exercised within the U.S. Government as a consequence of the prominent role acquired by political reporters in Washington DC, a shift that went "to the very core of policy formulation" (Cater, 1965: 11), turning the news media into a *de facto* fourth branch of government. This offers an early example within a thread of Anglo-American research that explores the interactions between the media and political institutions, and the consequences of these interactions for the exercise of politics and the quality of democracy (cf. Seymour-Ure 1974; Altheide & Snow 1979; Linsky 1986).

In recent years, this debate has certainly expanded, as a result of what has been interpreted as the increasing centrality of media and communications within different aspects of politics. This new intensity of media presence in society (Hjarvard 2008) is expressed through metaphors about the displacement of politics towards the media domain (Blumler & Kavanagh 1999; Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999): the 'submission' (Hjarvard 2008), 'infiltration' (Entman 2008) or 'colonization' of politics (Meyer 2002; Street 2005) by media rationalities. These assumptions have bred concerns and questions about the quality of public communication (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Bennett &

Entman 2001; Meyer 2002), as well as debates about whether these reactions among political institutions should be described with a vocabulary that denotes a certain degree of passivity on the part of actors and institutions that are usually motivated by particular interests, and are able to exert influence in news organisations (Deacon & Stanyer 2014; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014).

In colloquial use, the word 'mediatization' is often equated with what is staged (a media event) or spin-doctored in the interest of attaining publicity. In such a conceptualization, the word is used as a pejorative. However, there is agreement among scholars in stating that mediatization is a normatively neutral concept, and therefore any normative implications of the process of mediatization in politics should be contextually discussed with empirical antecedents (Hjarvard, 2008; Strömbäck, 2008; Kunelius & Reunanen, 2012). As with other complex societal processes, mediatization is multi-dimensional, and can be potentially observed across a range of practices; and it is multi-level, as consequences of mediatization might also be discussed and observed at a micro, meso or macro level (Schrott 2009; Hjarvard 2013; Marcinkowski 2014).

The mediatization debate has not been exempt from criticism, particularly on the basis of the media-centrism that suggests and the apparent all-encompassing nature of the concept (Deacon & Stanyer 2014). Recognizing that mediatization is a concept that may be used as an umbrella for a variety of observations, I agree with Hepp et al. (2015) in claiming that mediatization theory has proved fruitful for bridging disciplines, rearticulating important questions about the media and their transformative potential. For the study of mediatization of politics in particular, it is possible to observe how a coherent body of literature has emerged

to guide empirical enquiry that shares a common analytical perspective to analyse the interactions between political and media institutions (cf. Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Schulz 2004; Strömbäck 2008; Esser & Strömbäck 2014).

Reflections about how to improve and refine theoretical understandings and empirical enquiries guided by mediatization theory have come both from scholars who have been active contributors to the debate (Esser and Strömbäck 2014; Hepp at al. 2015), as well as from external voices. In this last group, Deacon & Stanyer (2014) stand out as the most vocal critics of mediatization research and have engaged in a dialogue with 'mediatization converts', expanding on some of the problems and challenges this concept may present. They develop three main areas of criticism that will be briefly addressed below and further expanded in this chapter: the extent to which the media are considered causal agents of socio-political change, how that process of change is to be understood and what attributes are assigned to the concept of mediatization.

Regarding the first point, Deacon & Stanyer (2014) question how causation and power are dealt with in mediatization research. In doing so, they criticise the media-centrism of mediatization theory and how the narrative about mediatization strongly suggests that media actors have gained power in relation to other social actors, in spite of this accrual of power not being fully acknowledged, defined or explained. Furthermore, they claim that by transferring innate power to the agents of mediatization, the field would tend to overlook that mediatization processes interact with other societal processes. I strongly agree with these concerns, which become all the more evident at the time of locating political actors as research subjects and acknowledging that most of their media-

oriented actions are strategic in nature, as has been discussed elsewhere (Elmelund-Praestekaer at al. 2011; Stromback & Van Aelst 2013; Marcinkowski & Steiner, 2014).[26]

Deacon & Stanyer's (2014) second area of criticism relates to how the process of change associated with mediatization can be understood, considering that not all research conducted under this paradigm offers diachronic or comparative perspectives. As a result, they pose the question about where to locate the beginning of this process and how to offer a solid foundation or description of mediatization processes. This thesis is based on a synchronic study, and therefore does not seek to compare or measure mediatization levels over time as a primary objective. Having said that, mediatization is here understood as a process, although not necessarily a linear one. Instead, it is a process resulting from the interactions between media and political actors and strongly interwoven with a particular social and political context. Furthermore, the assumptions of linearity in mediatization processes will be discussed against the framework of differentiation theory in section 3.1.1.

Finally, the third area of criticism raised by Deacon & Stanyer (2014) is that of how the concept of mediatization has been constructed and the risk of it becoming a pseudo-universal. For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of mediatization of politics is primarily understood as a *guiding framework* for an exploratory enquiry about the interactions between the institutions of media and politics in the Chilean context, where media refers to journalistic news media, and politics refers to traditional political actors, such as members of Parliament, Government and

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[26] I will further discuss my position regarding how power relations are to be better understood in the relationship between media and political actors in section 3.2.

political parties. By locating this study within the mediatization framework, empirical enquiry is then directed towards an exploration of political actors interactions with the news media as well as those potential 'spill-over effects' (Esser & Strömbäck 2014: 240) on political actors associated with the increasing autonomy of the news media institution.

From a functionalist angle, the mediatization of politics is seen only as an analytical perspective made possible by the institutional differentiation of the media, and not a superordinate process of social change (Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014), as catchphrases such as "media democracy" (Meyer 2002) or warnings about "the mediatization of everything" (Livingstone 2009) would seem to imply. The interdependencies between media and politics are well established in the field of Political Communications (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Wolfsfeld 2003), therefore it is not realistic to understand the relationship between media and politics as unidirectional. Certainly, the mediatization of politics implies a direction of change (where media becomes a vector of change onto politics), and that is a chosen analytical perspective. That is the case, nonetheless, as a result of what is perceived both for the research community and political actors themselves[27] as an expanding phenomenon, expressed in the institutionalisation of media logics within the whole spectrum of political institutions. An institutionalist lens allows research to answer questions about reactions to the media from within political institutions, included the relevance attributed to the news media by political actors, which in the Chilean case is on the rise (PNUD 2004, 2015).

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[27] Some studies that emphasize the high responsiveness of political elites to the media across different societies are Davis 2003; Davis 2007; Walgrave 2008; Van Aelst & Walgrave 2011; Reunanen et al. 2010; Kepplinger 2007.

Before moving towards an operationalisation of the concept, some of the more influential traditions that have informed the institutionalist variant of mediatization will first be discussed, in order to theoretically ground the chapter's main argument.

3.1.1 Differentiation theory and the mediatization of politics

The process of mediatization of politics is often introduced and explained within a narrative of modernisation. That is to say, both the increasing importance of the mass media and the consequent reactions in the political system are explained against a historical framework strongly influenced by differentiation theory (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Strömbäck 2008; Schrott 2009; Hjarvard 2013). Differentiation theory emerges from the work of sociologist Emile Durkheim (1893), who identifies the increasing specialisation of human activity as a major social trend in *The Division of Labour in Society*. This work analyses emerging changes in social organisation resulting from the fragmentation of human labour into a "host of special disciplines, each having its purpose, method and ethos" (Ibid: 2). These ideas served to articulate a narrative of modernity as a process of increasing social fragmentation of labour.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) produced one of the more frequently referenced discussions of contemporary media systems against the framework of differentiation theory. They develop a compelling argument for the use of this approach to better understand recent changes within the media, especially the separation between mass media and party politics observed in most European countries in the second half of the twentieth century, and the differentiation in this case is primarily explained as the result of processes of professionalisation and

commercialisation that have driven changes within media systems since. This narrative is also an integral component of the social theory of the media developed by Thompson (1995), who describes the media as a constitutive part of modernity and whose institutional differentiation has triggered profound changes in patterns of communication and social interaction, a process he labels the "*mediaization* of culture" (Ibid: 46).

It is important to note that differentiation theory relies on two central assumptions that are integral to institutionalist descriptions of mediatized politics. First, the differentiation of the mass media implies an important degree of institutional (or system) autonomy. Second, in close connection to the foregoing, the mass media system is able to develop (and export) an operational logic of its own to other societal systems. Both media autonomy and media logic will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, however it is important to briefly unpack these concepts now.

Thinking about the media through the prism of differentiation theory implies imagining the media as a social subsystem that is functionally independent from its environment. That is to say, following Luhmann (2000), as a system that is in charge of defining its structure, organisation and own operational standards. The history of the news media in Western democracies during the 20th century involves a process of differentiation, especially from political parties and other influential groups, a process that is concurrent with the development of commercial media markets and the professionalisation of journalism (Thompson 1995; Hallin & Mancini 2004; Hallin 2005) and political communication (Negrine 1996; 2008). Professionalisation becomes a key driver of the process of

differentiation, a process that is certainly not unique to the news media but common to other societal domains at the time (Dimaggio & Powell 1983). As a result of this historical development, claims for the autonomy of the media are usually grounded precisely on the expansion of commercial media together with the spread of professional standards in the exercise of journalism (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Hallin 2005).

This narrative about the modernisation of media and communications underlies the more important descriptions of mediatized politics. In a nutshell, the observations that lend support to the argument about the mediatization of politics are grounded in the historical differentiation of the mass media as social institutions, together with their increasing centrality. The main contention of the theory is that this ongoing and intensified societal process would activate visible transformations in the institutional domain of politics, whose actors have to accommodate media languages and formats in order to improve chances of visibility in a mediatized democracy.

Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) emphasise that this dependence on media resources is "connatural to modern politics", and situate the beginning of the process during the first age of political communication systems, a phase that Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) locate after World War II, when political communication appears strongly aligned and subordinated to political institutions. Gradually, this status quo would shift in favour of the media institutions, as long as they gained increasing autonomy in establishing the terms of what is communicated and how.

Likewise, the four-stage model of mediatized politics developed by Strömbäck (2008) follows a rather historical rationale: the first phase of mediatized politics

would be reached when politics becomes mediated, that is to say when the media becomes the main channel of communication for the dissemination of political information, "a pre-requisite for the successive stages of mediatization" (Ibid: 236). The second stage in Strömbäck's model corresponds to a movement of the media towards greater independence from political power, a process driven by commercialisation and professionalisation that culminates when the media begins "to be governed according to the media logic, rather than according to any political logic" (Ibid: 237). Finally, the third and fourth phases of the model would be stages of greater media autonomy from political institutions. During these, political actors and institutions have to incorporate media requirements, such as formats, languages and news selection criteria, for their communicational activities, until they eventually lose control over media contents (third stage), and the media logic become "a built-in part of the governing processes" (Ibid: 240), naturalised by political actors (fourth stage). As Strömbäck himself warns, the four-stage model he proposes is based on the development of Western democracies from the period starting after World War II and, although each of the model stages are not identified with specific time periods, it is possible to observe a clear time progression both in the narrative constructed to describe the process, as well as in the references supporting the description of each phase.

This model has been quite influential in the literature about mediatization of politics since its publication but has not been free from criticism, especially on the grounds of the implicit linearity that it entails (Lundby 2009; Hepp 2012; Hjarvard 2013). I argue that the linearity of this idea is actually problematic on two premises. The first one, fairly simple but not unimportant, refers to the

complications of an analytical model that is historically and geographically grounded. It is certainly possible to use a historical perspective to research and describe mediatization processes.[28] However, an analytical framework based on a specific set of historical developments is also of limited transferability to other geographical or cultural contexts.[29] The second problem is the implicit assumption about the ever progressing direction of mediatization, which becomes a modernising force of sorts. In their work on comparative media systems, Hallin and Mancini (2004) discuss at certain length the risks of understanding the relationship between media and political systems from an evolutionary perspective; that is to say, as a normative preference towards ever greater differentiation of the media from politics. They emphasise the complexity of these relationships and the existence of elements that may eventually counterbalance or constrain the development of this process, such as variations among political systems, national legal frameworks or contingent political trends. These concerns have been echoed in the debate on the mediatization of politics, where arguments have been made for avoiding conceptualisations that see mediatization as an advancing universal force (Hepp 2012; Lundby 2009). Commenting on the limitations of the model proposed by Strömbäck, Hjarvard (2013) stresses that "empirical analyses of changing relationships between media and politics not only have to consider variations in a general pattern of mediatization, but the process

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[28] One example of historical analysis about mediatization of politics can be found in the works of Wifjes and Voerman (2009). In a recent defence about the development of mediatization studies, Hepp et al (2015) welcome the emergent field of mediatization history, in particular of those analyses that incorporate historical perspectives on the introduction of new technologies and the transformation of social interactions.

[29] Few empirical works exist applying the framework of mediatization to non-Western contexts. To the analysis of mediatization processes in India, Downey & Neyazi (2014) develop an alternative framework focused on actors (political actors, media actors and mediatized publics). To discuss the mediatization of politics in Venezuela, Block (2013) develops a culturalist approach, based on the concept of media hegemony.

of mediatization of politics itself may be dependent on systemic characteristics in a particular context" (Ibid: 45).

It is fair to say that the emerging mediatization of politics theory has attempted to incorporate some of this criticism, highlighting the fluidity of the process and nuancing early ideas, to reinforce the concept of complementarity among different dimensions (Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011; Esser & Strömbäck 2014).

3.1.2. New institutionalism and the mediatization of politics

As already outlined, the institutionalist variant of mediatization of politics is grounded in the understanding of the media as an autonomous social institution, which shows important degrees of inter-organisational homogeneity due to the spread of common patterns of formal and informal rules that guide actors' behaviour (Sparrow 1999; Schudson 2002; Cook 2005; Benson 2006).

Developed as a theoretical framework to understand and explain institutional change (March & Olsen 1989), an institutionalist approach locates the analysis of the mediatization process at the meso-level. Institutions mediate the impact of macro level forces on micro-level action, bridging between individuals, organisations and society (Friedland & Alford 1991; Ryfe 2006). An institutionalist analysis allows for the location of empirical enquiry on mediatization research within the boundaries of specific institutional domains. Going down the ladder of abstraction that often characterises the debate on mediatization, the new institutionalism offers a locus to understand how institutions change and react to the environment by paying attention to practices, and how identities and interests are institutionally shaped (Friedland & Alford 1991; March & Olsen 2006).

Thinking about the mediatization of politics as a process of institutional change, therefore, implies thinking about how two different institutions – politics and the media – interact and mutually influence each other. March and Olsen (2009) identify the clash between divergent institutional norms as a catalyst of change dynamics, that can be understood "in terms of the organization, interaction, and collision among competing institutional structures, norms, rules, identities and practices" (Ibid:14). The tension between competing institutional logics has indeed been central in the development of an extensive research programme in the field of the sociology of organisations, which pays special attention to shifts in dominant institutional logics as well as complex institutional environments in which a plurality of logics coexist (Thornton et al. 2005; Reay & Hinings 2009; Lounsbury & Boxenbaum 2013).

Before discussing how the new institutionalism informs mediatization research, it is important to look at how institutions are defined and understood within this tradition. An institution "is a web of interrelated norms – formal and informal – governing social relationships" (Nee & Ingram 1998), therefore producing and monitoring what is consensually considered expected behaviour within certain domains. These usually unstated rules are resilient to change, and therefore constrain as well as enable social action. For March & Olsen (2006):

> An institution is a relatively enduring collection of rules and organised practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances (Ibid:3)

Different definitions agree on the existence of rules, both formal (explicit and enforced by sanction) and informal (implicit and based on convention) as

constitutive elements of institutions. These rules – or logics of appropriateness – are seen to guide behaviour by orientating and legitimising action, transferring structure to daily life (March & Olsen 1989; March & Olsen 2006).

The work of Timothy Cook (2005) offers one of the most compelling arguments for thinking of the media as an institution. He explores the premises identified by the new institutionalism as constitutive elements of institutions, in order to argue that the news media qualify as an institution based on the extended prevalence of homogenous news production routines, unspoken and implicit procedures widely shared across news organisations:

> This transorganizational agreement on news processes and content suggests that we should think of the news media not as a set of diverse organizations, or even a batch of individual institutions, but collectively as a single social institution. (Cook 2005: 64)

Cook's argument is, therefore, mostly based on a sociological understanding of institutions, in which actors' behaviour is explained by identity-based rationales, in this case professional rationales that underlie the inner workings of different news organisations. This vision of the news media institution certainly competes with alternative understandings of the media as mostly infused by commercially-based rationales (Sparrow 1999; Bourdieu 2005). These different understandings of the news media resonate with longstanding tensions within neo-institutionalist scholarship between a normative, identity-based approach to explaining action within institutions and a rational market-based approach (for a discussion see Ryfe 2006; Landerer 2013; Asp 2014). The former approach is represented by March and Olsen's logic of appropriateness, which developed a framework for the understanding of human action with clear normative undertones. The latter approach, in contrast, is illustrated by authors such as Nee and Ingram (1988)

whose work aims to understand how institutions shape the parameters of choice and economic action. It can be argued that these alternative analytical perspectives are complementary, not only because arguably different logics inform and guide action in different circumstances (March & Olsen 2009), but also because news organisations are both market and non-market organisations (Asp 2014) that are guided by profit and audience maximisation, as well as informed by an orientation to the public interest.

Within the debate on the mediatization of politics, far less effort has been applied to defining the borders of the political institution, than those of the media institution. This is partly justified because the study of political institutions (generally in the plural) has a long and established scholarly tradition within Political Science.[30] Conversely, the institutional differentiation of the media is a relatively new process, and the product of an increasing awareness that the media have become an autonomous force and, some contend, a constitutive part of politics (Schudson 2002; Cook 2005).

The main contention of the mediatization of politics theory is that there has been a shift in the balance of these mutual influences (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999). As many authors have argued, the state strongly shapes the media institution by means of subsidies, regulation and, probably more important, frequent and institutionalised exchanges between media professionals and official sources (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Cook 2005; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014). However, the differentiation of the media becomes associated with a more autonomous control of the main resource

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[30] Contemporary political institutions are parliaments, government cabinets, judiciaries, bureaucracy or political parties. For an overview of how theories for the study of political institutions have evolved together with political institutions, see Von Beyme (2006).

controlled by the media institution, that of society's collective attention (Hjarvard 2013; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014).

Ultimately, the process of mediatization of politics reflects the struggle of political actors to attain such collective attention, a struggle especially important when high levels of alienation from political institutions appear to be the norm across Western democracies.[31] As expressed by Hjarvard (2014) mediatization is a process "spurred by both the development of the media and the dynamics of a variety of other institutions in which social agents try to make use of the media's resources for their own purposes" (Ibid: 223).

3.2. Main dimensions of mediatized politics: towards a working definition

This section of the chapter explores the main dimensions of the mediatization of politics. A survey of different definitions of the concept in the literature allows for the identification of four constitutive dimensions of the process. These are (a) the idea of media logic (b) the notion of media autonomy, (c) the discussion about the resources controlled by the media and (d) the adaptive responses of political actors. Some of these have received more attention than others, but certainly none have been univocally approached.

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[31] Certainly statistics of approval towards institutions vary across countries and are responsive to context. However, there is strong evidence to suggest a general trend of alienation from political institutions. According to Gallup, in February 2015, 75 per cent of the U.S. population disapproved of the way Congress was handling its job and only 20 per cent approved. According to Eurobarometer, in August 2014, European national governments would be trusted by an average of 29 per cent of each nation's population, and national Parliaments by an average of 30 per cent. According to Latinbarometro, the approval rating for presidents across Latin America has decreased. The average regional approval for the Presidency in 2013 was 49 per cent, following a 4 year decrease. Chile is located at the bottom of the list, with 29 per cent approval.

As an illustration, and in order to offer a visual overview of the way in which this discussion has been conducted, the table below collects some of the more commonly referenced authors participating in the mediatization of politics debate and the way they approach the four identified dimensions:

Dimensions of mediatized politics
(a) Media logic
- As a framework to present and interpret social affairs (Altheide & Snow 1979) - As the modus operandi of the media (Thompson 1995; Hjarvard 2008) - As informed by news values and professional standards (Strömbäck 2008; Asp 2014) - As rules of the game, guiding behaviour, driver of structuration (Schrott 2009; Asp 2014; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014) - As the prominence of market-oriented logic (Landerer 2013) - As composed by professional, commercial and technological dimensions (Esser & Strömbäck 2014a; Esser 2013)
(b) Media autonomy
- What grants to media the status of social institution (Hjarvard, 2008) - Semi-independence from politics (Strömbäck, 2008) - The outcome of functional differentiation of the media (Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014)
(c) Media's resources
- Public attention as main resource controlled by the media (Kunelius and Reunanen, 2012, Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014) - Social agents try to make use of the media's resources for their own purposes (Hjarvard, 2014)
(d) Reactions in politics/ political actors
- Politics has lost autonomy (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999; Schulz 2004), and has become increasingly dependent on communication resources (Hjarvard 2013) - Political actors and institutions adapt to the media logic (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Meyen et al. 2014, Strömbäck, 2008). The media logic is institutionalized in politics (Schrott, 2009) - Media trigger increasing spill-over effects on political processes, institutions, organisations and actors (Esser & Strömbäck 2014a)

In the following sections, these dimensions will be discussed through consideration of the aforementioned literature and additional literature on new institutionalism, in order to develop a working definition that will guide empirical research on the mediatization of Chilean political elites.

3.2.1. On the logics of action and news making

The concept of media logic is core to discussions of the mediatization of politics, and is arguably used with great flexibility across media-related studies. The convergence between media and politics has been often explained in terms of a power confrontation between both spheres, and typically expressed in the idea that the media logic has overpowered the political logic in political institutions and organisations as a result of mediatization processes. While media logic has also been a contested term[32], it acquires greater strength and theoretical coherence within a new institutionalist framework. In this tradition, the logics of action are integral to descriptions of institutionalisation. They are "representations or constraints that influence action in a given domain" (Dimaggio & Powell 1983: 277); "material practices and symbolic constructions", "organising principles" or bases for action, "available to organizations and individuals to elaborate" (Friedland & Alford 1991: 248-249).

The term 'media logic' was first introduced by Altheide and Snow (1979), and later elaborated under the influence of an institutionalist framework, through which mediatization is understood as a process within late modern societies (Thompson

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[32] The concept 'media logic' has been criticized for its generalising nature, on the grounds that presenting a single media logic as inherent to the process of mediatization is a claim of dubious usefulness, that hides or blurs the range of differentiated effects associated to mediatization (see Couldry 2008; Hepp 2012; Lundby 2009). I would argue that this disagreement stems from a different understanding of 'the media' to be studied in different traditions of mediatization research. The idea of institutional media logics might be at odds with technology-driven or culturalist approaches to mediatization research.

1995; Hjarvard 2008). Different authors have used variations of the term, preferring 'media logic' (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Hjarvard 2008; Schrott 2009; Korthagen & Klijn 2012), 'news media logic' (Strömbäck & Esser 2009; Asp 2014), 'mass media logic' (Meyen et al. 2014) or 'news logic' (Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014). These differences are not entirely arbitrary. Instead, they can be read as attempts to better delineate or narrow down the spectrum of properties attached to the concept.

Hjarvard (2008) contends that "the logic of the media refers to the institutional and technological modus operandi of the media, including the ways in which media distribute material and symbolic resources and make use of formal and informal rules" (Ibid:105). The logic of the media in this definition derives directly from the elements that define social institutions, such as material and symbolic resources, as well as explicit and implicit rules guiding individual and organisational action (Dimaggio & Powell 1983; March & Olsen 1989; Friedland & Alford 1991). In this sense, the logic of the media corresponds to the organising principles that guide action within the media as an institution. Nomenclatures such as news media logic and mass media logic basically emphasise the fact that "the media", in this understanding, are "socio-technological organizations and institutions" (Esser & Strömbäck 2014) that present important degrees of homogeneity in their goals, routines and institutional arrangements (Cook 2005).

Operationalizing the logic of the media has, nonetheless, proved a far more challenging task. Most accounts collapse multiple dimensions into the notion of media logic. Meyer (2002) refers to media routines (what is news and how is presented), media economics and a distinct notion of time as the key guiding

principles dominating news media organisations. Esser (2013) and later Esser and Strömbäck (2014) link media logic to the logic of appropriateness (March & Olsen 2006), or rules that organise the media institutional sphere, and contend that this is a construct formed by professional (journalistic criteria), commercial (economically motivated rationales) and technological (medium-specific conditions) elements shaping news production. Asp (2014) focuses on professional norms and standards in which both market and non-market considerations have to be incorporated by those who operate within the media institution. Landerer (2013) takes a greater diversion to reconceptualise mediatization as the dominance of market-oriented logics in both the media and politics.

I argue that both the news media and political institutions are pluralistic institutional environments. That is to say, hybrid institutions in which multiple internal logics have to be balanced on a daily basis. The tensions between professional and market considerations have been widely acknowledged in journalism studies. As previously discussed, both commercialisation and professionalisation are key drivers for the emergence of the media as a modern institution, and several authors acknowledge that commercial influences often dominate the operations of modern media (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Hallin 2005; Strömbäck 2008; McManus 2009; Landerer 2013), which has resulted in the erosion of professional journalistic logics (Franklin 2005; Hallin 2005; Davies 2008). This tension is also the basis for the bleak evaluation made by Bourdieu (2005) on the state of the journalistic field, which he regards as highly heteronomous, that is to say pretty much permeable to political and economic

pressures. He contends that, as a result of this situation a certain journalism "increasingly dominated by commercial values, is expanding its domination over other fields" (Bourdieu 2005: 33).

This macro-level analysis of the commercialisation of the media is not at odds with the conceptualisation of the news media as a distinct social institution which, as Bourdieu (2005) contends, cannot be explained only by exogenous factors, and whose spaces of autonomy are often built against commercial logics.

It proves to be useful, in this regard, to look at the development of institutional theory beyond media studies, where empirical research at the meso and micro-level of interactions has been conducted to inquire how organisations and individuals accommodate and select competing institutional logics in hybrid environments (Pache & Santos 2012), or how professional logics are balanced against market logics in a variety of industries (Thornton 2002; Thornton et al. 2005). On the one hand, these studies show that institutional logics shift over time. On the other hand, they establish how complex modern institutions operate under multiple, sometimes contradictory, internal logics.

News media logic will be understood here as a *theoretical construct that encompasses professional, commercial and technological considerations shaping news production within modern media*. Defining news media logic as a theoretical construct has the objective of acknowledging the hybridity and complexity of an institutional logic built upon a variety of inputs. This definition is grounded in an institutional logics perspective, which recognises variation in the salience of the different components of institutional logics (Lounsbury & Boxenbaum 2013; Thornton et al. 2005). Being a hybrid logic encompassing professional, commercial

and technological considerations, the news media logic is certainly not monolithic, but open to variations between media organizations, as well as over time. For example, between media organizations that operate with a public remit versus commercially-oriented news organizations; or within media organizations operating on different technological platforms. From the perspective of a study that locates political actors as its main research subjects, what becomes more important is understanding how actors understand and interact with this external logic, rather than measuring their 'levels' of media logic, which would become a problematic endeavour. In this respect, it is useful to look at how the media logic has been operationalized and/or measured in previous research, especially how any measurement attempt necessarily implies a simplification and fragmentation of the concept of media logic outlined above. On the one hand, most studies aimed at observing media logic in media contents, often resort to an additional conceptual tool, that of media interventionism (Strömbäck & Esser 2009), and hence pay attention to the ability of journalists to distance themselves from politicians and embracing interpretive styles of reporting (Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011; Cushion & Thomas 2013; Mellado & Rafter 2014; Negrine & Bull 2014). On the other hand, those studies aimed at observing how political actors relate to the news media logic generally do not attempt to measure levels of media logic but to understand political actors' perceptions (Strömbäck 2011; Elmelund-Praestekaer et al. 2011) or uses (Kunelius & Reunanen 2011) of the media. Those who have presented quantifications of the media logic in studies focused on actors have done so by reducing the media logic to some of its components or assumed consequences, such as political actors' audience-oriented practices (Landerer 2014) or the negative coverage of policy issues (Korthagen & Klijn 2012).

As it can be noted, the definition of news media logic guiding this study recognises news making as the embodiment of the news media logic from the perspective of daily practice; the "organizing principle" (Friedland & Alford 1991) of the media institution. In this regard, it follows Thorbjornsrud et al. (2014), who favour the term 'news logic' in their study about the mediatization of bureaucracies, highlighting that "the rules of the news can be regarded as being premised on what new institutionalism labels a logic of appropriateness: they tend to be regarded as self-evident, given, natural and therefore not the object of deliberation" (Ibid: 7). New institutionalism elaborates rule-following as the basic logic of action within institutions. For March and Olsen (2006), these rules are "prescriptions based on a logic of appropriateness and a sense of rights and obligations derived from an identity" (Ibid: 7) to a community, which shows a distinctive ethos, practices, and expectations. News production is also based on mostly implicit rule-following; unspoken procedures, routines, assumptions and values "that are rarely explicit and must be found between the lines – in what actors and activities are reported or ignored, and in how they are described (Gans 1979: 39-40). These daily routines, selection criteria and decisions about newsworthiness "are embodied and inseparable from the daily work routines, which are understood to be the 'natural' way to gather news" (Cook 2005: 76).

Thinking about news making as the embodiment of such a news media logic does not imply a focus on text or format. It is a way of making this logic observable in concrete interactions between political institutions, organisations and individuals. The main driver of mediatization within the institutionalist framework is "the tension or interaction between the expanding media and other institutions with

their different logics" (Lundby 2014: 10). As a result, empirical enquiry demands the identification of the logics of action that organise interactions in the political domain, which is the focus of the next subsection.

3.2.1.1.   On the logics of action and political decision making

Applying the same analytical framework to study the political institution (in the singular) is not completely unproblematic. Political institutions (in the plural) are often the object of detailed study, which explores the distinction of a variety of institutional settings ranging from political parties to legislatures, governments to bureaucracies, and constitutions to judiciaries (see Rhodes et al. 2006).

The object of this work is the study of the mediatization of Chilean political elites, which can be characterized as a group of individuals holding positions in a variety of political institutions –national government, Congress and political parties (hereafter referred to as 'party politics'). As such, political elites are members of organised groups with a vocation of political power that have led some of the main political institutions in the country. As discussed in the previous chapter, Chilean political elites show a relatively homogenous social composition (Joignant 2009; Espinoza 2010; Cordero & Funk 2011) and have dominated public positions under two stable political coalitions since the recovery of democracy. Grouped together, party politics is a pluralist institutional environment, informed by and accustomed to regular conflict among a variety of internal and external institutional logics.[33]

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[33] In the Chilean case, one of the more salient tensions within the political elite in the post-authoritarian period has been that between the so-called professional politicians and those politicians with strong technical backgrounds, generally economics. This tension elevated the importance of the "technopols", a group that held key positions and acted as brokers between these different factions (Joignant 2009; Delamaza 2013).

Indeed, it is an institution whose mission is to manage and search for solutions to such conflicts, through deliberation and binding decision-making.

Following Meyer (2002), Esser (2013) identifies three main dimensions of political logic: policy, politics and polity aspects. The first one is described as the production side of politics and the search for long-term solutions to politically-defined problems. The second one is characterised as a power-oriented facet, concerned with self-presentation and the constant effort to gain acceptance. The third one relates to the institutional framework of a given political system, which limits the actions of actors (Meyer 2002; Esser 2013).

Similarly to the abstraction of news media logic, it is possible to appreciate that political logic is also a hybrid that collapses into one concept a variety of dimensions that might be more or less salient in specific institutional settings, political organisations or periods of time (for example,. elections vs. non-electoral times). Therefore, political logic is an abstract construct that encompasses *political, policy and polity considerations shaping political decision making* processes in modern democracies.

In early conceptualizations of the mediatization of politics, the clash between media and political logics has often been portrayed as a matter of either/or, where one logic advances to the detriment of the other (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Strömbäck 2008; Schrott 2009). Certainly, there are important tensions between media and political rationalities due to differences of timing and priorities; a 24/7 news cycle and constant media scrutiny appears clearly discordant with years-long policy cycles and episodic, fragmented and archetypical media coverage clashes with lengthy, sometimes erratic and demanding bargaining processes in

multi-actor settings (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Meyer 2002; Cook 2005; Strömbäck 2008).

Acknowledging these tensions, the underlying assumption that the mediatization of politics is a zero-sum game when more media logic implies less political logic has received wide criticism (Hepp 2012; Thesen 2013; Downey & Neyazi 2014; Marcinkowski 2014; Hepp et al. 2015). I argue that this criticism is justified by the very nature of the political logic, which includes a power-oriented facet demanding persuasion and visibility. This *per se* political facet of politics is not separate from but integral to policy-making and the polity within which it operates. In other words, political actors' ability to influence policymaking is dependent upon their ability to attain visibility, mobilise support and remain in power (Stone 2012). Acknowledging the agency of political actors and the interests they carry into their relationship with the media implies recognizing an important performative dimension of politics that cannot be regarded as a media effect. Instead, it is a dimension of politics that often finds great synergy with the news media logic, and anticipates a tendency towards the institutional coupling of media and politics[34], the implications of which require further empirical study.

In this regard, research traditions such as agenda-setting[35] tend to conceptualise political actors as much more active and strategic in their relationship to the

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[34] Luhman refers to the "structural coupling" between media and the political system, a macro level interdependency that reflects a constant loop of discomfort. Politics benefits from media publicity but is, at the same time, "irritated" by the media. In this understanding, "the same communications have at once a political and a mass media relevance" (Luhmann 2000: 67).

[35] The portion of agenda-setting research that is most relevant for this study is that of agenda-building, which pays attention to the process of message construction (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007) by examining the influence of political sources in the making of news agendas (Tedesco 2011; Cobb & Elder 1971). The most common agenda-setting function of the mass-media, though, is an area of enquiry initiated after the publication of McCombs & Shaw (1972) which refers to the transfer of salience between the agenda of the media and that of public opinion. McCombs (2014) himself seldom

media than mediatization research suggests (Thesen 2013; Van Aelst et al. 2014), especially during processes of agenda-building, where attention is paid to the role played by political sources, comprising individual actors and organised groups, in the shaping of the media agenda (Cobb & Elder 1971). In this situation the media are often seen as a resource used by these actors and one of the main targets of political PR (Tedesco 2011; Knotts Martinelli 2011).

3.2.2. The issue of media autonomy

Mentions of increasing autonomy for the news media institution, and decreasing autonomy for political institutions, as a result of mediatization processes are a second major theme in the literature (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Schrott 2009; Strömbäck 2011b). The aim of this section is to revisit the grounds on which these claims are made, arguing that an unacknowledged tension regarding the meaning of the news media's institutional autonomy has transformed this issue into a matter of contention.

From a functional perspective, the autonomy of the media relates to the ability of the media to differentiate themselves from other systems in its environment and emerge as an independent, and therefore observable, system. This argument is supported by systems theory, in which the autonomy of a given system does not imply self-sufficiency (systems are not separate from the environment) but rather "self-reproduction, self-organization, structural determination and, along with all these, operational closure" (Luhmann 2000: 23). According to this argument, the media are functionally different –and therefore autonomous – since the media

uses the term agenda-building, but nevertheless discusses the role of news sources as one intervenient element in the construction of news, to which he adds the agendas of other media outlets and journalistic news values (Ibid: 113).

perform some social functions that are unique to the system and different to the functions performed by other systems (Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014). For Luhmann (2000), the general role of the mass media system is the construction of social reality.[36] Systems theory stresses the interdependency of different societal systems. And therefore, autonomy becomes functional, and depends on the ability of the system to reproduce over time, maintaining its symbolic borders:

> The impossibility of external control and influence does not mean that societal systems are isolated from each other or self- sufficient. A (social) system is not called autonomous if or because it is entirely independent from its environment; rather is it autonomous if it is able to select certain areas in its environment from which it gets certain impacts and at the same time is able to shield from influences of other environmental areas. (Görke & Scholl: 2006, 647)

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the institutionalist stance on mediatization also derives from differentiation theory, therefore the greater independency or autonomy of the media (both terms are used interchangeably by scholars) is the result of processes of modernisation (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Hjarvard 2008; Strömbäck 2008) and of institutionalisation. The media "becomes a social institution in their own right" (Hjarvard 2008: 113), an institution invested with autonomy by means of defining formal and informal rules (such as media regulations and routines of news production), managing material and symbolic resources (such as advertising and steering of society's collective attention) and presenting important degrees of homogeneity in their practices and operational criteria (Dimaggio & Powell 1983; Benson 2006; Hjarvard 2013).

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[36] In "The reality of the mass media", Luhmann (2000) distinguishes between three components of the media system: news and in-depth reporting, advertising and entertainment. He contends that the code –or unity of difference- of the system as a whole is information/ non-information. News/non-news is the selection criterion of the first of these components.

Historical analyses show that the media's institutional autonomy has been driven by parallel processes of professionalisation and commercialisation (Thompson 1995; Hallin & Mancini 2004). These processes allow the emergence of the media institution as autonomous, but do not insulate the media from external pressures, particularly politics and the market. In this respect, the work of Bourdieu has been key to avoiding an evolutionary understanding of institutions, since it visualizes field autonomy as a permanent struggle, where change is not unidirectional (Champagne 2005; Bourdieu 2005). Taking this into consideration, media autonomy will be understood here as a constant struggle rather than a fully achieved pre-condition of institutional existence. References to the semi-autonomous media field (Benson 2006) or the semi-independent media institution (Strömbäck 2008; Hjarvard 2013) reflect this paradox. As stressed by Strömbäck (2008) the semi-autonomy assumption translates, in practice, into the ability of the press to self-define parameters of political content and especially to offer some resistance against political influence in the news.

This paradox is certainly not unique to media sociology. In democratic theory, autonomy is defined as "to be not under the control of another" (Dahl 1982: 16), and therefore opposed to or complemented by control. Dahl prefers to speak about "relative autonomy", under the premise that an institution can neither control everything nor lose control of everything.

> An organization is relatively autonomous if it undertakes actions that (a) are considered harmful by another organization and that (b) no other organization, including the government or the state, can prevent, or could prevent except by incurring in costs so high as to exceed the gains to the actors from doing so. (Dahl 1982: 26)

This definition introduces an important element in considering a normative notion of autonomy that is complementary yet different to the notion of functional or institutional autonomy. In order to be considered autonomous, an organisation should be potentially damaging to another without risking external intervention or, in other words, should be able to assert some external force on another institution without becoming vulnerable by doing so. When analysed from the perspective of differentiation theory, autonomy is treated as mostly functional and power relations are often under-explored. Conversely, when analysed from the perspective of democratisation, media autonomy usually acquires a normative dimension and power relations become more apparent. Dahl's definition of autonomy is more clearly connected to values of independence and the public service orientation of journalistic professionalisation, and therefore opposed to the instrumentalisation of the news media by states, political parties, oligarchs or corporations.

This distinction is important because questions about the autonomy of the media from the perspective of democratisation often rely on a certain type of news media autonomy, mostly or prominently based on professionalisation and commitment to social responsibility. Questions about the autonomy of the media from the perspective of mediatization (related to the institutionalisation of the media), however, are less concerned about the quality of media autonomy and acknowledge media institutional autonomy as the outcome of their interactions with other social institutions. This is why it has been repeatedly defined as a normative neutral concept (Kunelius & Reunanen 2012; Hjarvard 2013). However, news media autonomy is continuously disputed, and as it is historically and

contextually-defined, it is therefore bounded by a specific set of variables. A media system where autonomy derives mostly from commercial rationales will be different from a media system whose autonomy is more firmly rooted in rationales of public orientation (see Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011). The quality of media autonomy will have an impact on the quality of the mediatization of politics. However, these are normative implications of a process that is considered non-normative.

3.2.3. About media resources

A third relevant strand for this discussion about the mediatization of politics is that of the resources controlled by the media institution. This is an area not fully integrated into recent theoretical and empirical studies under the mediatization framework (for an exception see Kunelius & Reunanen 2012), but nonetheless identified as a driver of this process. This is to say that assimilation of, or adaptation to, news media logics within political institutions is not happenstance but a reaction to the greater relevance of media visibility across institutional fields. Attention to the nature of these resources and the impact they have in the political domain helps illuminate the question of why the mediatization of politics is such a pervasive phenomenon in contemporary societies.

Institutions control and allocate both material and symbolic resources (Dimaggio & Powell 1983; March & Olsen 1984). They are embedded in structures of material resources (financial, technological, organisational) that make action possible (March & Olsen 2009) and, at the same time, they allocate resources that enable and constrain actors. One of the premises of the mediatization concept is that politics has become dependent on some of these media-controlled resources and

is reliant on them to perform some of its functions (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Hjarvard 2008).

The management of visibility through the media is a long-standing and binding feature of modern politics and the starting point for a whole industry of press and communications management (Cater 1965; Gans 1979; Negrine 1996; Blumler & Kavanagh 1999; Seymour-Ure 2003; Cook 2005). This field-level reaction to media management is, indeed, a testament to the mediatization process itself and, according to Marcinkowski (2014), a response to the notorious lack of public attention that democratic politics receives in contemporary societies.

This viewpoint is resonant with Thompson's (1995, 2005) discussion about the new form of visibility created by changes in contemporary media and communications. The evolution and expansion of the media landscape has transformed mediated visibility into a crucial arena for the steering of societal attention, one that can hardly be ignored:

> The inability to achieve visibility through the media can confine one to obscurity – and, in the worst cases, can lead to a kind of death by neglect. Hence it is not surprising that struggles for visibility have come to assume such significance in our societies today. Mediated visibility is not just a vehicle through which aspects of social and political life are brought to the attention of others: it has become a principal means by which social and political struggles are articulated and carried out. (Thompson 2005: 49)

Starting with the questions of 'why does mediatization happen?' and 'what is the resource controlled by the media?', Kuenlius and Reunanen (2012) re-define mediatization in relation to that resource, which they identify as the controlling of public attention: "[mediatization is] the increasing influence of public attention (as the generalised medium of the media) in other fields and institutional domains" (Ibid, 12).

Thompson (1995) refers to this capacity as the symbolic power of the media institution, a form of capital that is not merely figurative but may have material consequences, for example changing the course of events and decisions or influencing actions. In this respect, the transferability of media capital into other forms of capital (such as economic or political) is one of the more promising avenues for mediatization research. Kunelius and Reunanen (2012) emphasise that media visibility might become a desirable and even indispensable resource in different subsystems. Driessen's (2013) study on celebrity, which he defines as an accumulation of media visibility, points in a similar direction by stressing how celebrity capital migrates to other social fields and is transformed into an intra-fields form of capital.

Certainly, media visibility is a double-edged resource that might have positive and negative impacts on political actors (Thompson 2005), but it is precisely because of this that news media logics are increasingly migrating and being translated into different institutional domains. Ultimately, the news media's ability to point at and render issues visible is assumed to have consequences in the political field and broader society.

3.2.4. Adaptive responses: submission or attempts at control?

A final common thread in the literature is the adaptive responses of political institutions, organisations and actors to the institutionalisation of media logics in the political domain (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Schulz 2004; Hjarvard 2008; Strömbäck 2008; Schrott 2009; Esser 2013). The identification and understanding of these reactions have indeed been the main objects of empirical study in the field.

It is possible to observe some tension between media-centred approaches to mediatization, especially common in macro-level conceptualisations of the process in which political actors are described as submitting to the media logic (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999) or being governed by the media logic (Strömbäck 2008), and actor-centred approaches under which political actors are seen as making active use of the media for their own purposes (Stromback & Van Aelst 2013; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014).

At an empirical level, media-centred approaches usually focus on analysing variations in media content, through longitudinal or comparative analyses that might show degrees of mediatization, in terms of the news media's greater ability to define their own content (Kepplinger 2002; Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011; Cushion & Thomas 2013). Actor-centred studies, instead, have focused on understanding the processes of mediatization from the perspective of political actors, as well as the implications of mediatization for political institutions (Kunelius & Reunanen 2011; Strömbäck 2011a; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014). Schulz (2014) exposes the main features of the latter approach as:

the actor-centred perspective implies two prepositions: first, political actors and organizations anticipate that the media will operate in a specific way and adapt to the opportunities and constraints media usage entails; and second, political actors and organizations proactively take account of the media and try to capitalize on media performances for their political purposes. (Ibid: 62)

Certainly, an actor-centred approach implies agency on the part of political actors and organisations, anticipation of the needs of the news in the planning of public interventions and media-oriented actions (Kernell 1997; Cook 2005; Davis 2009), what Esser (2013) describes as self-mediatization, or the reflexive reaction of the political system to changes in their media environment. However, unintended consequences of mediatization are also part of the process (Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014). Some empirical work has shown these tensions; for instance, how public agencies prioritise attention to cases that have received media coverage at the expense of others which have not (Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014), or how policy networks might struggle to reach agreements when they are subjects of negative media coverage (Korthagen & Klijn 2012).

An institutional approach distinguishes and attempts to bridge this duality between strategic action and structural conditions (DiMaggio 1997; Thornton et al. 2012). Taking this into consideration for the study of the mediatization of politics implies recognition that political actors bring both identities and interests to their communication activities, but they are certainly embedded in organisations and institutions that shape those actions (Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton et al. 2012).

As discussed in the previous section, media and political logics of action are understood as hybrids that do not necessarily contradict each other; they are not a zero-sum game and therefore they cannot constitute a dimension that varies along

a continuum between poles (more media logic vs. less political logic). According to this argument, political actors are not subsumed by institutional media logics; they do not and cannot surrender the political logic. Instead, institutional logics become available to individuals and organisations (Friedland & Alford 1991) and are drivers of institutional change (Thornton et al. 2005). March and Olsen (2009) acknowledge this plurality of logics of action which will prevail depending on context, and have also been acknowledged as constitutive of contemporary political communication (Chadwick 2013). From an institutionalist perspective then the question is not whether political actors submit to the news media or attempt to control them, but rather which logics of action prevail in actors' everyday practice and under what circumstances do news media logics prevail over others?

3.2.5. Towards a working definition of mediatization of politics

So far, this chapter has theoretically grounded the concept of mediatization of politics within a neo-institutionalist framework that understands the news media as a distinct social institution, which operates according to formal and informal rules, distributing material and symbolic resources, the most important of which is visibility.

Building on Meyer (2002) and Esser (2013), it has been established that the news media is a complex modern institution whose members' behaviours are constrained according to organising principles or logics of action, primarily professional and commercial rationales. News media logic is an abstract construct that accounts for this plurality of logics shaping news production. Likewise, party politics describes a complex institution, whose members' actions are constrained

according to organising principles or logics of action, primarily policy, polity and political rationales. Political logic is an abstract construct that accounts for this plurality of logics shaping political decision-making.

The mediatization of politics is a theoretical perspective that enables the observation of the ways in which news media logics are adopted within political institutions and how they are assimilated, resisted or negotiated against different logics of action, aiming to understand processes of institutional change in party politics driven by increasing autonomy in the news media field.

In an actor-centred approach to mediatization research, then, the main object of study, as well as a sign of mediatization, is actors' responses to the news media logics. These responses or adaptive practices are conceived primarily as strategic actions triggered by the necessity of mediated visibility but also as reactions to wider institutional change. As a result, it is acknowledged that the aggregated effects of these actions might translate into unexpected outcomes for political actors, organisations and institutions.

Four main dimensions of the mediatization process were discussed in connection to new institutionalist scholarship: (1) logics of action, (2) media autonomy, (3) media resources and (4) political actors' adaptive responses. This discussion allows the elaboration of the following working definition of mediatization of politics:

> Mediatization of politics is the process activated within political institutions as a result of increasing institutional autonomy of the news media (1) and the necessity of mediated visibility (4), in which the actions and decisions of political actors, organisations and institutions are adjusted (3) to news media logics (2).

This working definition encompasses the four dimensions outlined thus far, locating mediatization research in the realm of practice and institutional change, as actors' adjustment to news media logics become the main object of study. Among the limitations of this definition is the fact that it still relies on the abstract news media logic as the staple conceptual device to explore institutional change in politics as a response to actual or perceived media centrality. Finally, this definition highlights the interconnection of the different dimensions of the mediatization process: the degree and the grounds on which media autonomy claims are made will shape institutional logics of action, as well as political actors' responses and attempts at controlling media content.

3.3. Are Chilean political elites mediatized?

This section of the chapter will develop an argument to establish that Chile has experienced a process of mediatization of politics. It does so by exploring the ways in which media and politics have interacted in recent years using the working definition introduced above. Chapter 2 recounted historical events that form the background of these dynamics, whereas this section will pay specific attention to information and data generated after the turn of the century to limit the scope of analysis and better approach the current state of affairs in the relationship between Chilean political elites and news organisations.

As was briefly mentioned in the introduction, an important indication of the perceived power of news organisations among political elites can be found in the surveys of elites analysed in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports of 2004 and 2015. In the first survey, the news media are identified as the most powerful institution in the country. Not only that, but elites also ranked the

news media at the top of the ranking as the most conflictive institution, and one that is perceived as having too much power (PNUD 2004). As highlighted in the UNDP report, these results reveal how elites question the legitimacy of such perceived media power. As an example, in the same survey political parties are ranked as the second most conflictive institutions in the country but, in contrast to the media, they are not considered as having too much power. Another interesting piece of data from this report is the difference between the perceptions of the media held by the elite and by general society. The general survey positions the news media considerably lower in the ranking of powerful institutions, in sixth place. In explaining this difference, the report offers the following reflection:

> In part, this is because the media today are governed according to their own operational criteria; thus, editorial lines cannot be administrated only according to the designs of the owner. The fact that the media compete for the interest and fidelity of audiences that do not belong to the elite, makes the media as whole to increase their autonomy against them. This reality is experienced by many people of power as a cause of concern, because it undermines its traditional capacity to easily influence the public agenda (PNUD, 2004: 259).

Ten years later, in 2014, the situation was not very different. Again, an elite survey positioned the news media as the most powerful institution in the country, and their perceived mean of power (translated into a score 1-10) increased from 8.6 to 9.2 (PNUD 2015). What these reports suggest is the existence of an institution (the news media) that is increasing its autonomy in relationship to political elites. As a result, they are increasingly in a position to self-define their operating rules and impose rules of representation on the political arena.

3.3.1. The 'modern' Chilean news media and the quality of autonomy

Following the path outlined early in the chapter, the process of mediatization of politics presupposes the differentiation of the news media, as a "social institution

in its own right" (Hjarvard 2008: 113). Shifting attention to context as a determining aspect of how the process of mediatization develops is important to briefly analyse the main features of the differentiation of the Chilean media institution. Some of these aspects were introduced in Chapter 2, but they will be briefly discussed here to bring them into conversation with the theoretical framework of mediatization that has been developed thus far.

The first relevant aspect of differentiation of the Chilean media – that is to say, their emergence as a modern social institution – is that it appears less responsive to endogenous factors and more responsive to the actions of exogenous forces. In other words, professional or industry-related interests did not develop incrementally over the second half of the 20th century. Instead, as Sunkel & Geoffroy (2002) identify, the Chilean news media institution was strongly shaped by the actions of the military dictatorship and later by the state, via both regulations and subsidies.

The Chilean media system can be located within Hallin and Mancini's (2004) comparative systems as relatively close to the polarized-pluralist model (Leon-Dermota 2003; Mellado & Humanes 2014), a system whose main features are strong political parallelism, strong state intervention and weak professionalisation. Certainly, the transferability of the model onto the Chilean context is not perfect, but this can guide analysis, and explain a certain configuration that has made the post-dictatorship Chilean news media vulnerable to strong political and economic pressures (Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011). These features, shared by other Latin American countries, led Márquez-Ramírez & Guerrero (2014) to put forward the "captured-liberal model", a predominantly

liberal commercial model that, nonetheless, challenges assumptions about its liberal basis by favouring specific economic and political interests.

When discussing the formation of media systems under differentiation theory, Hallin and Mancini (2004) identify four crucial aspects that become the main dimensions of their comparative models: developments of media markets, professionalisation, political parallelism and state intervention. An analysis of these dimensions in the Chilean context might shed light on the way the institutions of media and politics have interacted in recent years, opening the gates to the mediatization of politics.

In Chile, the development of media markets has been strongly interlinked with state-sponsored media policy (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002), creating a paradox: the strong commercialisation through which the differentiation of the media is derived is, to a great extent, a reaction to state-intervention, in circumstances where these dimensions are usually opposed (as found in the Liberal model). When discussing the development of media markets as a comparative dimension, Hallin and Mancini (2004) mostly concentrate on comparing press circulation indices that reflect the reach of the media among the population. Understood in this way, it is possible to see how the process of commercialisation initiated by the state favoured the expansion of media industries and the reach of greater audiences, especially through the development of broadcast infrastructure (Tironi & Sunkel 1993). At the same time, the process of commercialisation has enabled a strong concentration of media industries, each of which appears dominated by a few prominent actors (Mastrini & Becerra 2006). Furthermore, media

concentration in Chile has favoured a certain ideological homogeneity and the sub-representation of wide sections of the population (Bresnahan 2003).

With regards to the dimension of state intervention, then, it is possible to observe a decisive influence in the area of market regulations, particularly by means of opening the television industry to private agents and encouraging concentration of ownership (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002). Also connected to state regulations, and decisive to the relationship between media and politics, has been the enforcement of a legal framework that seriously restricted the work of the press by criminalising criticism of the authorities, a framework that only changed in 2001 (UDP 2010). Finally, an additional source of state intervention has been the transfer of public subsidies to El Mercurio SA and Copesa[37], favouring the development, growth and strength of the print-press duopoly (Monckeberg 2009; Herrero 2014).

Political parallelism is defined by Hallin and Mancini (2004) as the extent to which the news media reflect political divisions in society, evidenced in links between news organisations and political parties. In the strict sense of party-press parallelism (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995), this indicator was very high in Chile up to 1973, as practically every political party owned or was strongly linked to some newspaper or magazine (Tironi & Sunkel 1993). These links, though, were violently cut with the arrival of the military regime. However, the situation that

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[37] There is little public information about state advertising in the Chilean news media. In 2005, a special commission was created in Congress with the aim of identifying the criteria used by public agencies when making decisions about where to place advertisements. This, after a private investigation carried out by Fucatel (*Observatorio de Medios*), revealed that 77 per cent of public advertising in print press was directed to the groups El Mercurio SA and Copesa, while 50 per cent of the advertising on TV was placed in the state-owned TV channel TVN. The commission judged that neither the public interest nor the market rationales behind these decisions were clear, and recommended regulations for the management of public advertising. To date, these recommendations have not been enforced.

followed was one of severe political control, enforced by means of censorship, interventions and threats (Tironi & Sunkel 1993). Now in a democracy, media emancipation has been a slow process and there is evidence lending support to the idea that news organisations integrated political logics to their operations, especially in the first decade of the transitional process. Authors such as Otano & Sunkel (2003) and Leon-Dermota (2003) discuss the regressive nature of these logics of action, which would often prevail over news judgements with the aim of preserving the fragile transitional political balance. Political parallelism in Chile is still high (Mellado & Humanes 2014), but no longer in the form of party-press parallelism. Other indicators of political parallelism, such as press partisanship and the relevance of party affiliation for career advancement in the media, are less clear in the Chilean context. Chilean journalists do not identify with a tradition of advocacy and editorial involvement, and support neutrality and objectivity in their professional practice (Mellado et al. 2012). Therefore, the political parallelism of the Chilean press today is not blatant partisanship but, rather, is reflective of the proximity between the news organisations and certain political camps and economic interests; this is evidenced in the strong links between the media, political and economic power (Bresnahan 2003; Couso 2012; Mellado et al. 2012).

Finally, the dimension of professionalisation is often discussed through key indicators, such as the professional autonomy enjoyed by journalists, the emergence of distinct professional norms and the prevalence of public service orientation (Hallin & Mancini 2004; Brüggemann et al. 2014). With regards to journalists' autonomy in Chile, this is an area where empirical studies have identified important deficits, including a situation in which values of objectivity

and autonomy are cherished at a theoretical level but easily compromised in day to day practice (Gronemeyer 2002; Mellado & Humanes 2012; Santander 2013), leaving the field especially vulnerable to economic and political pressures (Lagos & Cabalin 2009; Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011). However, cross-longitudinal analysis shows a certain movement towards greater journalistic independence in the elaboration of political content (Mellado & Humanes 2014). Professional norms have been established through formal university education, especially since the 1960s (Mellado 2009), and through an exponential increase in university degrees in journalism and specific to the professional title of journalist, with more than 40 programmes at a national level (Lagos & Cabalin 2013). Still, it is difficult to speak about professional homogeneity with teaching strategies characterized by heterogeneity and fragmentation (Lazcano 2009) and low levels of professional associativity (Mellado et al. 2010). [38] Finally, there is little evidence of engagement with values of public orientation in Chilean journalism, and available studies show a rather weak engagement with this ethos. In a comparative study, Mellado et al. (2012) showed that Chilean journalists considered the function of providing information to facilitate citizens' political decisions as less important than their Brazilian and Mexican colleagues do.

This brief discussion offers an initial means for understanding how the news media have been shaped as a social institution in Chile over the past few decades, characterised by strong commercialisation, significant degrees of state intervention and political parallelism, as well as weak professionalisation. A closer inspection shows that all the dimensions analysed here point to potential threats

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[38] According to Mellado et al (2010), only 11.4 per cent of journalists were registered in the main national professional association (*Colegio de Periodistas*).

to the institutional autonomy of the media, exposing the shortcomings of the "tale of modernisation" that identifies commercialisation as the main driver of media independence. Yes, the Chilean news media emerge as a relatively autonomous social institution as a result of the commercialisation encouraged during the 1980s and since. However, it is an institution operating with strong limitations. As in other countries in the region, a model of media structures with dubious democratic character reflects a legacy of power inequalities (Waisbord 2012). In spite of this, the news media institution as a whole has incremented its social relevance and developed an operational logic of its own (PNUD 2004; PNUD 2015), which allows the mediatization of politics to be observable. In the next section, the events that have made Chilean politics permeable to the logics of the news media will be established.

3.3.2. Political elites and party politics media-dependency

One of the main triggers of the mediatization of politics in Western democracies is the widespread representation crisis experienced by political parties, which has increased the need for adapting to a changing communication environment in order to retain some degrees of control over public debate (Stromback & Van Aelst 2013; Esser & Strömbäck 2014; Marcinkowski 2014). As introduced in Chapter 2, the Chilean party system has undergone an incremental loss of social legitimacy, due to entrenched political practices aimed at the self-reproduction of political elites (Siavelis 2009). The weakness of the intermediary functions played by party structures have led to a crisis of representation and a deficient linkage between representatives and civil society (Godoy 2003; Luna & Mardones 2010) that has contributed to the centrality of the media as a surrogate political intermediary.

The representation crisis has seriously worsened over the past few years, linked to a loss of trust in the institutions of representative democracy, such as Congress, political parties and the government (PNUD 2014), which have suffered great deterioration in their public evaluation since the turn of the century[39].

Together with losing their attributes as an expressive institution of civil society (de la Maza 2003), political parties initiated during the transition a process of de-differentiation or amalgamation (Silva 2004), in response to the prevailing neoliberal consensus through both tacit and explicit agreements of off-limit topics, such as human rights violations or the basis of the economic model (Siavelis 2009; Huneeus & Cuevas 2013). This process reinforces and feeds into the deactivation of civil society, paving the way for the emergence of personality-driven leadership, and the consolidation of politics as a media happening (Silva 2004). Godoy (2003) discusses how political elites, faced with the volatility of the electorate, are forced to use media resources in order to capture adherents, and later in order to regain lost legitimacy. Therefore, in line with what Marcinkowski and Steiner (2014) postulate, it is the need to regain visibility and recover public attention – the main resource controlled by the media (Thompson 1995; Kunelius & Reunanen 2012) – that pushes the political system to adopt news media logics of action.

Political actors' increasing dependence on media resources has often been observed as a reaction to the representation crisis. Silva (2004) discusses how, from the 1990s onwards, the mass media have "taken over" the intermediation role traditionally played by political parties in Chile, pushing politics to be

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[39] Data collected by the cross-longitudinal survey Latinbarometro, conducted bi-annually, shows that trust in Government fell to 34 per cent and 32 per cent for the years 2011 and 2013 respectively. During the first decade of the 21st century, this indicator oscillated between 44 per cent and 65 per cent (PNUD 2014).

"increasingly dominated by the mass media in general, and television in particular" (Ibid: 71), forcing political elites to acquire new languages and communication strategies. In a media environment dominated by television, access to mass media then becomes fundamental political capital, especially during elections (Arriagada & Navia 2010).

Similar to the Anglo-American and European traditions (e.g. Blumler & Gurevitch 1995), the mediatization of politics in Chile has been associated with a decline in the quality of public communication, a complaint about the subordination of politics to the mass media (Arancibia 2002), depletion of content resulting from the adoption of logics of spectacle (Weibel 2010) and the commodification of political messages (Silva 2004). More importantly for the present analysis, this development is associated with two parallel processes; firstly, the increasing autonomy of the media to determine their own contents and; secondly, the professionalisation of political communication techniques across political institutions.

Cordero and Marin (2006) discuss how transformations in the political culture and the news media combine to create new conditions of media visibility and enable the emergence of a new genre, that of the political media scandals.[40] These acquire a new dimension after the turn of the century, as a result of the emergence of a more inquisitive form of journalism and the breaking of scandalous political

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[40] Some of the early political scandals of the transition are documented in Cavallo (1998). They include a case involving the son of Augusto Pinochet, who received cheques for more than three million dollars from the Armed Forces (*Pinocheques* case, 1990); a case of political espionage between members of the right-wing party *Renovacion Nacional* (Piñeragate, 1993), and the denunciation of drug trafficking inside Congress made by a former minister of the dictatorship, Francisco Javier Cuadra (1994).

stories initiated by the media.[41] A sense of greater autonomy of journalists from political actors (Lagos & Cabalin 2013) also encourages this shift in the relationship between media and politics.

Empirical studies lend some support to the idea of a news media institution that is starting to define its own operational and selection criteria. Porath (2007) shows that TV news agendas maintain a very low correlation to those of political actors during electoral campaigns. The apparent emancipation of the TV industry from politics is not, however, as clear in the press, where 90 per cent of political stories are initiated by politicians (Mellado & Rafter 2014). Nevertheless, one strategy used by print journalists to distance themselves from politicians is decreasing space devoted to direct quotations from politicians, who have seen their possibilities of reported direct speech diminish in the pages of both elite and popular newspapers (Mellado & Humanes 2014).

These new signs of media autonomy are perceived with some concern by political elites; 62 per cent of politicians believe that the news media control the public debate agenda, instead of political actors, and are helping to create a noxious image of politicians, as distant, unreliable and inefficient (ICSO/UDP 2004). The latter helps to explain why political elites start perceiving the media as a powerful actor (PNUD 2004; PNUD 2015).

A major reaction to this increasing anxiety around the power of the media is the professionalisation of media management and political communication techniques. This process of professionalisation appears to be driven by the

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[41] Some prominent cases that span media attention during the first decade of the 21st century were cases involving politicians and sexual abuse (Spiniak and Lavanderos case), as well as cases of corruption inside public agencies, such as the MOP-Gate case (Cordero & Marin 2006).

electioneering industry. Professional polling services are integrated not only within campaign periods but to day-to-day government decision-making (Huneeus 1999; Cordero 2009), and the entire political party spectrum incorporates political marketing tools such as telemarketing, opinion polls and focus groups, along with the services of local and foreign consultants (Espíndola 2008).

In 2004, 75 per cent of politicians acknowledged having some form of communication advisor (ICSO/UDP 2004) and, as a result, together with the presence of press and communication officers, the routine production of information subsidies has been incorporated into the politician-journalist relationship (Santander 2013). Likewise, the Government's monthly expenditure in press management and communication staff has been estimated at more than US$2 million (Aravena 2009), giving an indication of how communications and press management have been transversally integrated into most public agencies.

3.4. Concluding remarks and locating the research gap

This chapter has theoretically grounded the concept of mediatization of politics within an institutionalist approach by exploring the elements that allow a characterisation of the news media as a social institution. In order to do so, two main theoretical strands were reviewed. First, differentiation theory and the modernisation narrative that inspect the emergence of the news media institution in contemporary societies (Thompson 1995; Hallin & Mancini 2004); and secondly, a neo-institutionalist perspective for the study of the news media in their interactions with the political domain (Cook 2005; Hjarvard 2008; Asp 2014). Building on institutionalist literature (Dimaggio & Powell 1983; Friedland

& Alford 1991; March & Olsen 2006; Thornton et al. 2012), four main dimensions of the process of mediatization of politics were analysed in order to establish a working definition of the concept that incorporates: logics of action, media autonomy, media resources and adaptive responses. These revisions stressed the importance of understanding news media and political logics as hybrid logics of action (Meyer 2002; Esser 2013) that can potentially clash as well as reinforce each other.

Additionally, it was established that autonomy of the news media institution is not understood here as an absolute pre-condition for the mediatization of politics to happen but as an on-going struggle to defend its borders (Bourdieu 2005). Following Thompson (2005) and Kunelius and Reunanen (2012), visibility is identified as the main resource controlled by the media, which explains political actors' adaptive responses as reflecting a need for attention (Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014), which generates some level of dependency on communication resources, favouring the institutional coupling of media and politics.

By applying the analytical framework developed within this chapter to the Chilean context, antecedents that lend support to the idea that Chilean politics has experienced a process of mediatization since the recovery of democracy have been introduced. Taking into consideration the literature discussed above, the mediatization of politics in Chile appears driven by both the deteriorated image of politics and the emergence of more adversarial forms of journalism. The main field-level reaction to these developments is the growing professionalisation of political communication techniques.

This process of mediatization has been acknowledged in local scholarship on media studies (Arancibia 2002; Cordero & Marin 2006; Porath 2007; Arriagada & Navia 2010; Mellado & Rafter 2014) and political science (Godoy 2003; Silva 2004) as a contextual feature of contemporary Chilean politics, but it has not been so far the object of systematic research. Recent studies have interpreted variations in political media content in the light of mediatization processes (Mellado & Humanes 2014; Mellado & Rafter 2014). However, when it comes to an actor-centred perspective, that is to say, the analysis of mediatization processes from the perspective of political actors and institutions, research is practically non-nexistent, revealing an important research gap.

The mediatization of politics framework remains useful for an exploration and understanding of recent changes in Chilean politics. The news media emerged as a semi-autonomous social institution (Tironi & Sunkel 1993) and political actors have been pushed to adapt to this new environment (Silva 2004; Espíndola 2008), at least partially as a result of an underlying crisis in the connection between the party system and civic society (Godoy 2003; Luna & Mardones 2010).

At the same time, it is possible to forestall those important contextual features that might have played a role in shaping the mediatization of political elites. On the one hand, the autonomy of the Chilean media appears questioned on the grounds of weak journalistic professionalisation (Gronemeyer 2002) and an important degree of permeability to economic and political pressures (Hanitzsch & Mellado 2011; Lagos & Cabalin 2013; Santander 2013), as well as high levels of media concentration (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Mastrini & Becerra 2006; Ramírez 2009; Couso 2012). On the other hand, political elites appear minimally inclined to

overcome transitional enclaves expressed in a political culture with important democratic deficits and resistant to transformations (Siavelis 2009). Taken together, these antecedents configure a specific context for the mediatization of Chilean political elites, and demand further exploration, especially with regards to how news media logics of action have been integrated, negotiated and resisted within the institutional domain of party politics. Additionally, an actor-oriented perspective to the study of mediatization of politics demands taking into consideration power relations that are often left uninspected within the grand narrative of mediatization. The institutional logic perspective appears well equipped to connect different levels of analysis, stressing the interplay between "individuals competing and negotiating, organizations in conflict and coordination, and institutions in contradiction and interdependency" (Friedland & Alford 1991: 240-241), recognising that agents bring identities and interests into their actions, while at the same time being embedded in organisations and institutions that enable and constrain those actions (Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton et al. 2012).

The present study seeks to contribute to this understanding of the process of mediatization of political elites in Chile, identifying the main features of this relationship from an actor-centred perspective and shedding light on the implications of the process.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will outline the methodological framework and research methods used in this study. The chapter will start by locating the thesis within a constructionist understanding of institutions and situating empirical enquiry at the meso-level; aiming for the identification and explanation of collective understandings within a given cultural arena or social group. In this case, the rules of the game shaping interaction between the institutional domains of mass media and party politics in Chile; paying attention to "rules, routines, norms and identities of an 'institution', rather than micro-rational individuals or macro-social forces" (March & Olsen, 2006: 16). Further, it will be argued that theoretical tools offered by neo-institutionalist theory (Cook 2005; March & Olsen 2006; Sparrow 2006), the institutional logics perspective (Thornton et al. 2012) and the interpretive approach to the analysis of political elites (Bevir et al. 2003; Richards & Smith 2004) offer an appropriate analytical framework to answer the overall question of how Chilean political elites have adapted to the mediatization of politics by focusing on three key aspects (a) goals, (b) dynamics of autonomy/control and (c) the institutional logics structuring prevalent political actors' media-oriented practices. From this analytical framework, the research questions guiding the present study are derived. This chapter then explains and justifies the choice of semi-structured elite interview as a research method and the identification of three groups of research participants: politicians, press officers and journalists working and interacting in the cities of Santiago and Valparaíso, in

Chile, in order to conclude with a description and justification of strategies for qualitative data analysis.

The chapter is structured from higher to lower levels of abstraction. Following the levels of research design identified by Crotty (1998), it starts by accounting for the epistemic stance and core theoretical assumptions of the thesis, from which a research strategy and specific research methods are derived. The first section (4.1) develops a methodological framework informed by sociological new institutionalism, together with an explanation of the qualitative nature of the thesis and its adherence to a social constructionist understanding of knowledge generation. The second section (4.2) develops the research problem and research questions guiding the study. The third section (4.3) offers a rationale for the research design, justifying the choice of an inductive and interpretive study of exploratory nature. The fourth section of the chapter (4.4) explains the choice of elite interview as the main research method and provides a detailed description of the strategies used for data collection and analysis, informed by elements of two neighbouring methodological camps: grounded theory and applied thematic analysis. Finally, the chapter concludes by accounting for the criteria used for the validation of findings (4.5), as well as the strengths and limitations of the chosen methodological approach (4.6).

4.1. Epistemic stance and core theoretical assumptions

The concept of institutions that informs this study is influenced by the neo-institutionalist tradition (see section 3.2.1). As a consequence, it is firmly rooted in a constructionist understanding of social reality. That is to say, it shares the view that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent

upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998: 42).

Stressing "the endogenous nature and social construction of political institutions" (March & Olsen, 2006: 4), the neo-institutionalist tradition acknowledges that practices and symbolic constructions are as important as material conditions for explaining social structures; and therefore institutions are understood, described and investigated in connection to their symbolic and material dimensions, as well as their historical context (Friedland & Alford 1991; DiMaggio 1997; Thornton et al. 2012).

Within this tradition, actors' identities and perceptions are not inspected within a psychological space but mostly studied in terms of shared beliefs and collective understandings, acknowledging the links between agency, culture and institutional change. Adler (1997) states that "even our most enduring institutions are based on collective understandings (...) [which] provide people with reasons why things are as they are and indications as to how they should use their material abilities and power" (:322).

From their emergence, neo-institutionalist theories provoked a shift in the study of political institutions, which evolved from a formal-legal approach to a behavioural approach (March & Olsen 2006) that places actors and action at the centre of empirical enquiry. In other words, what actors do (their practices), perceive (their cognitive experience) and how they develop beliefs (structures of meaning) do matter and are key factors for understanding how institutions develop.

Another important strand of literature supporting the study of elite actors' beliefs and interpretations about their positions, interests and actions comes from the interpretive tradition in political science, which has made a strong case in favour of studying elite actors' beliefs, not just in order to understand how they think or justify their behaviour but also for the explanatory power this variable may have in understanding the evolution of political institutions (Bevir & Rhodes 2001; Bevir et al. 2003; Richards & Smith 2004).

These theoretical perspectives naturally dialogue with a constructionist epistemology that pays attention to social interactions and their context (Crotty 1998; Schwandt 2000). A constructionist paradigm emphasises how meanings emerge from social interactions and is, therefore, particularly concerned with how people understand those interactions. The role of the researcher within this paradigm is to interpret or make sense of the meaning others have about the world (Rubin & Rubin 2005; Creswell 2007).

4.2. Research problem & research questions

I have developed in previous chapters an argument that lends support to the idea that politics has been mediatized in Chile. In other words, political actors and institutions have adjusted their practices to news media logics in order to improve their chances of mediated visibility. Systematic study of this process, nonetheless, has so far been neglected, and only acknowledged as a contextual feature of Chilean contemporary politics. I argue that this lack of research is especially acute when it comes to locating political elites as research subjects, therefore developing an actor-centred perspective on the process of mediatization that may account for the features of the relationship between mass media and political actors in this

national context. Additionally, I have argued in favour of applying the institutionalist framework for the study of mediatization beyond European and Anglo-American contexts as a strategy for exploring points of strain in the literature; namely, how news media and political logics interact, as well as how the notion of media autonomy can be better understood in the mediatization of politics.

In contrast to the wealth of theoretical work developed around the mediatization debate in recent years, empirical research studies guided by this framework have been produced in limited numbers.[42] Studies focusing on the analysis of media content have mostly concentrated on identifying and measuring indicators of mediatization from the longitudinal analysis of texts (Kepplinger 2002; Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011; Cushion & Thomas 2013). Overall, these studies have shown a tendency towards greater media autonomy in the way political news agendas are presented. In so far as they have become more interpretive, political actors are given less space to define media agendas and journalists take the role of primary definers of political narratives (for the UK context, see Cushion & Thomas, 2013; Negrine & Bull, 2014; on Sweden see Strömbäck & Nord, 2006; for a comparison between the United States and Sweden see Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2011). In contrast, in the Chilean context, longitudinal analysis of political news in print have shown a low level of media interventionism; politicians appear to maintain a strong influence on news stories and journalists have adopted indirect ways of keeping distance from political sources in texts, for example, through diminishing

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[42] Some indications of the breadth and speed of this discussion can be found in academic journals' dedicated special editions, such as those published by Communication Theory (2013, volume 23) and those published by Journalism Studies and Journalism Practice (2014), as well as numerous edited books (see Lundby, 2009; Lundby, 2014; Stromback and Esser, 2014). An important part of this work has been predominantly theory-oriented.

use of direct quotations (Mellado & Rafter, 2014). A slightly different picture emerges from the analysis of TV news agendas, which show greater overall distance from political sources (Porath 2007). Taken together, these studies reflect how media representations of politics have changed over time. However, what studies focused on content generally fail to show is how politicians have adapted to this changing environment and have readjusted their bargaining strategies over news making, since inferences in this direction remain speculative. Additionally, they often cannot properly account for contextual factors moderating or accentuating mediatization processes.

Studies focused on actors tend to show a more complex picture of mediatization processes, with scenarios of constraints and opportunities for political actors. They generally observe tensions between news media logics and policy-making (Reunanen et al. 2010; Landerer 2014) or bureaucratic rationales (Korthagen & Klijn 2012; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014). However, at least some political actors are in a position to take advantage of their adaptation to news media logics (Elmelund-Praestekaer et al. 2011). What these studies highlight is the fact that the mediatization of political actors is not homogenous. First, the ability to use media visibility as a resource appears aligned to other power resources (Kunelius & Reunanen 2011). Secondly, actors can actively embrace news media logics with strategic purposes (Landerer 2014), though not all the outcomes of the process respond to strategic objectives, and some are unwanted (Korthagen & Klijn 2012; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014).

I decided to take an actor-centred approach for this study based on the lack of research on this area in the Chilean context. Moreover, this perspective allows for

a better account of the ground-level power struggles in the relationship between political actors and news organisations, which is an important element to take into consideration in the Chilean case considering the prevalent elite-culture that dominates the local political ethos (Cordero & Funk 2011). So far, the scarce data available about how political elites relate to news organisations and have adapted to news media logics in the country comes from surveys, some of them not even primarily concerned with the subject. It has been established that political elites consider the media as the most powerful institution in the country and question the legitimacy of that power (PNUD 2004; PNUD 2015). Somewhat contradictory to that finding, parliamentarians have said they trust the media but do not consider them a relevant actor for policy-making purposes[43]. Still, they say that the news media have overpowered politicians in the ability to control public debate, and have sought professional support for media and communication related activities (ICSO/UDP 2004). Overall, the analysis of these studies shows a complex picture that demands further clarification and qualitative insight, especially regarding how news media logics have been integrated into everyday political practice.

From this research problem, I derived a general research question to guide a study of an exploratory nature approached in this thesis:

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[43] Data for the period 1997-2009 from the panel survey conducted by the *Observatorio de Elites Parlamentarias de América Latina* (Observatory of Latin America Parliamentary Elites) shows that Chile is one of two countries in the region (alongside Uruguay) in which parliamentarians declare high levels of trust in the media together with low levels of influence in political decision-making. This has been initially interpreted as a result of a high institutionalisation of political parties (Tagina 2009). Interpretation of these results though is complicated; not only because they derive from two questions in an instrument not specially tailored to explore politics and media relationships but also because trusting the media could be either connected to a positive assessment of their work, or a signal of political affinity and lack of adversarial journalism (Waisbord 2006). It seems also reasonable for parliamentarians to declare they take into consideration their voters', political parties' or group interests' demands more than the media for decision-making purposes. Rather than having great explanatory power, these insights offer points of departure for the study of the subject.

How have Chilean political elites adapted to the mediatization of politics?

An emphasis on adaptation seeks to shed light on political elites' interactions with the media and the process of mediatization of politics. As such, it suggests the exploration of transformations in the behaviour patterns of a social group in response to a changing media environment, in particular, how Chilean political elites negotiate their communication practices in relation to such change. From this guiding research question, this study is therefore expected to develop some insight into how the process of mediatization has developed over time (e.g. longitudinally) in recent years. However, being a cross-sectional study, where data has been collected at one point in time (see section 4.4) this study's main emphasis is, instead, how political elites have adapted to the institutional news media logic in recent years by paying attention to three core aspects of the process, which will be outlined below.

In order to operationalize the guiding research question provided above, three related subordinate research questions that point towards more specific areas of enquiry are formulated, keeping the focus on political elites as the main research subject of the study. These areas are (a) goals of media exposure; (b) media-oriented practices and (c) dynamics of autonomy-control.

The exploration of political actors' goals associated with media exposure finds a justification in the micro-foundations of the institutional logics perspective. In an attempt to theorize the links between institutional logics, practices, individuals and interactions, Thornton et al. (2012) identify social identities and goals as aspects that capture the dimension of individual agency or intentionality of action within institutional contexts. In other words, goals shape current and future

action, answering to individual choices that are nonetheless responsive to the environment and, therefore, institutionally shaped. Contrary to March and Olsen (2006), who separate identity-based and interest-based rationales for action, Thornton et al. (2012) contend that: "rather than viewing identities and goals as alternative motivations for social actors, we posit that they both affect cognition and action" (Ibid: 87). In doing so, it is acknowledged that goals are not only driven by self-interest but also adjusted to fit social roles and expectations.

The sub research questions associated with this area are formulated as:

SRQ1: What are Chilean politicians' goals when interacting with the news media?

SRQ2. *To what extent is media visibility considered a valuable resource for political activity?*

The idea of institutional logics structuring media-oriented practices is connected with the aim of exploring the process of mediatization from the perspective of practice. As discussed in Chapter 3, the idea of logics of action (Friedland & Alford 1991; DiMaggio 1997; March & Olsen 2009) is pivotal in the development of neo-institutionalist theory, and mediatization has been defined as a process of adaptation to news media logics of action (Meyer 2002; Esser 2013). The question about logics of action therefore is different from the question about "media effects" on decision-makers (see Kepplinger, 2007). Instead, it points towards understandings of news media logics of action and their accommodation[44] within daily routines.

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[44] This perspective dialogues with theoretical and empirical research about the way political actors anticipate the needs of the media for news-making and policy-making processes (Kernell 1997; Cook 2005; Davis 2007a; Davis 2007b).

The sub research questions associated to this area are formulated as:

SRQ3: How do political elites understand and interact with news media logics of action?

SRQ4: What are the prevalent media-oriented practices among Chilean politicians and how are they accommodated in their daily activities?

Finally, the third subject area is the relationships of autonomy and control between political elites and the news media. Questions about who controls whom in the media and politics relationship have been longstanding in political communication. Since Gans' (1979: 116) contention about political sources usually "leading the tango" in their relationship with journalists, the question about control has been the driver of several empirical enquiries (among others, see Seymour-Ure 2003; Strömbäck & Nord 2006; Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011; Pfetsch & Voltmer 2012), yet some studies lend support to the idea that the answer about "who leads" is highly contingent (Van Aelst & Walgrave 2011). I argue that the question about "who leads" is ill-conceived, and possible answers will be responsive not only to contingency but also to the level of analysis at which the question is formulated (macro, meso or micro-level interactions). Having said this, a key assumption about the process of mediatization of politics is that political actors have lost their autonomy (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999), as long as they have become increasingly dependent on communication resources and shaped by the media (Bennett & Entman 2001; Meyer 2002; Strömbäck 2008). What is more, the mediatization of politics has been conceptualised as a response to the need to retain degrees of control over public attention by political actors (Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014). In order to narrow down the scope of the

questions about autonomy and explore the contentious issue of autonomy loss associated with mediatization processes, then, research questions will be formulated in relation to the perceived ability to control media messages among political elites, together with the strategies used to this end.

Additionally, as perceptions about control over media messages are relational, and constitute the outcome of exchanges with journalists and news organisations, the following sub-research questions incorporate journalists and are formulated as:

SRQ5: What are the prevalent practices in the trade-off between Chilean politicians and journalists?

SRQ6: What are politicians' and journalists' perceptions about their ability to control media messages?

In order to provide meaningful answers to these research questions, a qualitative methodological framework will be developed, in order to incorporate political elites' experiences of the mediatization process, as well as perceptions of other groups of reference that frequently interact with them in their media-oriented activities, most prominently political journalists and press officers.

4.3. Research strategy: a qualitative interpretive framework

Given the nature of academic enquiry that has been introduced – concerned with political elites' adaptation to mediatization processes, the meanings attached to their interactions with the news media, and the rationales and justification of news media logic-following within this group - this study can be naturally located within an interpretive research paradigm. As such, it follows a qualitative strategy for data collection and analysis, informed by elements of grounded theory

(particularly Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 2008; Birks & Mills, 2011) and applied thematic analysis (Namey et al., 2008; Guest et al., 2012).

A qualitative research strategy is better equipped to account for the meanings brought by research participants to their actions, and to show how they are tied to contextual features (Jensen 2002; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Creswell 2007). In this study, perceptions and practices of political elites are central, as well as are their interpretations and reactions regarding the institutional rules guiding news making in traditional mass media outlets. Baxter & Babbie (2004) identify the study of meanings and shared beliefs about appropriate action (rules) in certain social groups as the main drivers of interpretive research in communication, a tradition committed to rendering those rules visible.

Having an exploratory and descriptive orientation, the methodological framework used is inductive; it aims to develop an account of the mediatization of Chilean political elites, from actors' experiences. In important ways, the approach followed for this study shares the principles of grounded theory development, a qualitatively driven methodological strategy in which a general explanation of a process, action or interaction is developed, shaped by the views of a large number of participants (Creswell 2007; Strauss & Corbin 2008).

Grounded theory is generally defined as a specific methodology to gather and analyse qualitative data in a systematic way with the aim of theory construction (Charmaz 2000; Creswell 2007) or, as stated by its more prominent proponents: "the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained for social research" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 2). Crucially, however, the ambition of this study is not to generate a whole new theory about the mediatization of political elites, but to

understand and explain this process in connection to the Chilean context. As was stressed earlier, there has been a wealth of theoretical developments around the concept of mediatization of politics in recent years. Nonetheless, some areas have been identified as theoretical points of strain in need of further development (Esser & Strömbäck 2014). Responding to this invitation, this study explores some of these theoretical categories qualitatively, in particular how news media logics of action interact with political logics of action, and whether mediatization is experienced as a process of autonomy loss by political elites. As such, it follows the stages identified by Silverman (2006) as the basics of a grounded theory project:

> (…) an initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data; an attempt to saturate these categories with many appropriate cases in order to demonstrate their relevance; and an effort to develop these categories into more general analytic frameworks with relevance outside the setting. (Ibid: 402)

In other words, the research process follows a path from participant-generated data to researcher-generated data, where the final result is understood as a co-construction of knowledge between participants and the researcher's interpretations (Charmaz 2006; Bryant & Charmaz 2007).

Techniques from the tradition of applied thematic analysis were also used during some stages of data analysis, and are described in the next section. This approach is in many ways complementary and adopts elements from grounded theory approaches. Both are conceived as interpretive strategies to analyse texts (generally free-flowing texts coming from interviews or similar strategies of data collection) that are used for the researcher as proxies for experience, in order to elicit participants' "perceptions, feelings, knowledge and behaviour as represented in the text" (Guest et al., 2012). Contrary to grounded theory approaches, applied

thematic analysis has the advantage of remaining open to the use of a greater variety of techniques for data analysis and data reduction, which I found a great advantage for a big qualitative data set.

Following the proposition of Guest et al. (2012), this study borrows those elements that were judged as more suitable at different stages of the research process from each of these neighbouring methodological camps. The credibility and validity of findings is facilitated by the transparency and visibility of the research methods and procedures followed, which will be detailed in the next section.

4.4. Research methods

The study conforms to an emergent design; that is to say, some decisions on data collection and analysis were taken after entering the fieldwork, in response to the interaction with research participants (Creswell 2007). In the following subsections, these choices will be explained and justified, including: the use of semi-structured elite interviews as a method for data collection, the characteristics of the sample including details about research participants and how access to them was secured, ethical issues and, finally, procedures followed for data analysis.

4.4.1. Data collection: semi-structured interviews

Data collection took place in the cities of Santiago and Valparaiso, Chile, during May and June 2013. Santiago is the Chilean capital where the central government is located, as are the headquarters of all political parties. Valparaiso is located 125 kilometres northwest of the capital and is home to the National Congress. As a result, it is usual for parliamentarians – and political elites in general – to travel

regularly between the two locations. During this period, 60 interviews were conducted with politicians (N=30), journalists (N=18) and press officers working with politicians (N=12). The duration of the interviews varied between 15 and 70 minutes, with an average duration of 33 minutes. All were audio-recorded and, later, fully transcribed for analysis. Additionally, notes were taken after the conduct of the interviews for initial assessments on the data obtained. Most interviews were conducted in professional settings, including *La Moneda* (the government palace), Congress in Valparaiso, the offices of Congress members in Santiago and the offices of political parties and news media organisations. A small number of interviews were conducted in other spaces such as cafés, personal offices or the family home of the respondent. The benefit of conducting most interviews in professional settings was the chance of doing additional observation and complementing interviews with informal conversations.

The decision to conduct interviews as the main research method derives from the nature of the research questions that this project asks, as they are associated with the realm of perceptions, beliefs and interpretations of the relationship Chilean political actors have with traditional news media. The data generated through this method for this study could not have been otherwise obtained and analysed.

As a qualitative research method widely used in social sciences, interviews are regarded as an effective tool to produce meaningful data in relation to interviewees' perceptions. In a constructionist paradigm, the production of knowledge through interviews is understood as largely constructed and generated through the interview process, as a result of the interaction between researcher

and research participants rather than something excavated and discovered (Mason 2002; Charmaz 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

The interviews conducted were semi-structured, following Bryman's (2001) description of the method. An interview guide was developed, from which most questions were posed to research participants, often using similar wording. However, the instrument remained flexible enough to pursue topics of interest raised in conversation by interviewees, or to tailor questions to their experience and positions.

Ensuring the production of meaningful knowledge is one of the main challenges in qualitative interviewing (Mason 2002; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). This aim was pursued in two different ways. First, aligning the interview questions to the research questions guiding the study and, second, assessing the interview questions in response to the fieldwork experience. These points will be further explained in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the aim of aligning research and data collection questions, the interview guide was developed around the three subject areas that inform the research questions: (a) goals and value attached to media visibility, (b) media-oriented practices and understandings of news media logics and (c) relationships of autonomy and control between political actors and news media. Following this general structure, three variations of the interview guide were developed, in order to adjust the questions to the experiences of the three groups of reference: political elites, press officers and journalists (see Appendix 1). There are very few differences between the first two variations (politicians and press officers interviews), whereas the interview guide for editors and journalists maintains the

same subject areas but incorporates questions tailored to their unique experiences with political sources that were obviously not appropriate for the other participants.

Secondly, the interview guide remained flexible. In other words, since the aim of the study was not producing standardized answers, it served primarily as a guide, yet some questions were tailored to the experience and position of each interviewee, with the purpose of obtaining meaningful data; it allowed for asking interviewees to expand on statements with personal experiences or comment on specific situations in which they might have been involved. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) recognizes data collection and analysis as "intertwined phases of knowledge construction". In qualitative-driven strategies of data collection, the information obtained in initial stages of the fieldwork should inform the later analysis and, in turn, lead to redefinitions of data collection strategies, such as rephrasing or redirecting questions or the choice of interviewees (Rubin & Rubin 2005; Charmaz 2006). Fieldwork for this study developed along these lines. For instance, some of the interview questions were rephrased after conducting the first set of interviews in order to make them clearer or more concrete in later interviews. Others, instead, were incorporated in response to relevant themes that emerged in the first interviews and informal conversations. The latter point can be illustrated with the subject of off-the-record conversations between political elites and journalists. After some interviews, it became clear that this was an important tool not only for political reporting but also for attempts at control and political spin. Thus, asking politicians about their experiences with off the record conversations proved to be a useful prompt to explore the topic of control, which

was not initially considered. Therefore, the question was explicitly incorporated.

Another important fieldwork decision was to increase the number of interviews with journalists and editors. Initially, interviews with this group of participants were conceived as a strategy to validate findings; to check and counterbalance the views of politicians. For this reason, the target was between 6-10 interviews with media professionals. However, many of these interviews revealed quite informative and rich data, so additional interviews with journalists and editors were conducted to better reflect a greater variety of positions and experiences within this group.

In summary, while the subject areas remained untouched and the main focus of the interviews unchanged, and while most questions included in the interview guide were posed to all research participants, the interview guide was used with flexibility. Additionally, questions and sample decisions were continually evaluated during fieldwork. This approach is congruent with an interpretive and emergent research strategy; data-driven and context sensitive (Mason 2002; Charmaz 2006).

The diagram included in the next page illustrates the connection between research areas, research questions and data collection questions.

Rationale of research design

Working definition of mediatization of politics	
	Mediatization of politics is the process activated within political institutions as a result of increasing institutional autonomy of the news media and the necessity of mediated visibility, in which the actions and decisions of political actors, organisations and institutions are adjusted to news media logics.

Overarching RQ: *How have Chilean political elites adapted to the mediatization of politics?*

Subject area	Research Questions	Examples of interview questions
Subject area: goals and value attached to media visibility	*SRQ1: What are Chilean politicians' goals when interacting with the news media?* *SRQ2. To what extent is media visibility considered a valuable resource for political activity?*	What are the main goals or goal that you pursue in your interaction with news organizations?
Subject area: media-oriented practices and understandings of news media logics	*SRQ3: How do political elites understand and interact with news media logics of action?* *SRQ4: What are the prevalent media-oriented practices among Chilean politicians and how are they accommodated in their daily activities?*	In what ways do you plan your media presence? How relevant is the media within your work routine? Could you estimate how much time you invest in this area?
Subject area: relationships of autonomy and control between political actors and news media	*SRQ5: What are the prevalent practices in the trade-off between Chilean politicians and journalists?* *SRQ6: What are politicians and journalists perceptions about their ability to control media messages?*	Would you say that you spend more time looking proactively to appear in the media or reacting to calls or requests from journalists? What kind of information you normally get/give during off the record conversations?

4.4.1.1. Some notes on elite interviewing

An important issue to address in this study was that of the position of research participants. From the total of 60 interviews conducted, half of the sample corresponds to political elites; parliamentarians, present and former government ministers and political party leaders (specific profiles are discussed in the next subsection).

As noted by Harvey (2011), definitions about what constitutes an elite are not clear-cut in empirical studies, but most authors agree in describing elites as "those who hold important social networks, social capital and strategic positions within social structures because they are able to exert influence" (Ibid: 443). Pierce (2008: 119) broadly defines political elites as "people who exercise disproportionately high influence on the outcome of events or policies", adding that "they may be ministers, MPs, senior civil servants, business leaders, union leaders, members of think tanks or financial institutions, learned commentators, journalists, local councillors, chief executives, gatekeepers, etc." (Ibid). Although these definitions are flexible enough to consider the whole sample as elite respondents, I will use the term with a note of caution, acknowledging that the label may not adequately reflect the positions occupied by all research participants, particularly all journalists and press officers, and the power differentials between them and their political counterparts. While the politicians interviewed can be clearly identified as elites, the positions and levels of responsibility of journalist and press officer respondents vary greatly; some of them occupy senior positions and therefore take on greater decision-making activities, while others play supporting roles and can be described as middle-range employees. Nonetheless, all research participants converge in institutional

sites of political power such as Congress, Government and political parties, and have direct influence on the way politics is represented in traditional mass media, as well as in the reproduction of political communication practices in these environments.

Carrying out elite interviews poses some challenges, particularly related to access and status differentials between the researcher and the interviewee (Pierce 2008; Harvey 2011; Mikecz 2012). How these issues were addressed before and during fieldwork is discussed in the next section.

4.4.2. Sampling strategy and research participants

This study is based on a purposive sampling. This is, by definition, a sampling that is "essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling" (Bryman, 2001: 334). This is a non-probabilistic sampling strategy, where members of the studied population do not have an equal chance of being selected (Pierce 2008). Mason also uses the term "strategic" to refer to a sample "designed to encapsulate a relevant range in relation to the wider universe, but not to represent it directly" (Mason, 2002: 124).

The relevance of the interviewees was assessed in connection to the declared objectives of the study and the research questions guiding empirical enquiry, as suggested by Bryman (2001) and Mason (2002).

As discussed in section 4.2, a general research question guiding the study (*How Chilean political elites have adapted to the mediatization of politics?)* was operationalized in 6 sub-questions responsive to three areas*:* goals of media exposure and value attached to media visibility; media-oriented practices and

dynamics of autonomy-control in their relationship with news organisations. Following these questions, the selection of research participants was defined by the criteria of experience and knowledge in the area investigated (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Primarily, in the case of political elites, active membership in Chilean politics at the national level was the first and most important selection criterion, favouring actors with actual or recent participation in Government, Congress or political parties. In order to validate and complement their views, two additional groups of research participants were identified: press officers working with politicians (within the same institutions of Government, Congress or political parties) and journalists from national media outlets with experience interacting with political sources. As such, all research participants are individuals working within concrete institutional and organisational domains: party politics and traditional journalistic media. By including the perspectives of these groups of reference –politicians, journalists and press officers – a comprehensive characterization of political communication practices is developed. Nonetheless, the inclusion of politicians and press officers working in different branches of government, as well as journalists working in different media platforms is not intended for comparative purposes inside groups of reference, but for the inclusion of a wide range of perspectives, both for variation and richness (Strauss & Corbin 2008), as well as for credibility purposes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Although a strict quota system was not followed, an adequate range of perspectives was also pursued aiming for variance in terms of research participants' political affiliation, gender, years of experience and positions currently held (see Appendix 2 for a summary of participants' attributes).

**Summary of Research Participants profiles**
1	Politician 1	Deputy	31	Communications 1	Senate
2	Politician 2	Deputy	32	Communications 2	Senate
3	Politician 3	Political party board	33	Communications 3	Deputies Chamber
4	Politician 4	Deputy	34	Communications 4	Deputies Chamber
5	Politician 5	Assessor, political party	35	Communications 5	Senate
6	Politician 6	Senator	36	Communications 6	Senate
7	Politician 7	Senator	37	Communications 7	Senate
8	Politician 8	Minister	38	Communications 8	La Moneda
9	Politician 9	Senator	39	Communications 9	Political Party
10	Politician 10	Deputy	40	Communications 10	Political Party
11	Politician 11	Senator	41	Communications 11	La Moneda
12	Politician 12	Deputy	42	Communications 12	Political Party
13	Politician 13	Deputy	43	Journalist 1	Editor, print press
14	Politician 14	Deputy	44	Journalist 2	Editor, online media
15	Politician 15	Assessor, political party	45	Journalist 3	Editor, elite newspaper
16	Politician 16	Political party board	46	Journalist 4	Journalist, radio
17	Politician 17	Former Minister	47	Journalist 5	Editor, radio
18	Politician 18	Deputy	48	Journalist 6	Editor, online media
19	Politician 19	Former Deputy	49	Journalist 7	Journalist, elite newspaper
20	Politician 20	Deputy	50	Journalist 8	Journalist, online media
21	Politician 21	Deputy	51	Journalist 9	Journalist, TV
22	Politician 22	Senator	52	Journalist 10	Journalist, elite newspaper
23	Politician 23	Deputy	53	Journalist 11	Journalist, elite newspaper
24	Politician 24	Assessor, political party	54	Journalist 12	Editor, elite newspaper
25	Politician 25	Deputy	55	Journalist 13	Editor, print press
26	Politician 26	Senator	56	Journalist 14	Journalist, online media
27	Politician 27	Deputy	57	Journalist 15	Senior editor, radio
28	Politician 28	Deputy	58	Journalist 16	Editor, TV
29	Politician 29	Former Minister	59	Journalist 17	Journalist, radio
30	Politician 30	Political party board	60	Journalist 18	Editor, TV

It is important to note that most respondents had previous professional experience in other positions. For example, 5 of the 30 politicians interviewed currently holding positions in Congress or political parties had previous experience in government as former ministers or deputy ministers. Most journalists and editors interviewed had previous experience in other media outlets and, less frequently, in communications and press management positions. Most press officers interviewed had previous experience as journalists in news organisations.

The table included in page 149 summarises how research participants will be identified throughout the thesis when directly quoted.

4.4.2.1. Fieldwork challenges: Gaining access to research participants

The literature on elite interviewing stresses the problem of access to respondents and how to maximise possibilities for data collection since this is a group that normally suffers from overloaded work schedules (Pierce 2008; Harvey 2011). In this respect, the issue of time was pressing for all respondents, and had to be factored into the planning of the fieldwork.

My previous experience as a journalist and as a communications officer gave me an accurate picture about the respondents' changing schedules and priorities. As such, I was prepared to be flexible in pursuing interviews. Thus, multiple strategies were used in parallel in order to maximise chances of access to participants. Personal contacts, networks and snowballing techniques proved useful to contact some participants. Nonetheless, while aiming for a balanced range of perspectives, this approach had to be complemented and several participants were approached without intermediaries. Most interviews required

multiple requests before interviews were secured, and it was not unusual for agreed-upon interviews to be cancelled at the last minute. Some of these could be re-scheduled, others could not.

Preparation for fieldwork started with identifying potential research participants, taking into consideration the criteria already outlined and observing an appropriate range of diversity within the studied institutional domains.

Introductory letters (see sample in Appendix 3) were sent via email in the weeks preceding the interviews to an initial group of potential research participants (approximately 30), in order to gauge responsiveness levels. The response rate to these emails was low, and therefore emails were followed by phone calls, either to personal numbers or offices, where personal contact details were not available. During fieldwork, 35 additional letters were sent to other potential participants. These letters contained a summary of the project and a short explanation about why the experience of the respondent would be of interest to the study. The latter was generally a reference to their expertise and past and/or present positions, following Mikecz's (2012) recommendation about the importance of showing awareness of an elite interviewee's trajectory, for credibility purposes.

This formal approach, where participants were first approached through email and often through intermediaries such as assistants, chiefs of staff or press officers, was supplemented by direct approaches to participants or potential intermediaries in natural settings. Most people were far more responsive to direct approaches. In this respect, Congress in Valparaiso and Congress's offices in Santiago were particularly useful places to reach potential interviewees. Initially, I had limited access to the building. Only when interviews were previously

arranged was access granted for the floor where the relevant office was located. Later, I separately contacted the Communications Offices of the Senate and the Deputies Chamber (both spatially and organisationally distinct, in spite of being in the same building) and requested permission to be in the press areas[45]. This was granted and that allowed me to circulate freely inside the building for most of my fieldwork. This access also allowed the observation of multiple interactions: politician-reporter exchanges, press points, press conferences. Additionally, it allowed me to contact insiders (press officers, assistants, assessors) that acted as gatekeepers facilitating access to new research participants, to directly approach politicians, press officers and journalists, to introduce the study and to request interviews. Many interviews were arranged in this way and conducted in Congress, in spaces such as parliamentarians' offices, the press room or the Congress Café. In addition to Congress, I visited *La Moneda* three times, several political party headquarters in Santiago and some news organisations.

Fieldwork for this study coincided with the progress of primary presidential elections of the *Nueva Mayoría* political coalition.[46] This event allowed me to conduct observations and reach potential participants at two particular moments: the preparation for a TV debate of one of the candidates and an informal meeting between another candidate and people working in the communications sector. Since the focus of this study is not electoral, these observations did not directly inform the analysis. However, they were privileged spaces to observe interactions

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[45] This permission was granted following a formal request backed by the thesis supervisor and an explanation of the research project being undertaken.
[46] The centre-left coalition Nueva Mayoría declared their presidential candidate on June 30th 2013. The winner of this election, open to both registered members and voters of the sector, was the current incumbent, President Michelle Bachelet.

between politicians, journalists or communications aides, as well as spaces to recruit further research participants.

Participants were asked to grant a 30-minute interview. In my experience, it would not be realistic to ask for more time, and chances were that some of them could be extended in situ. As already mentioned, this was approximately the average duration of interviews (33 minutes), although the range varied greatly. Some interviews ran as long as 70 minutes and some were as short as 15 minutes. My decision was to accept and include short interviews if that was the only chance of getting an interviewee. Interviews at the shortest end of the spectrum still proved informative, and all rendered useful information. Of course, different insights and greater levels of rapport were developed in extended interviews and this was one of the reasons to stretch the numbers of participants, reaching an eventual total of 60 people.

During fieldwork, preliminary analyses were conducted in the form of notes taken after the conclusion of the interviews, in order to identify areas to expand, constantly reassess the interview guide, as well as take decisions about who to contact next. In this respect, numbers of participants within each group of reference were primarily responsive to preliminary analysis of data collected. Additionally, a minimum target of 6 and an ideal minimum of 12 interviews per group was pursued, following Guest et al. (2006), who identified these numbers as

thresholds in the development of qualitative analysis[47]. This target was achieved and surpassed.

4.4.3. Ethical issues and anonymity of research participants

This study follows the research ethics guides set by the University of Sheffield, and research ethics clearance was obtained before the beginning of the fieldwork. All interviews were conducted after informed consent was given and the data provided for participants has been treated confidentially.

As discussed in the previous section, research participants were initially approached through an introductory letter, which included details on the nature and objectives of the project, sponsor details[48] and academic credentials. Those participants who were directly approached were given this information verbally. Additionally, all participants were informed at the beginning of the interview of the main characteristics of the research project and had the chance of asking questions. They were also informed about the decision to anonymize interviews in the thesis and in the event of the production of related publications. This researcher explained that they would be generically identified (e.g. Senator, political party board member, editor of elite newspaper, etc.). All participants agreed to these conditions and that agreement was audio-recorded, as previously specified in the Research Ethics Application Form approved by the Department of Journalism Studies.[49]

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[47] In an experimental study, Guest et al. (2006) developed a code book for a qualitative study, analysing interviews six by six (till reaching 60). They contend that 73 per cent of the codes were identified after the analysis of the first group of 6 interviews, and 92 per cent after the analysis of 12.

[48] This PhD has been financed thanks to a scholarship granted by Conicyt (*Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica de Chile*).

[49] Ethical approval is on file with Department of Journalism Studies and Research & Innovation Services.

Some scholars who discuss elite interviewing sometimes leave decisions on anonymity to interviewees, privileging the attribution of information unless requested by a research participant (Mikecz 2012). More often, however, the decision is connected to the eventual sensitive nature of the information provided and the protection of research participants (Mason 2002). The choice of anonymizing interviews in this study was made upon two premises. First, because interviews explored behaviour patterns rather than participants' interventions in specific events, and therefore the offer of anonymity was plausible and there was no clear value added by publishing names. Secondly, to encourage participants to provide more honest answers, and to avoid interviewees following the PR lines often expected in elite interviewing. Among press officers and journalists, the option of anonymity was clearly welcomed and facilitated the establishment of rapport during the interview process. Among some politician participants, the decision to anonymise interviews had a positive effect, as long as they were keen to reflect on their relationship with news organisations and openly disclose information about their routines, methods and personal relations. Others remained relatively constrained and did not share sensitive information despite anonymity. In a small number of interviews, participants requested to momentarily turn the recorder off, especially when making references to specific cases. Examples given under these circumstances were obviously not transcribed or coded. On other occasions, participants agreed to being recorded during the whole interview but gave examples off the record. These examples are not mentioned in the thesis either, in order to protect confidentiality. They offered useful insights to support the analysis but are not used to illustrate points.

An additional point to consider is that of language. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, and transcripts were also analysed in this language, in order to keep direct contact with the way in which participants expressed themselves. Specific quotations used throughout the thesis for illustration purposes were translated into English by the author and native speakers were consulted on translated phrases to ensure natural language clarity. Therefore, although most quotations used throughout the thesis are word-by-word translations, on occasions where idioms were not easily translatable, preference was given to sense-making rather than literality.

4.4.4. Strategies for data analysis

Overall, the process of data preparation and analysis extended for approximately one year, and was documented in a project journal for audit trail purposes, as suggested by Bazeley & Jackson (2013).

The analysis was conducted using NVivo10, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software program (CAQDAS). This software not only facilitated the process of coding but, more importantly, contains a variety of functions aiding non-linear forms of analysis. It does so by providing tools for linking information, modelling, as well as greatly facilitating the efficient retrieval and comparison of information using tools such as queries, matrices and word searches (see Bringer, 2006; Hutchison et al., 2010; Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

4.4.4.1. Initial coding and codebook development
After they were fully transcribed, all interviews were imported into NVivo10 for analysis. They were associated with their groups of reference (politicians, journalists, press officers) in order to facilitate future queries. All interviews were

analysed using successive stages of coding and aiming to develop analytical insight grounded in the generated data. The word 'data' refers in this context to the "textual representation of a conversation, observation and interaction" (Guest et al., 2012: 50).

Coding refers to the process through which textual data generated for analysis is de-constructed in multiple units of meaning or incidents – actions, characteristics, experiences, explanations – with the aim of assisting analytical thinking about that data (Charmaz 2006; Strauss & Corbin 2008; Birks & Mills 2011). It acts as a way to "define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple what it means" (Charmaz, 2006: 46). The initial stage of coding for this study was developed following a line-by-line approach, that is to say subjecting a first group of interviews (N= 14) to close inspection and developing open, rather than hierarchically organised, codes. Each time a code is created it has to be defined, aiming for consistency in the future application of that code to different data segments (see complete Code Book in Appendix 4). Following this approach, it was typical for a paragraph to include more than one, eventually overlapping, codes.

For example, the following paragraph (from a conversation with the editor of an online newspaper) has been coded with 3 different nodes: "symbiosis-synchrony", referring to the convergence between political and journalistic interests; "political operation", referring to a source's coordinated effort to get media coverage with a strategic aim; and "assessing quality of information", referring to the journalistic practice of checking the veracity of the information provided.

> So there you have an example of someone who is trying to operate and, despite that he is trying to operate, the issue is anyway real, is truthful, is not an invention and is news. So, what we do in such case is talk to all the sources.
>
> Journalist 2, Editor, online media.

In the following example, extracted from the conversation with a senator, the paragraph has been also coded into three nodes: "media ownership-concentration", referring to the concentration of media property; "triggering debate", referring to the political actor's aims of seeking media coverage to position a topic on the agenda and "acknowledging difficulties", referring to the recognition that such an aim is not always easy to achieve:

> Sometimes we speak about issues that we are interested in positioning in the media, which is not very easy because all media here is concentrated, so this is not an open thing in which everyone has the same communication possibilities.
>
> Politician 11, Senator.

The objective of this strategy for initial coding is to stick closely to the data and interrogate participants' experiences instead of applying pre-existent categories (Charmaz 2006); "a brainstorming approach to analysis" (Strauss & Corbin, 2008: 160).

After coding an initial group of six interviews following this approach, a total of 115 codes were organised in a tree code in order to facilitate the localization of specific codes in the analysis of successive interviews, providing an initial framework for data organisation and analysis. Codes were organised into six groups or domains, identified with a colour to facilitate visual identifications: political actors' domain (blue nodes), journalists' domain (red nodes), interactions between politicians and journalists (purple nodes), agenda drivers (green nodes), contextual features (orange nodes) and actors (yellow nodes). Each domain generally contained a handful of categories or higher-level concepts under which

lower-level concepts were organised according to shared properties (Strauss & Corbin 2008).

Nodes were constantly revised for consistency, in order to rename, reorganise or merge redundant nodes. However, new nodes only occasionally emerged after coding the first dozen interviews, confirming the validity of this threshold as a point of reference for data saturation (see Guest et al., 2006). Anticipating this scenario, the interviews first coded were those identified (during field work-level analysis) as richer in detail and example. Subsequently, analysis moved forward in groups of three, intercalating interviews from the different groups of reference (politicians, journalists, press officers). Since longer and richer interviews were analysed at the beginning of the process, coding of subsequent interviews became more straightforward; most codes had already been identified and later interviews analysed tended to be those that were shorter. The final number of nodes after the completion of initial coding in all interviews was 129.

Memo-writing was a fundamental tool during data analysis. Memo-writing is especially encouraged within the grounded theory tradition as a way to explore data and identify relations between nodes – the basis for data analysis and early theorisation – as well as a way of monitoring the relationship between emergent categories and research questions (Charmaz 2006; Strauss & Corbin 2008; Birks & Mills 2011).

The following image shows a screenshot from NVivo with the first stage tree node, as it looks when the nodes are not expanded. On the following page there is a diagram showing all nodes identified during the first stage of coding, organised in six domains identified with a colour to facilitate the coding process.

Figure 9: First Node Tree not expanded (see full diagram of nodes in next page)

POLITICIANS DOMAIN

GOALS OF MEDIA EXPOSURE
- Informing the public
- Listening
- Reinforcing
- representation
- Electoral aim
- Existence- Visibility
- Policy-making
- Triggering debate
- Setting oneself apart
- Accelerating discussions
- Sending messages
- Elite container
- Influence-power
- Reactive decision-making

ATTITUDES
- Double standard
- Being at ease
- Anticipating envy
- Adaptability
- Expecting promotional coverage
- Unfamiliarity
- Difficulties
- Struggling to cope
- Selectivity
- Being left out

POLITICAL COMM. PROFESSIONALIZATION
- Creating media niche
- Buying space in the media
- Patronising behaviour
- Complaining about story
- Constructing a story
- Strategic disclosures
- Political operation
- Off the record
- Targeting audiences
- Detecting opportunity
- Diverting attention
- Language command
- Competing for media attention
- Changing routines

CONSTRAINTS
- Damaging media exposure
- Acknowledging limited impact
- Non-mediated networks
- Territorial work
- Volatility of media currency
- Differentiated access

PLACE IN ROUTINE
- Absence of news management

POLITICIANS & JOURNALISTS INTERACTIONS

BOUNDARIES
- Understanding utilitarian base
- Keeping distance
- Risking corruption
- Being friends- close relationship
- Domestication of sources

PRACTICES
- Trading of Information-News
- Symbiosis- Synchrony
- Collaboration
- Rough negotiation
- Building and testing trust
- Frequent contact
- Interpretive community

ROLES DEFINITION
- Normative media role
- Defining politics
- Quality of political journalism
- Lack of understanding
- Rules of the game
- Little world- Isolation

JOURNALISTS DOMAIN

WORK CONDITIONS
- Poor Training
- Time-constraints
- Experience
- Beat

PRACTICES
- Pack journalism
- Self-C
- Asses
- Investigative journalism
- Key sources
- Protecting the source
- Checking on power

ATTITUDES
- Apparent objectivity

AGENDA DRIVERS DOMAIN

INTER-MEDIA COMPETITION

WHAT IS NEWS
- conflict-driven media content
- celebrity-led coverage
- Contingency

MEDIA-DRIVEN CONTENT

POLITICS-DRIVEN CONTENT

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRAINTS
- Editorial line
- Explicit biased coverage
- Journalist subordination
- Political editorial committee
- Relationship with directors-owners

INFORMATION MONITORING
- Media Consumption

CONTEXTUAL DOMAIN

CENTRALISATION
- Regional reach
- National reach

DEMANDS ON POLITICS
- Transparency
- Civil Scrutiny
- Public-politicians disconnection
- Distrust

MEDIA SYSTEM
- Market-oriented system
- State role in media system
- Pluralism
- Independence
- Ownership-concentration

POLITICAL SYSTEM
- Voluntary vote
- Transition
- Presidentialism

ACTORS DOMAIN

MEDIA ACTORS
- Television
- Social Media- Twitter
- Print Press
- Radio

POLITICAL ACTORS
- Social movement
- Press officers- Mediators
- Political parties
- New Political Actors
- Moneda- Cabinet
- Congress

Figure 10: Diagram of first node tree expanded

4.4.4.2. Data reduction and development of analytical codes

The second stage of data analysis started after all interviews were coded, in order to build an adjusted interpretation of the participants' views that could provide a basis for answering the research questions guiding the study. This stage, which I will describe as data reduction[50], incorporated a progression of the analysis around the identification of core categories and their main properties, which provided the basis for findings.

The main strategies followed, in order to move towards data reduction, were the identification of core categories and the analysis of data in clusters of nodes related to that category. In order to make this task more manageable, some exploratory techniques facilitated by NVivo10 were used, such as comparing relative frequencies of codes, exploring co-occurrences and using tools for visualizations such as cluster analysis.

Comparing frequencies among codes provided a first indication about topics that were given greater relevance by participants. Therefore, high frequencies[51] are closely connected to greater salience. Codes with higher frequencies – that is to say, themes more commonly discussed by participants – were thoroughly analysed, comparing how the different groups of reference approached those themes, highlighting similarities and differences where appropriate.

Codes generated in the first stage were further explored using queries that detect

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[50] Data reduction is a concept more commonly used within the tradition of applied thematic analysis (Namey et al., 2008; Guest et al., 2012).This stage of analysis receives a variety of names among grounded theorists. Following Glaser & Strauss (1967), Birks & Mills (2011) refer to it as intermediate coding; Strauss & Corbin (2008) refer to it as axial coding, while Charmaz (2006) distinguishes between axial and selective coding.

[51] Frequencies are assessed not only as to how many times a code was applied but also as to how many respondents the code was applied. This was used in order to avoid attributing too much weight to a code that was, for example, applied 20 times in just one interview versus another code that was applied once in 20 interviews.

relevant co-occurrences, that is to say, instances in which two or more codes were applied to a "discrete segment of text from a unique respondent" (Namey et al. 2008). Co-occurrences are a basic indication of relationship between concepts. These were first explored creating a general matrix in which all first stage codes represented the columns and the rows, in order to have an idea of relevant intersections (relationships) between codes. Relevant intersections in specific domains were further explored retrieving those segments of text in which codes were simultaneously applied, to assist analysis and memo-writing.

Additionally, other complementary strategies such as *cluster analysis* were applied to detect similarities and relationships. NVivo's clustering tools can be used to assess the similarity of nodes based on word or code similarity, then presented as a dendrogram or graph (Bazeley & Jackson 2013). So, for example, in the image below it is possible to see that the codes "adapting to the rule of the media", "circumnavigating the rule of the media", "monitoring the environment" and "creating opportunities" were discussed in somehow distinct ways. Instead, the code "obtaining visibility" was often discussed together with "enabling- facilitating (political) action", which suggests that the search for media attention is closely linked to political objectives. "Defining the rule of the media" was often coded together with "(news) trading", which might indicate that understanding how the news media operate is basic in order to attempt positioning topics.

Figure 11: Nodes clustered by coding similarity

Adapting to the rule of the media
Circumnavigating the rule of the media
Monitoring the environment
Creating opportunities
Enabling-facilitating action (policy dimension)
Obtaining visibility-public attention
Trading
Defining the rule of the media
Communicating-informing with the public (electoral dimension)
StrategicDisclosures
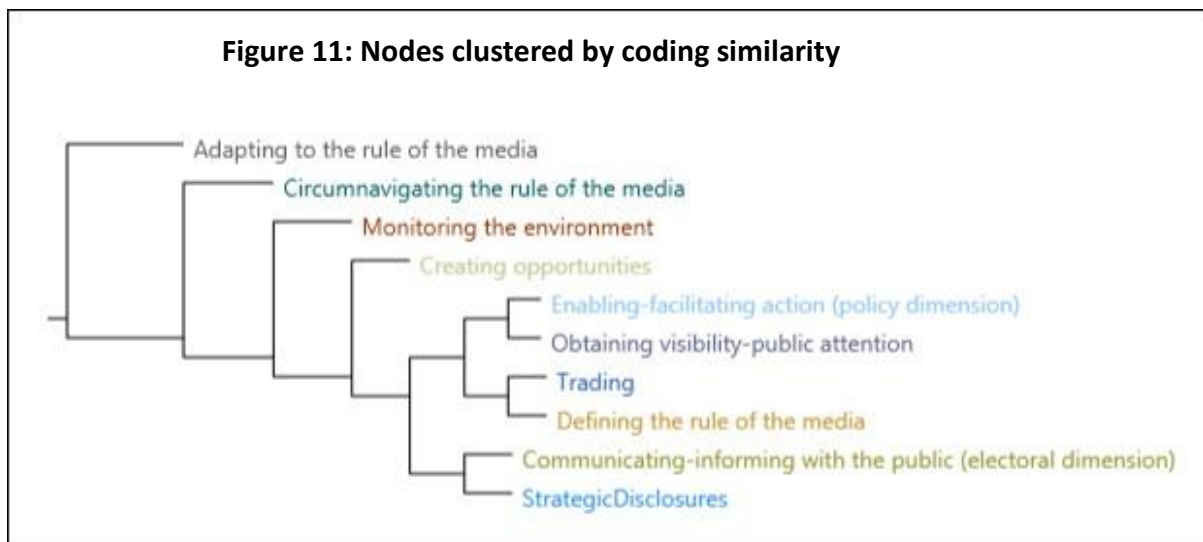
This line of analysis can provide a rationale to construct a narrative that is actually grounded in data and the views of participants (Guest & McLellan, 2003). However, I share the view of Bazeley & Jackson (2013) that these are tools best used in an exploratory mode to assist the interpretive effort of qualitative research and do not necessarily provide explanatory evidence. Instead, they are useful visualizations to spark ideas and point towards relationships that have to be manually explored in the raw data.

After the successive use of these techniques, six prominent clusters were identified and analysed: (1) independence-autonomy, (2) trading information, (3) strategic disclosures, (4) visibility-public attention, (5) what makes it into the news and (6) political communication professionalisation. These clusters were individually analysed through memo writing, in order to establish relationships, detect differences and, overall, go beyond the descriptive level and move towards analytical coding, explanatory models and theoretical insight. Charmaz (2006) refers to this process as clustering, a prewriting technique that aims to produce a

tentative map of relevant categories.

A discrete tree node, integrating 12 analytical codes, was the final outcome of the second stage of analysis, illustrated as:
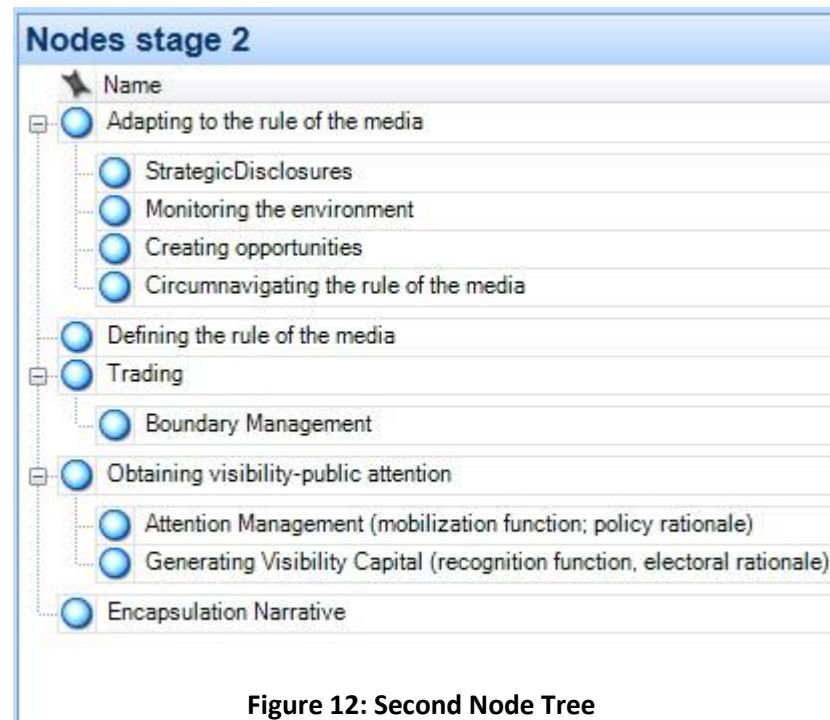
Figure 12: Second Node Tree

The organisation of these codes reflects the main relationships mapped through the exercise of clustering and memo-writing. Findings have been organised and presented using this tree node as a basis.

4.5. Validation of findings

The validity of findings in this study has been established at the different stages of the research process, aiming for coherence between research aims and outcomes, as well as the production of findings that are empirically grounded and yet able to enter into a dialogue with existing literature.

Validity in qualitative research is grounded in establishing coherence between objectives, theoretical perspectives and research methods (Kvale & Brinkmann

2009; Birks & Mills 2011), as well as the relevance and appropriateness of findings in relation to the research questions posed (Pierce 2008). As such, validity relies on a continuous process involving questioning data and checking interpretations against data, as well as transparency in the procedures used (Charmaz 2006; Strauss & Corbin 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

Some of the steps taken in order to increase the validity of findings in this study already outlined in this chapter can be briefly summarised as follows:

- At the stage of **research design**, the decision to incorporate groups of reference different from political elites was taken with the aim of securing a variety of perspectives, as well as providing an opportunity to validate findings via comparison of participants' accounts about the areas under study. Having comparison groups (Glaser & Strauss 1967) or multiple sources of information (Guest et al., 2012) has been highlighted as a measure for improvement in the credibility of theoretical insights in qualitative research.

- This concern was later pursued during the **stage of data collection** through the sampling of political and media actors that reflected different political affiliations, as well as experiences in different institutions, political areas and media platforms. At this stage, the questionnaire was also adjusted in response to first assessments on the conduct of interviews.

- At the **stage of data analysis,** a project journal was created with the aim of ensuring that an audit trail was maintained. Documenting decisions along the research process had the primary aim of being as transparent as possible about the path taken, an important condition for credibility in qualitative research (Rubin & Rubin 2005; Birks & Mills 2011). Developing a code book also helped to

maintain consistency during the coding process; which was later complemented with the use of software-aided techniques for the exploration of data, which guided interpretation, ensuring that findings were grounded in research participants' experiences.

Corbin & Strauss (2008) contends that credible findings are "trustworthy and believable if they reflect participants', researchers', and readers' experiences with a phenomenon but at the same time the explanation is only one of many 'plausible' interpretations possible from data" (Ibid: 302). Certainly, the validity of a qualitative and interpretive study cannot rely on replicability; however some avenues to gauge credibility of findings include exposing them to the judgment of experts (Pierce 2008). This has been a complementary validation route within this study, through the exposition of findings in international conferences.[52] These different steps taken seek for consistency of research findings and, therefore, reliability of the study as a whole.

4.6. Strengths and limitations of chosen approach

The choice of approaching the research problem outlined at the beginning of this chapter using an interpretive strategy based on conducting interviews is consistent with the research questions that this study seeks to answer, which are focused on a qualitative understanding of the process of mediatization, from an actor-centred perspective.

Qualitative interviewing is a research method particularly suited to grasping experiences, motives and opinions, and assembling multiple views in order to

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[52] Among others, findings of this study were presented at the ECREA TWG Mediatization Conference, Rethinking the mediatization of politics, LSE (April 2014); ICA Annual Conference (2015), IAMCR Annual Conference (2015).

portray complex social processes and the way meaning is negotiated (Rubin & Rubin 2005). Additionally, this allows an exploration of the role contextual features play in rather abstract processes (Mason 2002) such as the mediatization of politics, an issue of pivotal relevance for this study. For the study of political elites in particular, interviewing is a long-tested method, appropriate for the exploration of elite mind-sets as well as how dominant powers and institutions shape those understandings (Richards & Smith 2002; Pierce 2008).

This study certainly has important limitations that have to be acknowledged. Firstly, because of its research design, this project can only attest to an interpretation based on the views of a group of participants in a single moment in time. As such, it cannot comprehensively account for changes in the relationship between Chilean political elites and the media over time. Qualitative research can certainly offer some insights for longitudinal research. In particular, how individuals negotiate change and how social transformations relate to specific contexts (Holland et al. 2006). In this study, this aim is developed by exploring how political elites have negotiated change in the Chilean media environment in recent years. Nonetheless, this study has not been designed to provide evidence of longitudinal change in the mediatization process, let alone measure levels of mediatization over time.

Secondly, this study focuses on specific groups of actors, political elites and news media actors, therefore paying attention to the relevance that the traditional journalistic media paradigm still may hold. It does not delve into the logics of action that new media may be imposing on actors. These limitations, nonetheless, contribute to the aim of gaining explanatory power by delimiting the object of

enquiry to certain temporal parameters and certain actors. Finally, due to the nature of the research design guiding this study, there is no intention of measuring levels of mediatization. Some scholars have suggested that mediatization theory is especially suited to comparative research (Strömbäck 2011b) and even that it has to be conducted in a comparative framework (Meyen et al. 2014). The underpinning concept behind such statements is that the expected outcome of a study on mediatization should be whether a certain group, institution or country is more or less mediatized compared to others or compared with themselves at different moments of time. This is certainly a valid expected outcome of comparative research, but certainly not the only means of analysing mediatization. Far from it, this study was conceived upon the idea that mediatization research, and mediatization theory, can benefit from asking different questions such as how, why and under what circumstances are political elites mediatized, and what that means for the on-going debate on the subject.

CHAPTER 5

CIRCUITS OF ELITE COMMUNICATION

The mediatization of political elites in Chile has not occurred in a vacuum nor is it the mere reflection of global trends. Instead, it is a process that is responsive to the operational logics of a specific media environment and a specific political culture. The literature about relationships between political and media actors recognises that these are context-dependent (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Berkowitz 2009) and therefore shaped by political, social and geographical variables. Likewise, the institutional logics perspective highlights that, as well as institutions being historically contingent, individuals and organisations are embedded in specific cultural contexts (Thornton et al. 2012). Recognising this is relevant for situating the interactions between political elites and traditional news media in a more concrete environment, inhabited and dominated by particular media actors.

This chapter establishes the context in which political elites in Chile relate to traditional news media, identifying the main features of a prevailing political communication micro-culture that binds politicians, press officers and journalists together. This micro-culture is examined in terms of its communication practices, which are linked to physical and mediated spaces in which specific groups of institutional actors interact, all of which constitute what will be called 'a circuit of elite communication'. This circuit will be described within the chapter in relation to actors (politicians linked to party politics, press officers assisting them and journalists linked to news media outlets of national coverage), physical spaces (*La*

Moneda and central-level government agencies, political parties, Congress) and news media outlets that together configure an information environment relevant for the actors involved. Additionally, this circuit is shaped by personal and frequent interactions of the actors involved. The analysis of interviews allows description of this as a micro-culture heavily dominated by traditional players, exclusive and self-referential, which is nonetheless struggling to deal with a renewed informational environment, which has seen an expansion granted for the proliferation of digitally-native news organisations and social media.

Looking into this micro-culture follows, on the one hand, the interest expressed by the neo-institutional tradition and the institutional logics perspective for the exploration of identities, practices and beliefs (March & Olsen 2006) to better understand how the culture carried by institutions and networks of actors activates certain behaviours in individuals and groups (DiMaggio 1997). On the other hand, it follows a renewed interest in the study of elite cultures in media studies, as they are understood as spaces where communication practices have significant repercussions on society (Davis 2003; Davis 2007b; Corcoran & Fahy 2009).

Section 5.1 outlines how the relationship between political elites and news organisations has supported a micro-culture that reinforces and feeds the elite closure that characterises Chilean social (Torche 2005) and political organisations (Godoy 2003; Luna & Mardones 2010). In spite of recognizing the increasing fragmentation of the news media environment and the eruption of some influential media actors operating in digital platforms, research participants highlight the closed and self-referential nature of the political communication

community. This community is therefore characterised as inhabiting a micro-culture, based on frequent exchanges and intensive relations, which still heavily gravitates towards the elite press. Additionally, the disconnections between the political press and the general public are acknowledged, stressing two main points. First, the primary role this political beat has in configuring a space of inter-elite communication. Second, how the arrival of new media actors represents a challenge of legitimacy not only for political elites but also for traditional media players, as long as the micro-culture of elite communication as a whole sees its ability to control public attention diminished.

The second part of the chapter recognizes that the circuit of elite communication is not an open space where all actors have equal chances of mediated visibility. Instead, some structural sources of differentiation are identified, which research participants stress as determinant in defining access to the media. The super-visibility of the Executive power, the cleavage of national versus regional leaderships and the political biases of dominant media players are identified as structural barriers in the relationship between political actors and the media. These sources of differentiation are closely connected to features of both the political and media systems, and appear directly aligned to monetary, professional and time resources available to actors for the management of mediated visibility.

Finally, a typology of mediatization is developed taking into consideration institutional and individual resources devoted to media management. The identification of these ideal types highlights that the mediatization of political actors, that is the degree to which political actors adapt to news media logics of action, is dependent upon both the availability of institutional resources and their

own definitions regarding the value of mediated visibility in the construction of political leadership. Thus, the extent to which some actors appear more mediatized than others in their communication strategies is a combination of structural conditions and individual practices.

5.1 The elite micro-culture: excluding and bounded by the elite press

Constant communication, frequent information exchanges and similar patterns of media consumption and information monitoring reinforce the self-referential nature of the political communication community, a group integrated by political and media actors who converge around spaces relevant for the conduct of institutional politics, especially *La Moneda*, Congress and political parties, and around a delimited circuit of elite communication, comprised of certain organisational media actors.

Looking at the relationships between political and media actors through the lens of the neo-institutionalist tradition (Dimaggio & Powell 1983; March & Olsen 1984), it is possible to infer that by their convergence within a micro-culture that has fairly recognisable limits, these communities have developed norms and rules to guide their interactions.

For a start, interaction within these groups of actors is guaranteed due to their convergence in concrete spaces. In Congress, journalists and politicians share multiple common spaces and that is why is often referred to as a 'dream setting' for political reporters. The building is divided spatially between two separate yet

interconnected sections, the Senate and the Deputies' Chamber, and accredited journalists circulate freely through most sectors of the building, including the hallways and the cafeteria located right outside each chamber. All parliamentarians are, therefore, easily accessible on a one-to-one basis. Although journalists have a dedicated press room in each chamber, during legislative days most journalists spend far more time in the hallways, talking directly to politicians or their press aides. Casual interactions between journalists and politicians in *La Moneda*, the presidential palace, are certainly less frequent, as direct access to ministers and public servants is more restricted and often limited to rushed questioning and answering when authorities cross the building's patios, or in exceptional cases to previously agreed meetings. In spite of the difference between parliamentarians and ministers, access to political sources is not perceived as a problematic issue. On the contrary, the interactions between politicians, press officers and journalists are described as fluid, intense and frequent.

Certainly, the proximity between political and media actors is not only restricted to physical interactions. It is also built on the back of myriad informal conversations – face to face, over the phone, through instant messaging applications – and constant monitoring of published and unpublished information. Politicians, as well as press officers and journalists, comment on the reflexive nature of the political communication community, and how information moves at great speed, through both formal and informal channels, partially determining the course the news agenda will take as well as future interventions of political actors. During this process the political news agenda is shaped and negotiated, together with interpretive frameworks to understand events:

-XO: How often do you talk to journalists or editors?

- **A lot, a lot,** for various reasons, because one is usually exposed to this editorial niche; **you enter a certain circuit**. And therefore, it is not only about providing different information, but even to discuss and compare [information] **you have regular contacts with journalists**. [53]

Politician 29, Former Minister.

The most important part [of our job] is to know how the ground is, and we manage the ground: talking to the media, knowing which lines of work they are following; monitoring. That's us (…) and during the day I monitor websites, **I'm all day talking to journalists; all day long, it's awful**.

Communications 12, Political Party.

Everything changes very fast; it is very fast. You're stuck on an issue and the next day; no, the next hour, it changes. **Everyone knows what everyone else does. And everyone knows what everyone says**.

Journalist 9, Journalist, TV.

Proximity, speed and regularity of contacts are some of the issues highlighted in the above quotations. Davis (2003, 2007, 2009) is one of the scholars who has advocated paying attention to the micro-level politics of the political sphere itself, and the "mediated reflexivity" that characterises most of politicians' and journalists' interactions, as their relationships are "institutionalised, intense and reflexive as both sides have come to incorporate the other within their everyday thinking, decision-making and behaviour" (Davis 2009: 215).

At the time of identifying the informational limits of the circuit of elite communication, most research participants recognise that the increasing fragmentation of the information environment has made the task of monitoring information increasingly demanding. Patterns of media consumption certainly

[53] In most quotations some segments have been highlighted using bold. This emphasis has been added by the author, with the aim of directing the reader's attention and facilitating interpretation. When emphasis is added by the respondent, this will be signalled.

vary individually. However, specific media platforms are brought to the foreground as relevant for the vast majority of political journalists and politicians, playing the role of delimiting the territory of relevant information. At a national level, the press (particularly *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera* and *La Segunda*) is considered a non-negotiable part of the day for most research participants. Additionally, some radio stations are recognised as having a relevant role in the political beat (*Cooperativa, BioBio, ADN* and *Agricultura*). Limited time on free reception TV is partially counterbalanced by 24-hour news TV channels (*TVN 24 Horas* and *CNN Chile*) with limited audiences, but focused impact. In the digital domain, the newspaper *El Mostrador* and the website of investigative journalism Ciper.cl are often mentioned as relevant players, plus other journalistic projects functioning from digital platforms only (for example *El Dínamo, The Clinic.cl*). In the area of social media, Twitter is mentioned by approximately half of the sample (and one third of the interviewed politicians)[54] as an important source of information, especially useful for taking the temperature of the political moment.

Distinctions by medium also apply, and TV in particular is situated in a separate category by politicians and press officers because of its broad reach and potential mass impact. Regional and local media are also discussed and approached in different terms. As with TV, they are conceived of as outward-facing spaces of communication; that is to say, oriented to audiences located outside the circuit of elite communication.

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[54] The news media outlets included in the description of the informational limits of the elite political communication culture are those most frequently mentioned by research participants, as an indication of those common sources of information prominently considered in the formation of political news agendas. Nevertheless, there are other news media outlets that could be considered as actors within this circuit, such as *Qué Pasa* magazine, the financial press (*Estrategia, Pulso, Diario Financiero*), political TV programs (*Tolerancia 0, Estado Nacional*) or most recent digitally native additions such as *El Libero*.

With the limited space that political coverage currently has on free-to-air TV[55], the elite press is generally recognised as the gravitational centre of the political communication micro culture, despite this section of the news media being perceived as disconnected from the general public. This community of actors is well aware of the elitist bias of political journalism. It was common for research participants to describe their environment using words that denote isolation and being disconnected from broader society, such as 'microclimate', 'capsule', 'bubble', 'little world' and 'reality show', a narrative that reinforces the idea that the circuit of political news is mostly understood as a space for inter-elite communication, an idea typically illustrated in the following quotation, from a Senator:

> - (...) **through the media you're talking to other politicians and the media themselves**; it is sort of encapsulated with regards to the citizenry
>
> - *XO: Would you say that the citizenry is left out then?*
>
> - **It is completely left out**. This is like a reality [show]; here in Congress is a reality [show] and the same in *La Moneda*, between journalists and politicians (...) One of the most interesting issues here, and one that surprised me so much when I started in politics, is this encapsulation.
>
> Politician 26, Senator.

This prevalent narrative of encapsulation resonates with arguments about the historical role of the news media as a forum for communication among elites (Schudson 2002; Davis 2003; Wolfsfeld 2003; Corcoran & Fahy 2009), but more critically, it points to an inward-facing circuit of elite communication, integrated by a limited number of people, where relations are mostly personal and membership granted by means of successive interactions:

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[55] As mentioned in Chapter 2, press programmes represent 27 per cent of all TV programming. However, political subjects account only for 9 per cent of these productions (therefore slightly more than 2 per cent of total programming) (Anatel 2014).

> Sure, the media market is small and the political market is small, and then **the relationships are direct. [You know] everybody**, everybody, because you also go every week to Congress, where you will see them all and they will see you all day long; [then you have] *La Moneda*, political parties and that would be about it. **There aren't many places for reporting, and they are small.**
>
> Journalist 12, Editor, elite newspaper.

The idea of encapsulation appears reinforced by the centrality of the agenda setting power the elite press is perceived as having for the political conversation, in spite of the quite generalized acknowledgment that these newspapers are not widely read by the vast majority of citizens.[56] It is frequent for politicians and political journalists alike to state matter-of-factly that *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* (and to a lesser extent the evening newspaper *La Segunda*) are a daily starting point, acting in practice as proxies of the political agenda itself.

> It is the first thing that you as a journalist, editor, director or owner will read. They are extremely influential. **The duopoly of the press exists and is tremendously influential.** And, besides, they are good newspapers.
>
> Journalist 9, TV.

> Absolutely, **absolutely. They set the agenda, they build it.** So you read the editorial pieces of *El Mercurio* and there's the agenda. And *La Tercera* is the same thing; same.
>
> Politician 21, Deputy.

> I would like it if other news media had the same ability to generate public opinion, because in a way ***La Segunda*, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*** **set the agenda for the rest of the media.**
>
> Politician 22, Senator.

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[56] In their paper versions, *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera* and *La Segunda* print 149,000 87,000 and 27,000 copies respectively. Considering online and paper readership, those numbers are calculated as 450,000, 347,000 and 98,000 respectively (Achap, 2013).

> The sensitive spots that alert us. Of course, it is inevitable to start the day with *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* (...) but really relevant. **Starting the day without *La Tercera* and *El Mercurio* is like starting the day without shoes for us**.
>
> Communications 12, Political Party.

The generalized assumption is that most eyes, within the circuit of elite communication, will be on these newspapers daily, since they are a coveted forum for defining political positions and send signals to both political allies and enemies. Access, however, is highly competitive and, of course, not guaranteed. In the words of one research participant: "*El Mercurio* is the newspaper of elites; left and right" (politician 24). This status provokes some tensions among a number of politicians, who presently compromise political differences with the aim of reaching the elites and achieving political and social validation. Having political, class and geographical biases, the elite press perform the function of symbolically containing the "encapsulation narrative", not only as a reflection of the Chilean political micro-culture but connected more widely to the nature of elites and the social endogamy that characterises much of Chile's social scaffolding.

Neither politicians nor journalists are oblivious to the disconnect between the elite circuit of communication and the rest of society. Both groups express concerns regarding this aspect, as well as having little ability to challenge the situation:

> Of course, **that is the block in which one lives** because is obviously important what comes out in *La Segunda*, *El Mercurio*; but we read that, the bulk of the population do not read newspapers.
>
> Politician 11, Senator.

> Maybe 25 thousand read *El Mercurio* daily. Conversely, Emol[57] has between 350 and 400 thousand visitors. But they still don't manage to make that click. They still believe, especially the political world, that if they were interviewed by *El Mercurio* on Sunday everything changed. And it's not true. The media... I mean, **it is true for those in power. They still live there. People live elsewhere.**

> Journalist 15, Senior editor, radio.

The encapsulation of the elite communication circuit appears to be reinforced by the relative homogeneity exhibited by the elite press, both in terms of their news agendas (Valenzuela & Arriagada 2009; Gonzalez-Bustamante & Soto Saldias 2015), and the alignment these newspapers have shown regarding political party agendas (Porath 2007). Added to this are the widely acknowledged links between the elite press and the political and economic right (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Gonzalez-Rodríguez 2008; Monckeberg 2009; Couso 2012; Herrero 2014). Some politicians and press officers – especially those on the centre-left of the political spectrum – question the elite press's neutrality and accuse it of political bias and of the open pursuit of sectional interests and the existence of favouritism, highlighting the elite press as a closed space where political actors have unequal access. Others differ from this assessment and emphasise that access to the media – the elite press included – depends mostly on journalists' professional judgement and does not correspond to party distinctions. This discrepancy among research participants is not a trivial matter and indicates that a left-right distinction could be an inaccurate interpretation of the clientelistic networks observed transversally across the Chilean elite and some news organisations. Rather than claiming strict political parallelism, research participants identify relationships

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[57] Emol is the main website controlled by El Mercurio S.A., which reproduces some content published in El Mercurio but has separate staff.

built on proximity and privilege, facilitated by the small and manageable size of the political communication community.

Additionally, news organisations that are part of the elite press are identified as political actors in their own right, with a significant ability to position issues on the political agenda. However, there is consensus that their abilities to render topics and actors invisible – greater at the beginning of the transition – is increasingly being questioned in a new communication environment that allows and encourages the circulation of a greater variety of sources and viewpoints, especially online. This new communication environment appears to be eroding the discursive hegemony of the elite communication circuit, posing challenges to both political and media actors. This point will be expanded in the next section.

5.1.1   An eroded circuit: a sign of shifting logics or further isolation?

Both the Chilean media and political environments are undergoing a period of profound change. New actors have entered into the public debate, both in the media and the political domain. On the one hand, digitally-native news organisations and social media have expanded the informative circuit and the range of subjects covered by news media (Franco 2009; Godoy & Gronemeyer 2012; Gonzalez-Bustamante & Soto Saldias 2015). On the other hand, the main political coalitions are experiencing processes of fragmentation and re-organisation[58], while leaders emerging from the social mobilisations of 2011 and 2012 have formally entered politics.[59] These changes occur in the context of high

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[58] As mentioned in Chapter 2, the main political coalitions are going through processes of re-branding and change (e.g. the former *Concertación* is today known as *Nueva Mayoría*, while the centre-right Alianza has launched a renewed coalition rebranded as *Chile Vamos*).

[59] Four student leaders were elected deputies for the period 2014-2018 (Camila Vallejo, Karol Cariola, Giorgio Jackson and Gabriel Boric) plus a community leader, Ivan Fuentes, who acted as spokesperson during protests against the centre in the southern region of Aysen.

levels of distrust towards institutional politics[60], and a series of political scandals that have brought into the spotlight the too-close-for-comfort relationship of political and corporate actors,[61] and the emergence of new forms of social activism where political parties do not play as significant a mediating role (Mayol & Azócar 2011; Arditi 2012). All these developments have situated institutional political actors under constant civic scrutiny, which has been dubbed an elite crisis by some commentators.[62]

As previously discussed, the ability of the political press – and the elite press in particular – to control collective attention at a wide societal level is perceived as severely damaged. However, it is the circuit of elite communication as a whole that appears in question, as demands for transparency and accountability are directed towards both political and traditional media players, which makes ideas of discursive hegemony barely sustainable.

> It is not a cliché to say that the student movement is a before and after for the whole of society: to politicians, the media, and authorities; for everyone. Definitely, **Chile is no longer the same as before. And politicians know that** (...) they can no longer operate as before; everything goes out now (...) **I don't believe, truly, that *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* have the power and impact they once had**; impossible, not anymore.
>
> Journalist 2, Editor online media.

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[60] In April 2015, 65 per cent of the population disapproved of the Government of President Bachelet and 77 per cent disapproved of the work of Congress.

[61] The relationship between politics and corporate actors has been at the centre of the news agenda during 2014 and 2015. Two emblematic cases are Penta, which takes its name from a powerful holding whose owners were prosecuted under suspicion of tax evasion and the illegal funding of political campaigns; and Caval, which takes its name from the company owned by President Bachelet's daughter-in-law, who was allegedly involved in influence peddling to access a millionaire real estate business.

[62] The Ministry of the Interior, Jorge Burgos, provided an "official" recognition of this state of affairs during his intervention in Icare, an important business forum where political and economic elites converge: "The country is experiencing a serious crisis in certain respects. It is painful because it is a crisis of the elites, which are essential for the country's development", said Burgos in his intervention (Weissman 2015).

In my time, the media and the politicians still managed the agenda. Today that does not happen; and therefore today politicians know they don't control the agenda. **The citizenry play a greater role in the construction of the strategic agenda** and, therefore, politicians today have to adapt to the agendas that the people are indicating; in the environmental field, in the field of education, in the political field. **Social media are structuring relevant topics nowadays**.

Politician 19, Former Deputy.

So clearly **this editorial logic, about certain news organisations having the ability to dictate the agenda**, and the rest of the media reacting to that agenda, to the point that if something was not in those news organisations it did not exist, **that is over in Chile**. It is over basically due to the explosion of the internet, and the numbers of people commenting on and visiting various websites.

Journalist 18, Editor, TV.

As the quotations above illustrate, the new informational environment erodes the ability of traditional players to dominate the agenda. Media systems are hybrid constructs and, as such, actors are continually forced to adapt to new and shifting operational logics (Chadwick 2013). For Chilean political elites, navigating between the operational logic of traditional and new players poses a challenging task but, more critically, it appears to be a challenge that few identify as important and urgent.

Among politicians, the emergence of new media voices has been somewhat welcomed, and some of the new organisational actors appear widely validated by politicians. This is particularly the case for the investigative independent journalistic centre *Ciper.cl*, whose work is often mentioned as an example of quality journalism that has pushed new subjects into the public debate. However, when political actors discuss their own experience and relationship with some of these journalistic players, an inclination to question their legitimacy and resist

change can be detected. This is sometimes achieved through downplaying the relevance these new players have or by questioning their independence. In contrast, traditional media players, and the elite press in particular, are still considered the benchmark for political news and are often regarded as a proxy of the political agenda itself.

A similar pattern of partial adoption of new hybrid logics can be detected in the limited use of social media among political authorities. Fábrega & Paredes (2013) found that 73per cent of politicians (including cabinets, senators and deputies) had established a Twitter account at the end of 2011, yet many of these accounts were barely active or completely inactive. As mentioned before, around one third of the politicians interviewed for this study spontaneously mentioned Twitter as an important source of information, but even those personally engaging in social media said they struggled to cope with the demanding task of managing these platforms and adjusting to new means of communication and demands for transparency. The following quotation from a Deputy is illustrative of the process of adjustment experienced by members of Congress regarding the extent to which opinions salient in social media platforms should be actually taken on board:

> The first year I arrived here [to Congress] **many were terrified by Twitter**: 'such things appeared on Twitter, if we vote this way they will destroy us...' I think now, today we are getting used to it and we understand that it is part of the logic; you have to act conscientiously, with conviction and you can be the object of [criticism] (...) I think the first year; 2010, 2011, with the social movements and all, **there was a kind of panic**. **Not anymore; nowadays we have learned to appreciate it in its right dimension**, we cannot ignore it and also we can use it a bit more.
>
> Politician 10, Deputy.

Among media actors, a renewed informational environment also poses challenges and opportunities. News organisations are still finding ways of redefining their

roles, and pushing to retain editorial relevance and add value to content in a context of information overload where offering exclusive content is increasingly difficult. Different organisations will define their own policies regarding social media use but most political journalists agree in understanding these platforms, particularly Twitter, as reporting tools only; they actively work to produce content that might have an impact in these networks, resisting the idea of social media dictating the agenda. Additionally, as with political actors, news organisations face increasing levels of scrutiny on social media, and see their legitimacy constantly questioned.

> **Politicians are indeed more exposed, but also we are. In social media, we are far more exposed** to being asked: why the newspaper gave so little space to this information? Or why the main headline is about a worthless news story? Or a story that was not enough developed? Or that it wasn't news, according to some people? Today the citizen has a voice and we are far more exposed; also in other media.
>
> Journalist 3, Editor, elite newspaper.

> **People turn to digital media precisely because of the press oligopoly that we have**. So the fact that *El Mostrador* is relevant, the fact that *Ciper* is relevant, is a statement about the people who are looking for information; or **doubting in this case, distrusting of formal media as information providers.**
>
> Politician 23, Deputy.

> They are not totally ignored; again, the front page of *La Tercera* is an issue, but probably the opinion of a large part of a more informed elite in Chile, won't be: 'oh, this is important because is on the front page of *La Tercera*'; but rather, why did *La Tercera* publish this on the front page? And what interests would lie behind this front page? **(...) There is a general questioning of all decisions taken by the media. There is a media consumer who is increasingly critical, that has alternative sources of information** and therefore feels empowered regarding that media outlet because he can learn about things elsewhere.
>
> Journalist 18, Editor TV.

Overall, the erosion of the circuit of elite communication is perceived as coming from the 'outside', driven by new political and media actors that do not share a professional culture nor necessarily engage in the system of practices that have sustained the micro-culture of political communication in recent years. This micro-culture has certainly been hit by these changes and it is still finding ways of reacting to them. Research interviews reveal that both political elites and traditional media are struggling to adjust to the new environment, facing difficulties in finding ways to deal with these developments. More crucially, these difficulties are common to both sides; as long as political actors and traditional media actors must react to diversified information sources, they both become subjects of increasing social scrutiny. Popkin (2006) highlights how newer media often represent a threat to both political and media elites, as their practices had become highly interdependent. In such a scenario, new technologies or the eruption of new players create a space of risks and opportunities; the options are adapting to change or losing power (Popkin 2006; Chadwick 2013).

In the context of Chilean political elites and their relationship with the news media, new political and media actors will offer opportunities for change, particularly through widening the range of subjects and sources that take part in the political debate. I argue that it is not clear, however, that this relative openness had substantially damaged the symbolic power traditional media outlets exert on political elites or the role it plays in the mobilization of political support *within* the elite, a point that will be further expanded in the next section of the chapter. To a great extent, these news organisations and particularly the elite press and niche political programmes act as elite containers: delimiting the elite

communication circuit and providing a forum for elites to articulate their concerns, interpreting what is relevant to those groups and also conferring an elite status to those who gain visibility through them. In other words, although the supremacy of the elite press is perceived as having been eroded by a new communication environment at a broad societal level, this section of the press still exerts significant power in binding together the political communication community in general and the political elites in particular. As such, the circuit of elite communication sees its ability to control the agenda seriously damaged at a societal level, but not necessarily at an elite level. On the one hand, this dissociation reinforces the encapsulation of political elites, highlighting the signs of exhaustion for a model of political communication that is better understood as a contributing factor to explaining the distance between political elites and the citizenry. On the other hand, it highlights the importance of better understanding the communication practices of political elites, their relationship with traditional media actors and how they have adapted to a shifting media environment.

5.2. Structural sources of actors' differentiated access to mediated visibility

This section identifies a set of structural conditions pertaining to the Chilean political and media systems that determine the levels of access to mediated visibility that political actors may have. These conditions were discussed and identified by the three different groups of research participants as relevant factors in the politics-media relationship, and reflect structural forms of political and media organisation that belong to the Chilean context. This analysis allows for the

identification of structural conditions mediating access of political actors to the news media.

There are three main conditions identified by research participants: first, the super-visibility of the executive power; second, the sharp differences between national vis-à-vis regional leaderships and third, the limited pluralism of the Chilean media system and the implicit political alignment of some news organisations, which could be discussed in terms of a *sui generis* form of political parallelism.

5.2.1. The super visibility of the Executive power

The first structural condition defining the political elites' access to the media is closely connected to the constitutional arrangements that lay the foundation for the institutional design of the Chilean political system. As discussed in Chapter 2, Chile has a reinforced presidential system (Godoy 2003), one of the strongest in Latin America due to a set of exclusive legislative attributions (Aninat et al. 2006).

Among research participants, the Executive power is widely perceived as having a clear upper hand for agenda control purposes, compared to other political actors. This advantage is expressed in two ways. Firstly, the exclusive initiative it has in the legislative realm is perceived as having a correlate in terms of news agenda control capacity. Secondly, the communication resources managed by the Executive power – dedicated staff, professionalized communication strategies, access to consultancy, among others – is often far superior to that of politicians based either in Congress or political parties. As a result, those actors located outside government perceive their ability to get media coverage and set the media agenda as seriously compromised in comparison to those actors located inside

government. As a result, the most frequent alternative to the management of public attention is reacting to what the Executive does or says.

These judgements were frequently expressed by actors who had transitioned between different branches, having therefore acquired experience from distinct institutional positions. The following quotation is from a communications officer working with a Senator, having previously worked in government:

> Yes, there are plenty of differences. I mean, **when you are in government, you can develop a communications strategy to replicate across the country in 48 hours...** [laughter]. With a Senator you play it so that the news media decides to invite you to participate in their agenda but it is very difficult, although if you're involved on a very timely topic and you are really bold about it, you might fully permeate the agenda at the national level.
>
> Communications 1, Senate.

Presidentialism has been identified as a key variable in the media and politics relationship. Usually, the figure of the president overshadows collective actors such as political parties (De Albuquerque 2012), as long as presidents are considered newsworthy and capture permanent media attention (Gans 1979; Kernell 1997).

Additionally, the visibility of the Executive power is discussed by research participants in terms of the comparatively higher resources and professionalized political communication means available to authorities working in this branch of government, not just the president but also other members of cabinet and high level appointments. Having professional capacity, a hierarchical structure and extended networks across the country, the operational communication capability of the Executive power appears unparalleled to other actors. The inherent executive ability of the government would add to these structural differences in

relation to actors located in the legislative power or political parties, whose roles become reactive.

> We understand, and here you can note the presidentialism, if you ask me, because **for journalists in La Moneda their number one priority – and I understand that – is to report on the activities of the president,** and they report on the typical political agenda (e.g. meetings of the political committee) but they are not always attentive to the legislative agenda. They do it but I understand that is their focus, because it **is what they are asked for, and is fastest and most newsworthy** [reporting on the president].
>
> Communications 11, La Moneda.

> It is a presidential system. **When a politician speaks about ideas, there is no way, but the Executive does things that have an impact on communities** (...) You can spend 20 years as opposition and you won't project any replacement leadership. You won't generate a presidential candidate from the opposition. But the moment you get to be in government; in 2, 4, 5 months you can achieve what you didn't in 12 years.
>
> - XO: That's the power of the Executive.
>
> - Yes, it is not the power of the media.
>
> Politician 3, Political party board.

The differential in resources between the Executive and the Legislature has been explored by Godoy (2003), stressing that 75.35 per cent of promulgated laws were initiated by the Presidency in the period 1990-2003. This distinct advantage would be explained not only by the exclusive legislative initiative granted to the Executive by law in several areas (see section 2.1), but also because parliamentarians have comparatively little technical advice in the legislative field. Something similar happens in the communication dimension. The Executive power is usually perceived as an actor with greater capacity of positioning topics. The following quotations, from a minister and a former minister, reflect the struggle associated with managing the media agenda, as well as the material resources and personal relations associated to this capacity of media management.

When you are in charge of a campaign, your relationship with the media is definitely a relationship of unity and struggle, to put it one way, **you are looking for cooperation in communication opportunities but you also want to get content across,** get profiles and strategies and other things and **that's very hard, and nowadays that requires a battalion of people, many, many people and deep knowledge of your counterparts**; who are the owners of the media, who are the people that you have as counterparts, what do they think, what their beliefs are, what they want, because those are yours margins; this is a perpetual negotiation, from early morning until the news after midnight.

Politician 29, Former Minister.

Therefore**, I know that when there is a topic you want to position, you have to insist, insist and insist on that topic at any cost, until – at the end – your message remains**. Or rather take advantage of your minutes as spokesperson, because when you talk to the media most of them are doing live transmissions, then I start not accepting questions, I start speaking about what I am interested in as government, and only then I take the questions they want to ask.

Politician 8, Minister.

Often, political actors who do not have similar access to platforms of media visibility and equivalent resources (note that both quotations included above are from politicians in ministerial positions) are forced to adopt a mostly reactive approach, and wait for the emergence of appropriate opportunities of communication. To this first structural condition of access to mediated visibility a second condition is added, that of the distinction between national and regional leaderships, which is the object of the next section.

5.2.2. National versus regional leaderships

Considering the strong centralist tendency observed in Chilean political culture (see discussion in section 2.3.2) it is not surprising that most political communication efforts among political elites, especially in the space of intra-elite communication, are firmly oriented towards Santiago-based national media.

Additionally, national and regional dynamics of communication and press management are acknowledged as separate and distinct. For authorities based in central government, communication decisions are often directed from the centre to the regions. For parliamentarians, though, it is often a matter of either/or. Those political actors who represent districts located in the centre of the country stand better a chance of accessing the national media than actors who project their images from regions outside the centre. At the same time, those political actors who aim for career advancement will also aim for the national media.

Studies of media content lend support to elites' perceptions of the differences in editorial dynamics between national and regional media. Mujica & Puente (2006) note that national media give minimal coverage to news that has a regional impact, while Gronemeyer & Porath (2014) found that geographical differences are a better predictor of editorial variety than media ownership.

In a country with a long-standing tradition of administrative and political centralism (Mardones 2006; Boisier 1992), having national leadership is often the same as building a leadership base from Santiago, which includes communicating with national news organisations based in the capital. Entering into this privileged space is difficult and highly competitive. Additionally, parliamentarians who develop their political capital regionally and locally will often privilege regional and local media, which are generally perceived as easier to access and manage. These positions are highlighted in the quotations included below; the first one, from a Deputy elected in the Metropolitan Region; and the second, from a Deputy elected in a southern region.

In the regions, people [other politicians] have regional media; they are always on regional radio, or regional television**. Those of us who are parliamentarians of Santiago, if we are not in the national media we do not exist**: we do not exist. Because in my district, I am visiting a corner, and at the next corner they don't know who I am...

Politician 13, Deputy.

I think there are two issues. **One, is the lack of local news. Therefore, one becomes a good news source** [for the regional media]. And that gives you the possibility – beyond what you do personally – to become local news.

- XO: An authority figure...

Of course, an authority figure; if there is a controversy with a mayor, you can have a say. If there is an issue with a project, you can have a say. If there are issues with the government, you can have a say; whether you are in the opposition or with the government (...) **one is an important reference for local media. Nationwide, instead,** there are 120 deputies, 38 senators, and government authorities; thus the competition for space is different (...) **nationally it is much harder.**

Politician 4, Deputy.

As a result of these dynamics, local and regional authorities appear to face a less competitive environment in their regions, but fewer chances in the national media, the most prized and main arena for political debate among political elites, and the main platform for career advancement. It is possible to argue that these established communication dynamics are a corollary of other forms of centralism, such as that observed in terms of the composition of political elites (Joignant 2009), party organisation and the selection of political candidates (Siavelis 2002; Navia 2008). However, they can also be understood as a contributing factor to political centralism, given that regional leadership has a significantly reduced chances of national visibility.

A senator for [the Region of] Magallanes cannot go for [a position in] Santiago, simply because nobody knows him. **You may have done an impeccable job, but you will never appear in the [national] press.** For example, you have Senator C. He rarely appears in the press. However, in Magallanes, he sweeps away everybody else.

Politician 15, Assessor political party.

As such, it is often the case that party press officers based in Congress approach press strategies, depending on the places each parliamentarian represents and whether she or he occupies other positions within central party structures in order to justify communications strategies directed towards national media.

5.2.3. Limited media pluralism and political biases

The third structural condition defining political elites' access to media visibility is that of the limited pluralism exhibited by traditional media players, as a result of the way the Chilean media system has developed during the democratic transition. More concretely, politicians, press officers and journalists alike highlight how the political biases of news organisations as a whole make media outlets more or less receptive to certain topics and actors.

As was discussed in section 2.4.1, the main concerns about pluralism in the Chilean media system have been based on systemic analyses that stress issues such as the concentration of media ownership on business interests with close connections to the political right (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Bresnahan 2003; Leon-Dermota 2003; Gonzalez-Rodríguez 2008; Monckeberg 2009; Couso 2012). In other words, these are analyses that rely on an understanding of the political economy of Chilean media industries.

This established narrative about the functioning of the Chilean media system becomes more textured when analysed from the perspective of daily media-oriented practices, and it is a divisive topic among the elite itself. Some actors do claim degrees of censorship or indifference from the main news media actors in the political beat because of their political positions – in particular among the elite print press and television – as illustrated by the following quotations.

> Sometimes we talk [to the media] about issues that we want to position in the public debate, which is not very easy due to the concentration of the media, because **this is not really an open space, where everyone has equal chances of communication**.
>
> Politician 11, Senator.

> It is very little [my ability to position topics on the public agenda]. **The press and generally the news media in Chile is tightly controlled**, very ideological; there is no plurality in terms of media ownership, and like everything else in the country**, the owners, those with the money are those who play the music**. The spaces are reduced and that clearly works against us (...) you have just to check out who are those frequently invited onto one program or another. It is relevant.
>
> Politician 6, Senator.

Positions, including those of the politicians quoted above, were reinforced by many press and communications officers and, to a lesser extent, by journalists, some of whom recognised organisational pressures to amplify or minimise certain stories or actors. Contradicting such views, other politicians have far more tempered assessments about the so called "information blockade" (*cerco informativo*), claiming that the lack of access of certain political camps to the media is a myth, a caricature and an old-fashioned concept that cannot be seriously sustained in the current media environment. This diversity of views can be appreciated in the following quotations:

No**, I think that's a caricature**, rather than coming from academia, created by the same political class, that journalism is not plural in Chile. I think that is a lack of respect for journalists themselves.

Politician 12, Deputy.

I have never felt excluded from the media by ideological issues. It would be very … **I sometimes see these arguments that I do not agree with … exaggerated. No, I have not felt excluded**. I acknowledge, though, that the press especially – television has come a long way – still has a very clear ideological stance, particularly in its editorial lines.

Politician 20, Deputy.

In order to make sense of these apparently contradicting views beyond individual differences, it is important to resume some of the arguments introduced in section 3.3.1 in order to make some conceptual distinctions that might help to better understand how the limited pluralism in the Chilean media might operate as a structural condition defining political elites' access to the media.

A first distinction is connected to the form political parallelism has taken in the post-transitional Chilean media: highly commercialised and not formally connected to party politics. In spite of this, the proximity between traditional media players and economic and political interests has been widely acknowledged (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Leon-Dermota 2003; Monckeberg 2009; Couso 2012), which has led some scholars to describe the Chilean media system as one characterised by high levels of political parallelism (Mellado et al., 2012; Mellado & Humanes, 2014). In the definition offered by Hallin & Mancini (2004), political parallelism refers to the links between the media and major political divisions or tendencies in society, which are demonstrated – among other things – by the presence of politically-oriented content, partisanship of media audiences and a variety of media outlets with different political alignments. These attributes do not

necessarily fit a description of Chilean media. For a start, rather than polarised, the media environment has been described as subordinated to economic interests and highly homogeneous with respect to political leanings (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Leon-Dermota 2003), as well as with respect to news media agendas (Valenzuela & Arriagada, 2009; Valenzuela & Arriagada, 2011; González-Bustamante & Soto Saldías, 2015). To this is added, a high dependency on official sources (Faure et al. 2011; Mellado & Rafter, 2014), and adherence to journalistic values of neutrality and objectivity (Mellado & Humanes, 2014), according to which the media do not openly endorse political candidates or parties.

Taking these antecedents as background, it is not surprising to find inconsistencies in the perceptions of politicians, journalists and press officers regarding the extent to which political affiliations facilitate access to mediated visibility. In terms of everyday information exchanges, media biases are not always clearly exposed, but rather appear associated to the establishment of elite cliques that run across the political spectrum, and have developed during the transition.

Regardless of divergent individuals' perceptions about their own access to the media, there is a shared acknowledgement of the role some news organisations play as actors that represent interests within the political field. From this viewpoint, some news organisations are described as displaying important degrees of agency in the selection of issues and voices, not so much from a journalistic point of view but from an organisational point of view and therefore based on the interest of influencing certain political decision-making processes.

You do not do politics as a rhetorical activity, to shine individually, but rather with the claim that these ideas will occupy a considerable space in public debate and will achieve not only greater influence but that they will gather a number of people to be an instrument, and for those ideas to be embodied in public policy. That is what this is about. And the media is not very different. **I do not think that the main objective of the media is to inform, but rather to influence** (...) and I think that to the extent that we recognize that **the issue set in dispute is influence,** it will be easier to be open about our goals.

Politician 5, Assessor, political party.

We have news media that are so biased, they are in the hands of the same people, and then everything is entangled. Ultimately, what happens is that **media owners, with few exceptions, generally they do not own news organisations as their main business activity, but strictly with the purpose of reinforcing certain views** or holding certain positions. I mean, for Luksic Channel 13 is not a business, TVN has a different reality. For Claro, Mega was not a business; Saieh does not make his salary in La Tercera, does he? El Mercurio transcends that field as well. They play with mechanisms that are very different.

Journalist 15, Senior editor, radio.

Claiming a right-wing bias in the Chilean media is a simplification, as studies on political coverage have shown (Navia & Osorio 2015). The latter especially considering that five out of six governments elected since the recovery of democracy have been centre-left; and therefore the relationships between the traditional media players and authorities that have been part of the ruling coalition over the last decades have naturally strengthened. As such, it is useful to borrow the concept of "elite closure", used by Torche (2005) to describe the minimal downward mobility of the Chilean elite, as opposed to the high mobility observed between middle and lower classes that are not highly differentiated. Drawing a parallel, the analysis of interviews suggests that the Chilean media structure has created a communicative closure, favouring certain official voices against others and strengthening the proximity between political and economic elites.

Taken together, I argue that all the structural conditions so far identified – the super visibility of the executive power, the distinction between national and regional leaderships as well as the limited pluralism of the media system – highlight that not all actors enter the media arena with the same visibility options, nor the same incentives and conditions to become mediatized. Instead, some actors – those located in the executive power, projecting national leaderships and close to economic elites – will stand a better chance and will have more institutional resources available to adapt to media languages and formats; that is to say, to become mediatized. Other actors will develop mediatized practices to compensate for this very lack of attributes.

In the next section, a typology of mediatization levels will be developed based on the already identified structural conditions together with the individual and situated decisions regarding the value of media capital as a political capability.

5.2.4. Linking institutional resources with individual routines: a typology of mediatization levels based on resources allocation

The purpose of this section is to establish a typology of political actors' mediatization levels that takes into account some of the structural conditions identified in the previous sections, together with individual media-oriented routines of specific actors. Overall, this typology is based on the levels of resources allocated to the end of managing media visibility, be they time or human and material resources, such as dedicated and specialised press and communications staff. This typology seeks to map profiles of political actors in their relationships with the media, according to the time they devote to the media and the institutional positions they occupy. As such, it accounts for structural conditions as

well as actors' individual decisions regarding the extent to which they will adapt to media demands and actively pursue mediated visibility. In this regard, this understanding of mediatization assumes proactivity from political actors, what has been described as reflexive mediatization (Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014) or self-mediatization as, "a reflexive response by the political system to media-related changes in their institutional environment" (Esser, 2013: 163). Furthermore, this is seen as caused by the dependence of politics upon media-controlled communication resources (Hjarvard 2008) together with the contingent need for public attention (Marcinkowski 2014).

Public agencies react to the process of mediatization by allocating resources to deal with media demands (Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014). In other words, the perceived centrality of the news media within the political field is reflected in a generalised allocation of resources to the management of media visibility. This allocation of resources is often paired with other power resources (Kunelius & Reunanen 2011), and associated with the professionalisation of political communication.

Most interviewees agree on a steady, yet uneven, movement towards the professionalisation of political communication from the recovery of democracy onwards. The literature available includes mentions of the professionalisation of political campaigning (Tironi & Sunkel 1993; Silva 2004; Espíndola 2008) and the institutionalisation of polling and other techniques of public opinion monitoring (Huneeus 1999; Cordero 2009) as government tools. To this is added the use of advisors and dedicated press and communications staff (ICSO/UDP 2004; Santander 2013).

There is general agreement according to several interviews conducted that the Executive power has been the main driver in the process of professionalisation of political communication in Chile, both in terms of division of labour (specialising and multiplying communication-related positions) and the amount of resources devoted to this end. In other relevant political institutions, such as Congress and the political parties, the picture is uneven and complaints about lack of resources, improvisation and amateurism are frequent among politicians and communication officers interviewed.

Communication budgets are not disaggregated in the Nation Annual Budgets, and therefore exact information about the evolution of monetary resources devoted to this end is not easily accessible.[63] From the manual revision of Annual Management Reports that the various public agencies are obliged to provide to the Directorate of Budget, however, it can be observed that media and communications management is usually integrated into the work of these public agencies. Typically, each Ministry –and most public agencies- have a dedicated communication and press team which is overseen by *La Moneda* through SECOM (Secretariat of Communications). [64]

In contrast, most political parties have only one or two press or communication officers in their headquarters, who are in charge of dealing with the press mainly in relation to the main figures of the party. Some of them might have additional

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[63] The category "publicity and dissemination" is incorporated into the broad category "services and consumer goods", that each public agency receives annually, and is therefore utilized in a variety of ways. Publicity and dissemination –as a budget category- allows multiple uses, although there are legal restrictions associated with it. According to the Budget Law (2013) these resources can only be used "to fulfil the duties of those agencies" and their use is explicitly prohibited in publicity campaigns whose sole objective is enumerating the achievements of a specific authority or the Government in general, with the exception of public accounts.

[64] SECOM stands for *Secretaría de Comunicaciones* (Secretariat of Communications), a public agency housed in La Moneda and dependent on the Ministry in charge of the government's communications, including regular spokesmanship functions (*Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno*).

journalists in important regions. Additionally, there are one or two press managers for each parliamentary bench in the Senate and between one and four for each parliamentary bench in the Deputies Chamber, based on the numbers of parliamentarians elected in each party. Coordination between these different levels scarcely exists, if at all, and their functions are mostly concentrated in daily press management, lacking resources to undertake further communication functions.

Often communication professionals follow and execute political decisions, but senior communication officers are not always integrated into the decision-making structure of parties or government structures; one of the dimensions identified by Stromback & Van Aelst (2013) as typical organisational adaptations to media demands. As an example, during Sebastian Piñera's government, Cabinet meetings were followed by communication meetings, where heads of communications discussed how to execute decisions and guidelines agreed by the Cabinet. In the case of Senators and some Deputies, weekly agenda meetings, in which press officers might or might not be included, are a standard practice. In these meetings, scenarios are anticipated and the main issues of the week defined, including media and press management aims.

When looking at media-oriented routines at an *individual level* the variation is also relevant between authorities. All politicians interviewed for this thesis were asked to estimate the time consumed by media-related work in their day to day routines, including media monitoring, meetings for media planning, conversations with journalists or editors, as well as formal exchanges, such as press contacts, press conferences or interviews. For all of them, the media were considered a relevant dimension of their work, but the answers ranged from those who said they were

monitoring the media 24/7 and estimated that these activities counted for about a half of their work routine and those who admitted having only sporadic contacts with journalists and very selective media consumption. As a general rule, the relevance attributed by the actor to the issue of press and communications management is, in the first place, reflected in whether she or he has dedicated press staff, which usually involves daily efforts of visibility management. As discussed above, this is standard practice in most public agencies within the Executive, but within Congress and political parties some politicians resort to party press officers instead of having their own staff, which naturally leads to a lower frequency of formal contacts with the press. Among those who employ personal press staff, they are typically but not necessarily journalists, and their daily work is generally focused on press management at national and/or regional level, assuming functions such as liaising with journalists, monitoring the news environment, supporting the dissemination of activities, advising on decisions about news management, spinning stories to fit media languages and requirements, and producing standard information subsidies, such as press releases and press conferences.

The time allocated to media-related work within a politician's routine seems to be determined by their institutional position on the one hand, and their own political definition regarding the role attributed to the media in the construction of their leadership on the other. The success of these strategies is a completely different matter. Nonetheless, as stated at the beginning of this section, it is possible to identify some typologies of actors associated with the intersection between these two variables.

Regarding the institutional position variable, in a Presidential system such as Chile's, the President represents the top end of institutional visibility while the lowest end of institutional visibility is represented by political party members with minor positions in the party structure. The attention granted to officials due to their hierarchical positions is widely acknowledged in the literature (Cobb & Elder 1971; Seymour-Ure 2003; Manning 2001), as is the visibility of the figure of the president in different national contexts (McCombs 2014; Rincón 2008; Cook 2005; Gans 1979; Kernell 1997). Although it would be arbitrary to locate different institutions along this variable in terms of absolute values, it is possible to establish relative differences. For instance, the institutional visibility of the president is higher than that of his or her ministers, the institutional visibility of the Senate is higher than that of the Deputies Chamber, the institutional visibility of the president of the Deputies Chamber is higher than that of other deputies, and the institutional visibility of the party leader is higher than that of one out of five party vice presidents. A higher position in terms of institutional visibility is generally accompanied by resources for visibility management, including dedicated staff, a combination of long-term vs. short-term media planning, better options for coordination between actors, and also better chances of getting media attention, as the following quotation from a journalist working with a Senator and former Deputy illustrates:

> And now I realize the difference between the Senate and the Deputies Chamber; not before. **I had never been in the Senate. It is easier, since Senators are fewer;** they are more respected, **The Deputies' Chamber is much more of a jungle**; trying to appear in the media competing against 120 Deputies is much more difficult than trying to appear between fewer.
>
> Communications 5, Senate.

Regarding the individual definition variable, if mapped, the top end of the axis represents those political actors who consider mediated visibility a prime political asset and work proactively in the management of their visibility. The low end of the axis represents those political actors who have a low frequency of exchanges with the media and do not actively work in pursuing additional visibility.

Figure 13: Typology of mediatization
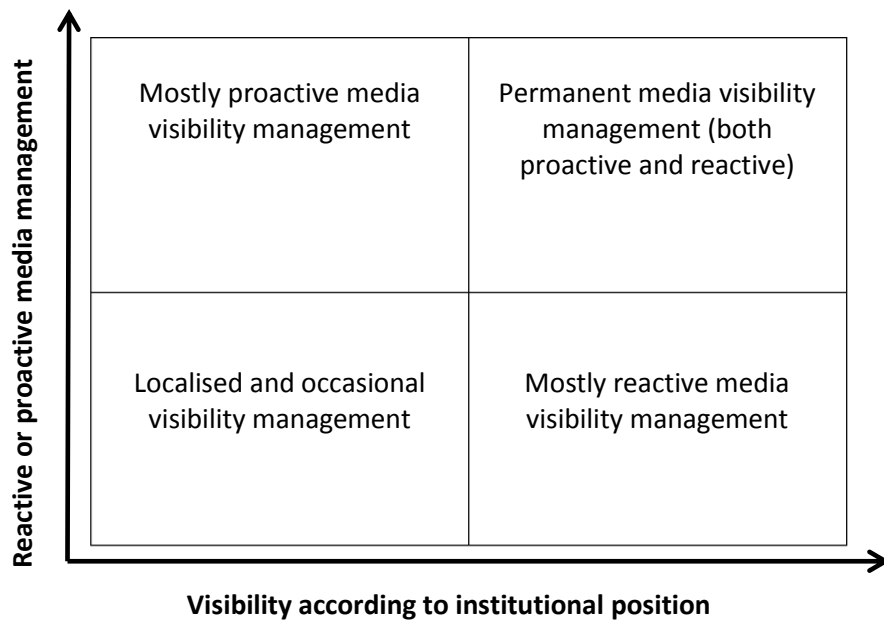
The upper right quadrant represents those politicians who engage *in permanent visibility management*, both proactive and reactive. These political actors actively pursue media visibility and have integrated media-oriented practices into their daily routines, supported by institutional resources devoted to achieving that end. Politicians in this position consider the control of public attention through traditional news media as a baseline for maintaining political capital and

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occupying positions of high media exposure. The quote below illustrates a typical perspective on this dynamic:

> **I'm always available (...) I know where I appear, how I appear** (I have a monthly measurement) and how many appearances there are, where they are concentrated; whether on television or radio. I have a monthly average of 300 appearances concentrated in regional media, focused on electronic media, later comes the national print media, national and regional radio and then television, but clearly it has an impact; averaging 14 television appearances a month produces some degree of impact. Not at saturation level but, at least be present on the topics you're interested in.
>
> Politician 22, Senator.

> I believe for him [the minister]... It's not that I believe, **I have absolute conviction that for him communications are a top priority** (...) He knows the mobile numbers of his entire press team; he knows perfectly well who is calling and what for. He goes everywhere with a journalist and his chief of staff is also a journalist (...) **The minister has the personal policy that we [the press team] have to interrupt him but never something important related to the press [should be missed] because he lacks time**.
>
> Communications officer 11, Central government.

> **My relationship with the media is personal**. I manage the relationship with editors, with journalists, personally. If they ask me for interviews, **I deal with that personally as well, and I like it that way;** I'm used to it, I've done so during my whole political career. See, I seek a mixture that is very complex from the point of view of my workload, because I do many things in national media but, simultaneously, I do many things in local and regional media (...) **Some days I may have 10 radio contacts and that is strenuous, but I like to keep it that way**.
>
> Politician 9, Senator.

The lower right quadrant represents those politicians whose institutional positions may lead towards a permanent management of mediated visibility and, as a result, have regular exchanges with journalists and editors, as well as the possibility of accessing professional resources to support these activities. Nonetheless, these politicians adopt a *mostly reactive strategy*, managing media

demands as they come and only occasionally working proactively regarding topics of interest.

> XO: In your work routine, particularly, what place does it takes?
>
> - P3: The media? I would say, in everyday life, without any false pretence... this issue is: the relationship with party leaders is the first one**; the relationship with leaders of the other parties, the second; and the media, the third.**
>
> XO - So, it does take some space, then.
>
> P3: Yes, yes, yes. **I cannot help it,** even considering that I am...
>
> XO - Rather low profile.
>
> P3: Yes.
>
> Politician 3, Political party board.

> No, I mean something like everyday dealings, no, but **I do have good relationships and links to some media**. And every week we have at least some contact, primarily connected to the areas that are usually my competence (...) Now, **I'm not a deputy who is constantly positioning issues. But we have done so occasionally.**
>
> Politician 2, Deputy.

The upper left quadrant represents those politicians and political actors whose institutional positions are less prominent but nevertheless decide to adopt a *mostly proactive strategy* and work to actively build their leadership on the back of mediated visibility, hoping to capitalise on their media currency to increase their bargaining power and their political capital. Accordingly, they will devote resources to managing these activities, such as hiring dedicated staff, communications consultancies and typically commit personally to building relationships with the media. The quotations below all belong to deputies who have relatively high media profiles and reflect this dynamic:

If I had to say how important my relationship with the media has been during my parliamentary life, it has been very important. It has been part of my daily agenda, both to be informed and to be attentive to have a dialogue with journalists, with the objectives that we have discussed (…) **Important, very important, among the most important issues in my parliamentary life.**

Politician 20, Deputy.

In my case, I would say half of my workload is the media; I usually talk to ten to twelve local radio stations that I have in the various municipalities in my region every week, I do a press conference a week and I write articles in several newspapers every so often, every two weeks or so **(…) I am absolutely a man who uses the media to spread what you do**, both the good and the bad. **It is very important in my system.**

Politician 27, Deputy.

Yes, every day, every day. For example, today: in the morning, I was interviewed on *radio Agricultura* by Alejandro de la Carrera, after that I was called by *La Tercera*, later *Pulso* spoke to me, and now *El Mercurio* is calling. I talked to television stations and radios at 12.30; at 11.30 I was interviewed for a program in the Chamber television station (...) And… this has not been a very newsworthy day.

Politician 10, Deputy.

The lower left quadrant includes those politicians and political actors whose institutional positions allow for a reduced and localised management of mediated visibility, and accordingly they do not actively pursue mediated visibility as an in-built part of their professional routines. In other words, these actors will react to occasional media demands, generally at regional or local level. They will privilege direct contact with interest groups, and therefore will invest in alternative sources of political capital.

Because I am very interested in my region, in being an actor there (...) So here [in Congress] I do those two things [attending all sessions and participating in the discussions], I do not dedicate myself to, for instance … sometimes I have been invited to journalistic programmes here in Santiago. [Alejandro] Guillier, when he was still on TV, he was a very special journalist

and he invited me twice and he said but how is that possible, deputy, **why would you reject this, and I explained that I am off to my zone on Thursdays, and here is my schedule,** and you would not believe how full it is…

Politician 28, Deputy.

The position represented by this last quotation (localised and occasional media visibility management) was mentioned minimally by the research participants, while the vast majority of the politicians interviewed could be located in any other of the three quadrants, depending on their positions, the resources and the intentionality placed on media-related work.

It is important to note that this proposed typology refers mostly to relations with traditional news media. While it would seem reasonable to expect those politicians working in media management as part of their political strategies (the top half of the typology) to embrace social media platforms, that is a separate enquiry that will need further research to establish. Additionally, the generation of direct media and communication channels (such as dedicated websites, individual radio programmes, paid advertising or leaflets) also occupy separate media tracks, meaning that political actors with minimal media visibility management still might, and generally will, develop different communication strategies with their groups of interest.

5.3. Final discussion and conclusion to the chapter

Two main arguments have been developed in this chapter. Firstly, the communication practices of political actors have been circumscribed within a circuit of elite communication, within which actors adopt outward-facing and inward-facing strategies of communication. This circuit, however, appears to be struggling to come to terms with a new informational environment that potentially challenges the legitimacy and the intermediation role of both traditional political and media players. Secondly, some structural conditions were identified, which would act to facilitate or hinder politicians' options of visibility in traditional news media outlets. Nonetheless, these conditions are not deterministic and levels of self-mediatization appear to also be reactive to actors' individual practices, resulting in multiple profiles of mediatization, as illustrated by the typology developed in section 5.2.4.

Overall, this chapter has examined salient cultural elements shaping communication practices among political elites and salient structural elements defining actors' access to the media. In doing so, contextual linkages between media and political institutions are explored before looking into relationships and specific practices of communication, which are the focus of Chapters 6 and 7. Taken together, the analysis here stresses two important features of the political communication culture of Chilean elites: encapsulation and centralisation.

5.3.1. Encapsulation: The circuit of elite communication

While the structural proximity between media and political institutions has often been analysed in terms of formal linkages expressed in levels of state intervention (for example, patterns of media ownership, regulation and subsidies, see Hallin &

Mancini 2004), factoring the impact of local political cultures into the dynamics of the media and politics relationships has proven a more challenging task, even if recognised as a fundamental tenet of the study of political communication (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Barbara Pfetsch, 2004; Guerrero & Márquez-Ramírez 2014). Locating academic enquiry inside sites of power (Cook 2005; Davis 2007), instead, allows for a less deterministic inspection of these relationships and a better assessment of how practices embedded in specific cultural contexts mediate these relationships. This is the value of situating political elites' interactions with the media within a circuit that has been described explicitly by research participants as isolated from civil society.

Although the idea of a circuit of elite communication is certainly an abstraction, it has been grounded in the connections between a specific set of actors, a specific set of places and a specific set of media organisations that both contain and act as referents within the political beat, and whose news agenda is often equated to the political agenda. In this regard, the elite press was widely identified as a space of convergence and as a pivotal reference point within this micro-culture. Describing this space as a micro-culture is sustained in the identification of shared practices of information exchange, media consumption and information monitoring further identified by this relatively small group of individual and organisational actors and illustrated above. Additionally, this description is sustained in the recognition of a disconnect between the communication practices of the elite and an expanded informational environment perceived as operating according to different operational logics.

The recognition of the existence of this circuit of elite communication does not, however, intend to suggest that media and political actors can be regarded as acting in unison. Some traditions of communication research have favoured the idea that the media disseminate the views of political elites (Herman & Chomsky 1988), including in the context of the Chilean political transition (McNair 2000; Bresnahan 2003; Otano & Sunkel 2003). However, the notion of the media acting as a mere platform for the reproduction of hegemonic views has also been questioned, either in recognising the autonomous spaces generated in the media (Altheide, 1984; Cook, 2005) or the multiple interpretations audiences may have of the messages presented by the media (Gamson et al. 1992). Thus, identifying the existence of a circuit of elite communication has a more modest objective of recognising that the symbolic space where the representation of politics is disputed – especially within the elite – is shaped by routines, tensions, practices and long-term relationships that deserve closer examination. The insider culture that shared practices generate, can potentially challenge autonomous journalistic practice (a point that will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 7) but does not deny autonomy altogether. The implications of this proximity are described in insights from the very same inhabitants of this circuit who, on the one hand, recognise how the representation of politics may become 'encapsulated' as separate from the citizenry, and on the other hand that it is overwhelmed by an informational environment that cannot be contained by the old practices. Therefore, the circuit of elite communication can be regarded as suffering what Bourdieu (1984) calls "the hysteresis effect"; the discrepancy which occurs when practices "appear as ill-adapted because they are attuned to an earlier state of the

objective conditions" (Ibid: 109). Likewise, the circuit of elite communication as a whole is in search of new scripts to guide its interactions.

5.3.2. Centralisation: Centralised politics, centralised communication

The second argument that can be formulated from the findings presented in this chapter derives from the identification of those structural forces that position some actors in more favourable terms than others in their opportunities for mediated visibility. In other words, the communicative power of some actors is higher as a result of how the Chilean political and media systems have been configured.

On the one hand, the political power that is highly centralised in the figure of the President in particular and the Executive in general (Godoy 2003; Huneeus 2005; Santos et al. 2014) seems to have a communication correlate. On the other hand, voices based in the centre of the country appear to have much more weight than others. To this is added conditions of limited pluralism that reinforce the relevance that certain media outlets – in particular the elite press – have in the formation of public opinion within the elite. The identification of these sources of differentiation highlights the centralist character of the Chilean political communication culture. Communicative power is concentrated in Santiago, in the Executive, and in specific media outlets that are relevant for the circuit of elite communication and of which this community presumes some political biases. Certainly, because of the nature of this study, it is only possible to state that a presumption of political biases exists and not confirm those biases. However, the links between the main media players, corporate and political actors have been established in the literature (Monckeberg 2009; Couso 2012; Herrero 2014) and

empirical works have shown moderate but consistent biases in the political coverage of the main newspapers (Navia et al. 2013; Navia & Osorio 2015).

These observations also invite caution against optimistic assessments of the political diversity gained with the multiplication of voices through new technologies, as well as the relevance of such new voices. They do exist and add new viewpoints and subjects that traditional media tend to ignore (Godoy & Gronemeyer 2012; Gonzalez-Bustamante & Soto Saldias 2015). However, as Karppinen (2013) argues, the distribution of communicative power reflects structural asymmetries that are generally much more resistant to technological change than what analysis might otherwise suggest. The findings in this chapter lend support to the idea that the political communication culture is structurally weighted towards the centre of the circuit of elite communication (in Santiago, with the President and the cabinets, and with elite media), and chances of visibility are usually aligned to institutional resources available to central actors for the management of mediated visibility. Therefore, some actors are in advantageous positions of communication because of their location within their respective fields and how those fields have configured over time, favouring a communicative closure that today is under strain, adding tension to relationships inside the micro-culture of political communication.

Nevertheless, structural conditions cannot account for the totality of social relationships. That is a basic premise that the institutional logic perspective (Friedland & Alford 1991; March & Olsen 2006; Thornton et al. 2012) shares with other traditions including field theory (Bourdieu 1998; Benson & Neveu 2005). The typology of mediatization developed towards the end of this chapter offers an

initial indication in this direction, as some actors proactively adopt media-oriented practices in order to gain communicative power within traditional media, regardless of their positions. In the next chapter, analysis will go beyond the macro-level in order to examine inter-field relationships. That is to say, attention will be paid to everyday practice and relationships between political and media actors, in particular to how field-level logics (news media logics) are understood by political elites and what type of adaptations to the media are prompted as a result of these understandings.

CHAPTER 6

POLITICIANS SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF NEWS

This chapter is structured in three sub-sections. The first (6.1) examines the main drivers of Chilean politicians in their media-oriented practices by focusing on goals attached to politicians' interactions with news organisations. The second (6.2) explores the political elites' understandings of the news media logic. Finally, the third section (6.3) identifies the main expressions of adaptation to the news media logic; that is to say, the practices through which the mediatization of political actors is more commonly expressed. In doing so, this chapter deals directly with the question about how political elites understand and interact with the logic of the media and the drivers guiding that relationship.

Paying attention to drivers of action has been theoretically justified as a way to improve understanding of how actors negotiate meaning within institutions. Different analytical traditions such as that of institutional logics (Thornton et al. 2012) and the sociology of critical capacity (Boltanski & Thevenot 1999) pay attention not only to practices but to justifications for behaviour as a way to improve understanding of social interaction and the management of conflict within institutions. Following these approaches, this chapter identifies the main goals that drive political actors to engage in media-oriented practices by considering those goals explicitly declared by politicians and their communication aides, as well as the perceived gains derived from having media exposure. This analysis lends support to the idea that mediated visibility is mainly considered by

political actors as a "mobilizing capability", using March and Olsen's (1995) terminology to describe a resource able to activate other political resources. Media visibility is, nonetheless, considered quite volatile and a potentially risky form of currency, as media content is not something which political elites have full capacity to control. On the contrary, media contents appear strongly shaped by the operational criteria of news media organisations.

As discussed in Chapter 3, news media logic in this thesis is broadly understood as the modus operandi (Hjarvard 2008; Hjarvard 2013) and the organising principle (Friedland & Alford 1991) of the media institution; those routines and practices that have "become taken-for-granted assumptions about how to produce news" (Sparrow, 2006: 145). As such, news media logic is a theoretical construct that accounts for professional, commercial and technological determinants of media outputs (Meyer 2002; Esser 2013; Hjarvard 2013). Although it has been acknowledged that the news media logic is open to certain variations across media organizations and media platforms (see discussion in section 3.2.1), it is the existence and relative resilience and stability of this institutional logic that defines the media as a social institution (Cook 2005; Asp 2014). Additionally, one of the premises of the mediatization theory is that this operational logic is being adopted by actors in institutions other than media (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Strömbäck 2008). Institutional logics, though, are not behaviour templates that spread effortlessly (Hay 2006). They are open to interpretation and elaboration by individual actors, which means that they pose opportunities and constraints (Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton et al. 2012) but, as much as they can be embraced, they can also be resisted or barely tolerated.

To understand the mediatization of Chilean political elites and the adoption of news media logics by political actors within this political culture, it seems necessary to first identify how they understand and elaborate this logic. This is aided by exploring how they explain their media-oriented practices as well as their interactions with journalists and news organisations. This question is answered by means of identifying the main features political elites associate with the logic of the media, which are (1) conflict, (2) permanent attention to the present as a reaction to media temporalities, and (3) commercial underpinnings of media routines, characteristics also identified by communication officers and journalists as integral to the operations of the media. Additionally, though, politicians discuss the news media logic as an opportunity and as a gateway to control public attention. On the one hand then, the news media logic is resisted and criticised on normative grounds for overemphasising conflict and being blind to long-term processes that bring some unwanted consequences to political actors. On the other hand, even if resisted, the news media logic is generally seen as open to instrumental use.

The third and final section of the chapter examines the main domains of adaptation to the logic of the media as a result of political actors accepting and even internalising the news media logic and the predominant news values – what Strömbäck (2008) refers to as the fourth stage in the process of mediatization of politics. Four domains of adaptation are identified, strongly connected to the main traits of the news media logic: (1) the professionalisation of political communication, (2) the adaptation to media languages, (3) the adaptation to media temporalities and (4) the adaptation of information subsidies, more

specifically, the dissemination of unattributed information as a form of covert information subsidy.

The implications of these forms of adaptation are further discussed: first, identifying the effort for control over media contents as the main driver of political elites' adaptations to the news media logics and secondly, identifying potential implications of this process of adaptation that are not necessarily wanted by those involved.

6.1.   Media visibility as a political resource and the 'uses' of media exposure

As discussed in section 3.2.3, the literature on the mediatization of politics has devoted significant attention to identifying elements conforming to news media logics and how actors adapt to them, and less attention to identifying the resources political actors seek or expect to find in their interactions with the news media and how these resources empower political actors in their institutional fields (for a theoretical discussion see Stromback & Van Aelst 2013 on the mediatization of political parties). The premise is that media visibility has greater relevance in the political field (Thompson 1995; Thompson 2005) and other societal fields (Kunelius & Reunanen 2012), and political actors and institutions have therefore become dependent on these communication resources (Hjarvard 2008; Strömbäck 2008). In order to better understand the process of mediatization of politics from the perspective of political actors, this section investigates how those resources controlled by the news media are understood by Chilean political elites, paying particular attention to the goals political actors attach to their media related activities.

The most basic meaning of mediated visibility for political actors is that of affirming public existence. The accumulation of media visibility is often discussed by politicians in the most basic sense of 'being seen', and therefore associated with existence and public recognition in the eyes of both general audiences and peers. Affirming existence can be easily associated with electoral ambitions, although it is clear from politicians that this is a resource that has to be constantly managed and pursued, beyond specific campaigning periods. Additionally, visibility capital is discussed by politicians as an asset for career advancement and power reproduction; the promotion of achievements or personal qualities; and the chance to make actions and decisions visible to voters or the general public. This permanent need for remaining visible to relevant audiences is reflected in the following quotations:

> **If your goal is to improve your level of knowledge,** having presence in the media will always help, because clearly the media reach and penetrate citizens. That's the idea. **If your interest is to position a subject**, obviously the media end up being equally useful, if you are able to transmit that. **I always consider that the media end up being obviously a positive element to gain political capital,** regardless of your definition.
>
> Politician 2, Deputy.

> Firstly, because what is not known, does not exist. I mean**, if something is unknown, it didn't happen.** Secondly, because in order to be in politics you must have power; power is the essence of politics. For transforming reality you have to manage power and, for that, you have to be a public opinion figure; **you have to be considered, you have to be recognised as a necessary agent; influential, an articulator. That is why you need to be in the public eye**.
>
> Politician 7, Senator.

The multiple goals identified by Chilean political elites in their relationship with the news media can all be associated with the overarching objective of managing

mediated visibility to the end of using this visibility as a political resource and an asset that can contribute, in different capacities, to political action. When looking at the specific goals discussed by research participants, it is possible to distinguish between goals of electoral and policy rationale. These distinctions have been built mainly for analytical purposes and while they may overlap in practice, it is possible to identify how specific goals relate to specific audiences and key media channels (see Figure 14). Goals of electoral rationale point towards an understanding of the news media as a platform to reaffirm existence and seek recognition among electors, although these goals are not necessarily restricted to elections. Goals of policy rationale concentrate a larger number of actions in non-electoral contexts, and are oriented to agenda building, public bargaining processes and the mobilisation of public support around policy issues.

In this regard, the value attached by political elites to the common dimension of media visibility can be captured in the concept of "mobilising capability", a term coined by March and Olsen (1995) to describe those resources needed for the activation of other political resources. The idea of mobilising capability is favoured over other more abstract terms such as "symbolic power" (Thompson 1995), on the basis that it better captures the notion of media visibility as being expected to have, and perceived as having, concrete consequences for political institutions. Actors acknowledge, nonetheless, that these consequences are not always positive since media content is not under their direct control and, even if positive, media visibility necessitates complementary non-mediated forms of attention control, both for electoral and policy-making purposes.

6.1.1. Goals of electoral rationale

Being seen in the media is perceived as having the value of showing politicians active and committed to work in the eyes of audiences; informing and communicating with the public. This form of visibility can potentially become an *electoral capability*, although it is clear from the interviews that the news media are perceived as playing a limited role in this regard. This is due mainly to the relevance territorial work is perceived as having for defining electoral contests, and because spaces for political content in mass media are reduced and do not necessarily adjust to promotional expectations.

Goals of electoral rationale associated to mediated visibility are here widely defined to encompass communication with voters and also more loosely with members of the public. Based on this distinction, goals of media exposure with underlying electoral rationale can be organised into two main clusters: firstly, those directed at fostering dynamics of power reproduction, and secondly, those directed at communicating with the public. As such, they are not only pursued during election periods but permanently as ways of building and maintaining support between elections. While this is clearly the case for elected officials, it is also true of those who are increasingly evaluated by their public performances despite being appointed, such as members of the cabinet and the heads of numerous public agencies.

Goals of power reproduction relate to the use of the news media as a platform campaign, but also to affirming existence, increasing levels of knowledge, obtaining public recognition and promoting one's own qualities and achievements.

FIGURE 14: Goals of media exposure		
	Overarching goal: Managing media visibility	
Common dimension of value attached to media visibility	**Visibility as mobilising capability** (Activation function by means of controlling public attention)	
	Goals of policy rationale	**Goals of electoral rationale**
Specific dimensions of value attached to media visibility	**Agenda building** (positioning topics, setting the terms of the debate) **Public bargaining** (differentiating position, accelerating decision-making, sending messages to counterparts)	**Power reproduction** (news media as campaigning platform: affirmation of existence, public recognition, promotion of achievements) **Communication with the public** (Representation, social legitimation, accountability to voters)
Key targeted audiences	Peers, political audiences (intra-party, inter-party, other representatives), elite, interest groups	Public opinion, electorate
Reach	Mainly national	National, regional and/or local
Key media platforms	Print elite-press (*El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, *La Segunda*) New media (*El Mostrador*, *CNN Chile*, *TVN 24 Horas*) Niche programs (Radio and TV) Twitter	TV Radio Regional and local media Twitter, Facebook
Non-mediated parallel work	Intra-elite relations, bargaining abilities, technical knowledge	Territorial and local work
Limits to media centrality	Power of the Executive as agenda-setter Relevance of non-mediated networks (small and cohesive elite)	Centrality of territorial work to define elections

The table above offers a scheme of goals political elites attribute to media visibility, together with some of the main attributes that relate to those goals.

The necessity of having some levels of media exposure with electoral aims is especially acute for those politicians attempting to build a national image, as well as those based in urban areas, and the Metropolitan Region in particular. These audiences are generally perceived by the politicians interviewed, whether justifiably or otherwise, as more demanding than audiences based in other zones of the country. At the same time access to the national news media is perceived as more competitive and challenging, making media exposure a goal that demands more resources.

The distinction between the construction of national and regional leaderships was already identified in Chapter 5 as a structural form of differentiated access to the media. Goals of media exposure associated with power reproduction appear closely connected to the national/regional cleavage, and politicians and press officers raise this distinction frequently. For those politicians who pursue the acquisition of a national profile (where 'national' is often equated to Santiago-based politics), media visibility becomes a must, and part of the inbuilt repertoire of resources needed for career development. The following quotations are from politicians involved in national politics, who reflect this idea that in certain positions the pursuit of media visibility is not understood as optional.

> What happens is that ... politicians increasingly maintain public support for the next election. And **in large constituencies**, in large districts, which have [a larger component of] public opinion, **not appearing in the press, it just kills you.**
>
> Politician 15, Assessor, political party.

> Well, to me, at one point [having a regular relationship with the news media] had a personal gain, because **I represent a district in which public opinion is important,** where people vote more for a deputy who positions topics and has views on issues, rather than someone who is worried about sewers. This

gave me an advantage and, in fact, in the three elections I have contested, I substantially improved my ballot, and **ended up achieveing the first majority** in a district that has been traditionally inclined to the centre-right. **And that is connected to this, I think, to being someone who was consistently and commonly in the news media.**

Politician 20, Deputy.

Politicians who do not target the national media appear to be achieving these goals more easily. For politicians and press officers interviewed, access to regional and local news is generally seen as easier and as spaces where politicians still retain important degrees of control over the terms in which they communicate with the public. This is due to a largely deferential treatment of regional and local authorities (or the assumption of such treatment). Additionally, in some regions and localities political advertising become a much-needed form of income for small media, which are sometimes open to selling micro-programmes to politicians (e.g. in local radio).

Goals related to *communication with the public* refer to functions of information that political elites expect the news media institution to perform and might help them to inform general and specific audiences. When it comes to reaching the wider public, though, traditional news media are typically envisaged as conduits to reach mostly passive audiences. An example of the latter is television appearances, which are commonly associated with an increase of visibility capital among audiences that are normally difficult to reach and perceived as having little if any interest in politics.

> Sometimes people – it happens a lot in my district – they evaluate your work depending on whether you were in the media or not (...) **People do not even distinguish which issues you raised or what was the problem, but if people saw you on TV, they establish a relationship**, a sort of feedback about who works and who doesn't.

Politician 23, Deputy.

That is very interesting. I was on a television program, especially in [channels] 7 or 13, the next day I got into the lift and **people said: 'you were on TV'. People did not know doing what**.

Politician 17, Former Minister.

I think that the benefit is that **people see you,** and realize that you're on the issues that matter. For example, when I appear on a national television channel, people tell you ... **they do not know what you said ... but they saw you**.

Politician 4, Deputy.

Quotations such as those included above reflect a one-way understanding of communication where audiences are imagined as mostly passive, and news organisations, especially broadcast, as neutral conduits through which goals of a promotional nature can be achieved. However in practice, these ambitions usually clash with news formats and languages that are not open to promotional intentions and commonly find resistance from journalists. As a result, goals with electoral rationale are perceived as more difficult to achieve in the relationship with the news media.

Often politicians and communication officers mention other communication channels as equally or more important and effective in their communication with the public, especially social media or their own media platforms (including, among others, websites, social media sites, advertisement or micro programmes purchased in local media). Taken together, these trends seem to highlight the limits of the mass media paradigm in understanding strategies of public communication. Davis (2003) recognises that when the media get involved in political negotiations, "a significant proportion of the discussion is produced by,

and aimed at, decision-making and power- broking elites" (Ibid:670) with little reference to mass audiences. If politicians acknowledge that, to a greater extent, direct communication with the citizenry happens somewhere else (ranging from social media to territorial work), this is then an important indication that traditional news organisations become a site of communication at which different aims are pursued, and the very process of mediatization becomes closely connected to the aim of sustaining power positions in society without major audience involvement. In other words, traditional news media are not primarily conceived as spaces for dialogue or debate with civic society, which raises some questions about the role news organisations play as part of a democratic dialogue.

6.1.2. Goals of policy rationale

Following politicians' accounts, goals of media exposure with an underlying policy rationale can be grouped into two general areas. First and most importantly is agenda building, both in terms of positioning issues and setting the terms of public debate. Secondly, the media are conceived as a forum for participation in public bargaining processes, providing opportunities for actors to establish their positions, accelerating decisions or sending messages to individuals and interest groups, increasing actors' bargaining power. In this regard, goals with a policy rationale are widely defined as those seeking mobilization of support around political decision-making, and not restricted to the technical discussion of policy issues.

When political elites mention or discuss goals of media visibility with policy rationales it is clear that visibility in the news media becomes a prime political capability in terms of intra-elite communication. That is to say, media exposure

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associated with these goals is mainly oriented towards the elite, and therefore the value of media visibility lies in its inward-facing communication function.

Building the agenda, or making topics of political interest visible in the media, is probably the most mentioned goal of media exposure among politicians. This is frequently expressed in the objectives of "positioning topics" *("poner temas")* and "triggering debates" in the mediated arena. In practice, agenda building is an aspiration and a constant struggle that is, however, rarely fully achieved. Both political elites and press officers align in describing efforts of agenda control as strenuous attempts in a battlefield where political institutions are perceived as having diminished in their abilities to control messages and content. This goal can be connected to literature on the agenda building efforts of message construction located in the processes of news production (Cobb & Elder 1971; Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007), rather than the media effects presumed in the tradition of agenda-setting research (McCombs & Shaw 1972). As such, efforts of agenda building in particular are addressed as a difficult matter that requires careful planning, resources, professional support and generally the coordinated action of numerous actors. In this regard, the Executive is better positioned to steer public attention around specific issues by aligning resources within a hierarchical structure to achieve that end. For political parties and parliamentarians, positioning topics in public debate is more difficult and generating alliances offers a better chance of controlling public attention:

> **We can. Yes, we can position issues but only to the extent that we coordinate among ourselves, particularly with partners**. I mean, I do not think that a particular actor, except some very specific actors and around very specific issues; for example, in the case of the Christian Democrats, [someone

such as] Gutenberg Martinez[65] can position a topic; say, the party wants Camilo Escalona[66] to be a senator in some region. That, he can accomplish. These sorts of things, but **position an entire topic, we could only do so if we make an agreement;** for instance between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists; or more.

Politician 3, political party board.

Positioning "entire topics", as the research participant explains, generally means occupying the media agenda over long periods of time (weeks or months) around major policy issues. The latter demands the deployment of major resources, as the quotations below reinforce. The first comes from a press officer referring to the communication plan of one of the most emblematic policy reforms in the government of Sebastián Piñera (the extension of maternity leave for working mothers); the second belongs to a former minister who refers to strategies of communication deployed during the administration of President Lagos, who began his period in office with the economy having been hit by a financial crisis and negative growth.

> With big topics we work with SECOM because they have experts from different areas; Marketing, Communications. **Topics of this level require more than one ministry**. We discuss how to support the issue (...) **exactly, we gather a big team;** [heads of communication] from the Interior Minister, SECOM, SEGEGOB[67]; paralleling the political committee but in the communications area.
>
> Communications 11, *La Moneda*.

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[65] Gutenberg Martinez is a former Deputy (1990-2002), a historical figure in the Chilean Christian Democrat Party, of which he was twice president (1992-1994 and 1999-2000).

[66] Camilo Escalona is a historical figure in the Chilean Socialist Party, of which he was president in the periods 1994-1998, 2000-2003 and 2006-2010; former Deputy (1990-1998, 2002-2006) and Senator (2006-20014).

[67] The Interior Minister, SECOM (Secretary of Communications) and SEGEGOB (General Government Secretary) are all agencies housed in *La Moneda*, the presidential palace, and therefore work more closely with the Presidency, coordinating relationships with other branches of government, political parties and Congress.

> During the Lagos government we took office in a very adverse context; very high unemployment rates, very adverse times around the Asian crisis. The cycle of distrust towards political institutions was starting, and **that was a moment of intense relationships with the news media,** where we sought to find windows and provide context for the negative news regularly appearing in the media. **That was a huge effort and we had to devote a lot of time to that and develop units responsible for it.**
>
> Politician 29, Former Minister.

Efforts involving resources such as those described above are not available to all political actors equally. Most actors routinely engage in more modest attempts at agenda building, especially by disputing frames for the interpretation of events and political processes. In this regard, individual actors that stand better chances of success are those who have built and maintain networks within the news media, and therefore are in a position to more easily reach journalists and/or editors to activate interest around specific issues or events.

Public bargaining through the news media is the second area of goals associated with media exposure by political elites. These goals are connected to the notion of the media as a privileged arena for public deliberation (Habermas 2006) in which politicians can adopt positions within a discussion, send messages to other actors, as well as gain leverage while waging public disputes within or among political parties and public agencies.

Additionally, and as a result of public bargaining practices, some actors mention the possibility of increasing the speed of decision-making processes, as long as mediated visibility can put pressure on other actors, driving them to react in response to amplified public attention over some issues.

> At the macro level, I think that **receiving media coverage clearly builds pressure to achieve things one is interested in** (...) It is likely that **your views will receive greater consideration** when you go to talk to the Minister of Health, or the Minister of Finance, instead of coming out of nowhere. **So it is a tool in my opinion, to work, to achieve objectives** (...) Because what is unseen, descends in priority levels.
>
> Politician 14, Deputy.

Two points are raised by politicians regarding the acceleration of decision-making processes. Firstly, some actors acknowledge that there are important mismatches between media schedules and legislative schedules, so it can be difficult and sometimes impossible to actually react in good time to mediated pressures, especially when it comes to changes that have to be generated in Congress. An additional point raised is that controversial policy issues - where disagreements between interest groups are patent - are those which generally capture media attention (see Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer 2011). Since divisive issues receive greater media attention, exposing these differences in public can actually make it more difficult for actors to reach an agreement without compromising their position in the public eye.

6.1.3. Media visibility as mobilizing capability

As described above, the management of media visibility is identified as the overarching goal in the relationship between political elites and the media, and the main driver for the process of adaptation to news values and routines. The attainment of mediated visibility is therefore perceived as having consequences inside and outside the circuit of elite communication. In other words, this media-controlled resource is envisaged as a tool in the governance processes.

March & Olsen (1995, 2006, 2009) state that institutions provide structures of resources, which in turn create capabilities for acting. For political institutions, they identify four types of relevant capabilities enabling political action: rights and authorities, resources (money, property, time, etc.), knowledge and organising capacity. Together, these provide actors with greater or lesser scope for action (March & Olsen 1995: 93-94). Additionally, though, they identify what they call mobilising capabilities, which are described as essential triggers of the aforementioned political capabilities:

> Capabilities are necessary for effective action, but they are not sufficient. Action also requires activation and attention. Since attention is a scarce resource, political systems are responsive not only to the distribution of resources, competencies, rights and authorities, but also to their mobilization. As a consequence, the management of attention is a major activity of governance. (March & Olsen 1995: 116)

The political function attributed to media exposure by political actors can be described in terms quite similar to what March & Olsen (1995) describe as mobilising or activation capabilities within political institutions, the main component of which is, as they note, the organisation of the scarce resource of attention. The control of public attention has been identified as the main resource managed by contemporary news media (Thompson 1995; Luhmann 2000; Kunelius & Reunanen 2012), but nonetheless, these spaces of communication have not been a relevant concern for the neo-institutionalist tradition within political science.[68]

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[68] March and Olsen (1989, 1995) include a few mentions of the news media in their work, highlighting particularly the auditing functions that democratic theory attaches to news organisations and noting the gap between the expectations and the actual operations of the media industry. Crozier (2010, 2007, 2008) is one of the few political scientists that have paid attention to information dynamics and communications shifts as key to the understanding of contemporary governance. For other recent work in this direction see Korthagen & Klijn (2012) and Hajer(2009).

What the analysis of interviews suggests is that media visibility is understood as both a source of public attention as well as performing activation functions. The news media as a social institution renders actors and issues visible, but also enables political actors to act in other domains; an indication of the ability media visibility has to become a political resource. As highlighted by Kunelius & Reunanen (2012), this media-controlled resource (attention) is not an end but a means; it does not replace power, but eventually becomes power. Overall, the activation capability associated with media exposure by political elites is closely connected to an increase in levels of perceived influence associated with media appearances. According to political elites, securing media exposure plays a prominent role in increasing the perceived levels of power of those subjects of media coverage, especially within the political environment. Thompson (1995) discusses how forms of symbolic power associated with media visibility influence actors' capacity to intervene in the course of events and influence the actions of others. Likewise, politicians recognise that media exposure may have quite concrete consequences, such as increasing individual bargaining power, attracting opportunities or improving their ability to be heard, especially in front of their peers:

> In terms of visibility, beyond power; power is always important, the problem is how to use it; **for me it is a tool to accomplish things for the benefit of the people**. I've always understood this so I do not get dizzy (...) [For example] **It is not the same to fight a minister who currently has 54 per cent public approval than a minister that has 23 per cent ,** do you know what I mean? It is not the same. **And they know that I have press**, and that if I call them, I am going to get all the press.

> Politician 8, Minister.

(...) And also, especially with authorities in your coalition, **when they know that you have spokesmanship abilities on some issues, and opinions; they treat you differently**. In that respect, at least in my case; they return my calls; if I ask for a hearing, I will have it. It isn't the same for everyone, no.

Politician 10, Deputy.

The quotations included above point in the same direction: when conceptualised as a power resource, mediated visibility is primarily conceived as increasing actors' capacity of action. There are, nevertheless, some important nuances regarding the uses of mediated visibility by political elites, which will be expanded in the next section.

6.1.4. The limits of media visibility

To complement findings discussed in previous sections about the value attached to media visibility by political elites, this section will look at the limitations and constraints of media visibility as a political resource. This was a topic that received uneven attention among research participants. Politicians brought up these concerns most clearly, followed by communications officers, whereas journalists addressed them superficially and less frequently. The latter highlights that the limitations of mediated visibility as a resource were a political concern more than they are a media concern. As a result, exploring these categories is particularly useful to better understand the limitations of media-centred approaches to the idea of mediatization of politics, as well as to contextualise the relevance of mediated visibility as one resource among others available for political actors.

Constraints and limitations on the political value of media exposure is a topic which politicians in particular discussed extensively. Two points are highlighted. First, though highly valued, media visibility is perceived as *a volatile currency*, a

double-edged resource, potentially damaging if not appropriately managed. Secondly, mediated visibility demands to be complemented with other sources of visibility

6.1.4.1. *The volatility of the media currency*

It has been established that media visibility is identified as a mobilising capability within the political domain, but one that is highly volatile and political actors emphasise that to be seen in the news media cannot be readily equated with an improvement of political capital. The acknowledgement that media visibility can potentially be damaging comes across in the answers of most politicians. Visibility associated with media exposure is perceived as contingent, episodic and volatile, not necessarily related to an effective political performance. As put succinctly by a communication officer working in the Senate: "you could fill a graveyard with overexposed politicians" (Communications 6, Senate). While journalists tend to equate media exposure with power and influence, politicians are far more cautious in their responses. They generally make the distinction between good and harmful visibility, and are highly critical of those colloquially known as "moths" (*polillas*), or political media personalities always seeking the media spotlight.

> **There are others who obviously try to be in the news by any means** and I think that, at the end, overexposure is–at any level, assuming roles that are different from those typical of the function – **overexposure ends up discrediting people** (...)

> Politician 16, Political party board.

I think **it also depends on what political exposure and what media exposure you have**, because there are parliamentarians who actually go public all the time, every day, talking about everything, and I do not know if that ultimately generates a sort of positive political capital.

Politician 14, Deputy.

It depends, because the question is why do they go public? I can give you an example; Deputy A. is regularly in the press, Deputy B. is also regularly in the press. Probably they are in the media in equivalent measure; but there is a qualitative difference with respect to the topics and attitudes that relate to their press appearances. **There is a short route and a long route.**

Politician 25, Deputy.

Thompson (2005) highlights that contemporary media create new opportunities and new risks, exposing political leaders to "a new and distinctive kind of fragility" (Ibid: 42); media content often escapes political actors' control, and therefore mediated visibility can potentially work against those who are brought into the media spotlight. In line with this idea, the quotations above highlight the volatility of the media currency as primarily associated by political actors with the result of over-exposure (too much, too often) and damaging exposure (poor media management, little selectivity in media appearances or little control over media content). Therefore, the volatility of the media currency appears attached to the ever-present risk of damaging media exposure, both as a result of individual choices as well as the outcome of a lessened capacity of controlling media content. Opportunities for communication are constrained in time, have a limited impact and their consequences are short-term, therefore over-reliance on this form of political capital is considered risky. Beyond electoral dynamics, media visibility is also perceived as potentially risky for the development of decision-making processes. For example, it may hinder negotiations by promoting a polarisation of

positions and, thus, minimising opportunities for dialogue and consensus, or by encouraging pernicious information leaks.

It is important to highlight that most of these comments referred to damaging media exposure perceived as the result of individual choices, and therefore not necessarily a consequence of an adversarial press. Instead, it is a perceived risk that derives from the adoption of news logics that hijack the scope and tone of actors' public interventions, potentially damaging their reputation.

6.1.4.2. *Balancing mediated and non-mediated forms of visibility*

Another important area discussed together with limitations of mediated visibility as a political resource is the limited impact mediated visibility has on the development of some political processes, both electoral and policy-related. Managing media exposure and developing networks in the media certainly have to be balanced with other forms of non-mediated visibility among interest groups. In particular, attention to territorial work and inter-personal relations within policy networks are frequently mentioned as equally relevant and often more relevant political assets.

Attention to neighbourhood associations, cultural centres, social movements, unions, trade associations and other specific counterparts in policy processes are different forms of visibility management, perceived as running on parallel tracks to media work, therefore subject to other rationales for action[69] where the media are perceived as having a marginal role, if any. In addition to community spaces such as those mentioned above, other spaces mentioned as separate from the

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[69] Reunanen et al. 2010 discuss these difference in terms of media vs. policy logics; Korthagen & Klijn 2012 contrast the logic of the media and the logic of decision making in governance networks.

media domain are inter-parliamentary work in commissions, where face-to-face communication with interest groups is crucial.

In terms of communication with grassroots organisations, territorial work is frequently highlighted as decisive, regardless of whether politicians appear to be highly mediatized or not. Therefore, appropriately balancing media and territorial work was frequently emphasised in interviews as a basic skill; some might "compensate" between one and the other, others choose one as their main strategy.

> No, I mean it is important because **the news media place you in the spotlight, but if all you do is to appear in the media, you are done**. And conversely, if you concentrate on territorial work only, you are also done.
>
> Politician 21, Deputy.

> My work has been assessed with an 82 per cent citizen approval. I dare you to find any other MP in Chile with that level of approval. So, **that's what happens when you are a regional figure and I would rather be a regional figure than a national figure**. I have some impact on national news, but ultimately I focus on the region and that makes the difference.
>
> Politician 22, Senator.

> In this first period I tend to think that has a medium importance because when you are in your first period [in office] you must consolidate. It's like when one puts a product on the market, you have to make investments of various kinds; money, time, presence and also news media, of course (…) **I feel that the media collaborate, yes, but it is not the most important point. I privilege my territory-based work** (…) There are some who have had the experience of having a lot of media work in their first period, and they did not last, because they did not choose the other route [territory-based work]. Being in the media is cheaper; proximity is certainly more expensive.
>
> Politician 18, Deputy.

Despite mediatization of politics having been acknowledged as a process which has accelerated from the 1990s onward in Chile (Silva 2004; Cordero & Marin

2006), the relevance of street rallies and door to door canvassing as traditional electioneering campaign techniques have remained central in electoral processes (Espíndola 2008). The analysis of the interviews reveals that this territorial logic is considered crucial; particularly to build and maintain support between elections, stressing that electoral success is the result of multiple variables other than media visibility alone. The following quotations exemplify these ideas. The first refers to an emblematic election for a Senatorial district in which a former candidate to the presidency lost to a "local" candidate.

> The smaller the scale, the more relevant the territorial work and the less weight communication has. Because **there are people who believe that because they are on TV, they are going to be voted for, and that's not the case.** (…) You have the case of Lavín vs. Chahuán in the Fifth Region[70], for example. Chahuán beat Lavín, and Lavín arrived [in the election campaign] from a presidential campaign and Chahuán was a Deputy. That's territorial work (…) **He believed that because he had a nearly 100 per cent knowledge, and he was on TV, that would make a difference, and it didn't.**
>
> Politician 15, Assessor political party.

> Now, there are many examples of candidates who have been a lot in the media, who have a good media positioning work, who are competing with very quiet candidates with no media profile, and yet you are surprised by the results of elections when the candidate who had no media positioning is elected because he was well positioned with their constituents (…) **Local context matters; is very important.**
>
> Politician 24, Assessor political party.

> Those who succeed in politics know that **being in the news media is important but touring the region in a systematic way,** even if it costs the world, every Thursday and Friday besides the district week, **those are the winners**, and those who increase their voting throughout the years. But all that **has to be done in parallel with the media**.
>
> Communications 6, Senate.

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[70] The electoral race mentioned in this quotation is the 2009 Parliamentary Elections, where former Deputy Francisco Chahuán (RN) surpassed the voting of former Presidential Candidate Joaquín Lavín (UDI), becoming Senator for the Circumscription 6 (5th region coast).

Overall, politicians emphasise how media visibility has to be balanced with other visibility strategies, other activation schemes, particularly for electoral purposes. In the context of policy discussions, other strategies of visibility and legitimation inside policy networks – such as direct contact with interest groups – are also regarded as running on sometimes parallel tracks to strategies of media visibility. This demands balancing complementary spaces.

When the media are a target of political communication, though, understanding media logics becomes crucial. How these logics are discussed by research participants is the focus of the next section.

6.2. What makes it into the news? Defining the logic of the news media

This section explores the concept of news media logic from the perspective of research participants, paying attention to those features highlighted by Chilean politicians, press officers and journalists as salient in the routines of information exchanges in which these different communities of actors engage on a regular basis with the aim of co-producing political news. As discussed in Chapter 3.2, news media logic is here understood as an abstract construct encompassing professional, technological and commercial considerations shaping news production, which becomes observable in the process of news making. Central as it is to definitions of mediatization processes, the news media logic does not exhibit stable components across the literature, and emphases are placed on both field-defined features of the news media logic, such as professional norms and standards of journalistic practice (Strömbäck & Esser 2009; Asp 2014), news values and storytelling techniques (Strömbäck 2008) and notions of

newsworthiness (Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014), as well as on external influences shaping that logic, particularly commercial drivers (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Strömbäck 2008; Esser 2013; Landerer 2013; Meyen et al. 2014). What most analyses have in common is the attribution of structuring capacities to a logic that lays the foundations for actors' interactions over media content. As such, it is crucial to grasp how the rules of the game imposed by Chilean news organisations are articulated by actors inhabiting political institutions based on their own practices, as well as how they interact with and react to this institutional logic.

Three features were particularly salient in participants' accounts regarding the logic of the news media, which will be further unpacked below. First among these is the identification of conflict and negativity as the backbone of newsworthy content in the political beat. Second is the permanent *presentism* imposed by media-defined temporalities and third are the commercial underpinnings contained in news production dynamics. All these features are fairly recognisable in different branches of literature on news making, in particular Meyer's (2002) definition of media logic as the result of media routines - notions of what is news and how it is presented -, notions of media time as distinctly different from political time, and media economics. Yet, these supply relevant information regarding how this external institutional logic is negotiated and how media-oriented practices adjusted to media requirements. Also important is paying attention to absent or less salient features of the news media logic, such as the public orientation of political news. This barely surfaces in participants' discussions of what makes it into the news in the beat, not even among journalists who claim their professional autonomy rests on concepts of newsworthiness

rather than public orientation. The latter will be discussed in connection to the commercial nature of the Chilean media system (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Couso 2012).

The second sub-section looks at the political elites' reactions to the news media logic, accounting for attitudes of resistance to a logic mostly perceived as external and constraining. Nonetheless, the logic of the news media is also discussed as an opportunity, highlighting that speaking the language of news – becoming mediatized – is mostly a way to unlock access to mediated visibility and an attempt to retain control over media messages, which raises questions about how power shifts are to be understood in the process of mediatization. Finally, some unintended consequences of the process of mediatization for political actors are identified, such as the overexposure of political confrontation over policy discussions, and the anchoring to the present that pushes political actors towards reactive rather than proactive media management, amplifying previous power differentials between political actors.

6.2.1 Conflict and the news: no grey zones

When comparing the accounts of the three groups, a shared understanding regarding the core features of the news media logic emerges. For politicians, political communicators and journalists alike, certain elements of news values become central in shaping and defining their daily interactions. Conflict and negativity are widely highlighted as a commonly recognised feature that values or devalues information.

Close to the time when the interviews were conducted, an independent MP made strong accusations against some of his colleagues during a session.[71] This attempt at denunciation ended up with some shoving and a fistfight between this MP and the head of one of the then official parties, an unusual event in the Chilean Parliament. This outbreak of violence had extensive media coverage for two days[72], and was repeatedly used among interviewees of all political affiliations as the epitome of the distorted image of politics the news media was willing to spread at the expense of less-newsworthy, yet relevant, discussions that take place daily in Congress. Conflict and confrontation in political news are rarely physical as in this somewhat unusual example. They remain, nevertheless, widely identified core values of news production (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Tuchman 1978; Harcup & O'Neill 2001; Allan 2010) that helps locate stories within a narrative of protagonists, antagonists and the increased probability of such a story progressing into future episodes (Cook, 1998). Awareness that conflict adds value to stories, statements and actions was widely acknowledged by politicians and press officers alike, as the following quotations illustrate. The first belongs to a new Deputy and the second to a journalist working as a press officer in the Senate.

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[71] The case alluded to is that of Deputy René Alinco, a former construction worker and later deputy for the District 59 (XII Region) during 2006-2014. On June 12th 2013 he urged the Ethics Commission to intervene on the basis of two main allegations, one directed at Rosauro Martinez, an MP from *Renovación Nacional*, whom he accused of participating in crimes committed during the military dictatorship. The second denunciation was formulated broadly against his colleagues and without names, allegedly including abuse of power, influence peddling, workplace harassment and even sexual harassment in Congress, committed by elected members. The accusations did not find broad support among political parties, and the Ethics Commission asked Alinco to give names and details in order to take further steps, which were not provided. The accusations about abuses of power ended there. The accusations against Martinez, though, followed a different path due to a parallel judicial investigation that ended with his impeachment and prosecution for the deaths of three opponents to the military regime.

[72] At least 50 news reports in all media platforms informed about the fight on June 12th and June 13th 2013, according to the news search engine Nexchannel.

> I don't have much experience since this is my first legislative period, and **it is hard to relate to the media, if you are not really into controversial issues.** I think that when it comes to the national media [our role] is very reactive, because **what is interesting for the media, what makes it into the news is not what you are seriously working on**. For example, you will never see a story about a good bill that will change the life of a person. It is difficult because few will care about it. What makes the news? The project that was not approved, or the project that triggered a fight between two Deputies who were about to come to blows. That happens to be the news of the day (...) **Today it is like this. And I think, in that sense, you have to know how the system works.**

Politician 4, Deputy.

> I daresay that in the last 4-5 years, the sound bites that you have to send to the media are actually white or black: you killed it or you didn't; it is not that it is wounded and might need treatment. No, that is useless. Did we kill it? OK, let's kill it, and there the sound bite goes, and you are on television and you are everywhere... but **none of this ambivalence of old politicians** who were more likely to say 'yes, we do have the opportunity to study this article, this law, because we want to see whether it is positive or not positive'. **No. That sound bite today is absolutely left out by the press**

Communications 1, Senator Office.

The perceived prevalence of conflict as the more important aspect of the information traded between politicians and journalists can be connected to both professional and commercial components of news media organisations. Turf wars, spin tactics and political operations are all elements identified as prevalent in the conduct of everyday politics and which allow journalists working this beat to add elements of conflict to their stories. At the same time, conflict or negativity is an element frequently considered in both classical and contemporary descriptions of news values, as long as negative news are seen as unambiguous, newsworthy and attractive to audiences (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Harcup & O'Neill 2001; O'Neill & Harcup 2009). For the political beat in particular, negativity further works as a rhetorical strategy that allows journalists to show distance from their sources and counterbalance attempts to control media messages (Frank, Esser & Spanier

2005). In addition to this protective role, conflict is also attached to commercial values that help stories sell (Lengauer et al. 2011), performing therefore a twofold objective: the reinforcement of the professional role of journalists and the attraction of audiences.

The understanding that conflict adds news value to stories may be common among research participants, but the appraisal they made of this value differs depending on their positions. Although all groups discussed the use of conflict and negativity in political news, explicit mentions of this matter are more prevalent in the political side of the sample; 22 out of 30 politicians, and 11 out of 12 communication officers elaborated on this point, against 7 out of 18 journalists.

Those journalists who mentioned this point generally do so in a matter-of-fact way: polemic adds value to stories; lack of conflict decreases the value of stories. Press officers and particularly politicians, though, have a more ambivalent relationship with this notion, since it is usually perceived as a double edged resource; it may decrease the quality of public debate but it can work as a tool for agenda control. Press officers recognise that they are pushed to take extremes, to adopt white and black positions and produce bold statements in order to get through media agendas. There is, in this respect, an acknowledgement that grey areas do not fit news media languages. Politicians, in turn, understand that if they are willing to provide conflict their chances of being in the media are higher, and that triggers a process of boundary negotiation, between what is sometimes perceived as compromising quality in exchange for audience reach.

The use of negative frameworks in political news has been analysed previously, distinguishing between actor-related negativity and framework-related negativity (see Lengauer et al., 2011), focusing on whether the confrontational frame comes

from statements and tone provided by politicians or interpretive packages created by journalists; both of these dimensions of conflict are acknowledged by research participants in this study. On the one hand, conflict or negativity is strategically adopted – usually through antagonising other political actors, both on and off the record – as a standard tool for political news management, under the premise that conflict adds value to their relationship with news organisations. On the other hand, when conflict is perceived as created by journalists and news media outlets it becomes a point of resistance for politicians and their press aides; 'an-other' way to do things. Critiques of the quality of journalism, together with the articulation of resistance to the news media as institutions, usually start from discussions about the negativity of news, which is expressed by politicians and press officers in attitudes of discomfort towards the workings of the media or the recognition of difficulties in the process of managing public attention.

6.2.2 *Coyuntura*, presentism and the temporality imposed by the media

The second more prominent attribute of the news media logic discussed by research participants is the issue of permanent attention to the present, as well as the timing and pace of news, which can be connected to professional and commercial components of news organisations equally. Politicians and journalists alike speak often of the need to constantly react to sudden and unexpected changes in the news agenda. Two words are used often to discuss the notions of time imposed by the media environment: *coyuntura* and *contingencia*, none of which can be literally translated into English. *Coyuntura* is a Spanish word whose literal meaning is "the combination of factors and circumstances that a nation

faces for the decision of an important matter".[73] This word, though, has been adopted in political communication jargon to describe evolving current affairs that demand immediate attention, as opposed to long-term issues. This term is used in a similar and sometimes interchangeable way with *contigencia*, to convey notions of immediacy, attention to the present and unpredictability. News stories are perceived as evolving quickly in ways harder to predict due to shortened news cycles and the multiplication of communication channels, anchoring political actors to the *coyuntura*, which often renders less-effective the long-term planning of communication strategies. Instead, it demands from actors a permanent state of alert in order to identify opportunities while news agendas develop.

From the perspective of political actors, the perceived difficulty associated with foreseeing the life period of a story limits their ability to control media flows (such as proactively placing topics in the agenda). Conversely, reacting in a timely fashion to an on-going agenda creates space for a certain degree of visibility control. Similar to what politicians say about conflict, the relationship between political actors and the rhythm imposed by the news cycle is ambivalent. Following this pace closely is criticised as short-sighted and damaging to the quality of public debate, as the focus on the present becomes obsessive and 'big discussions' are ignored and marginalised. However, it is also instrumentally integrated into routines in order to render topics of interest visible, as illustrated by the following quotation.

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[73] Definition offered by RAE, Real Academia de la Lengua Española.

- How would you assess your ability to place topics on the agenda?

It is intermediate. It is intermediate to... **What happens is that if you enter the topics of the moment[74], you will appear for sure. And the more controversial, the more contentious, the more to the sound bite, it is more accepted,** apparently. But if we try.... let's see; what happens is that there is always a discussion; there is always the temptation of rather entering the topics of the moment, because it is the only thing that guarantees that you appear. Or we try to connect [those interventions] with the things we're doing in order to give a long-term vision... a medium-term let's say, that is not just fighting someone.

Politician 15, senior advisor

The temporality imposed by the media due to newsroom arrangements; journalistic routines and media production demands is integral to news making (Tunstall 1971; Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979). To this is added the clash between political schedules and media schedules as a crucial point of friction between the fields of politics and journalism, as long as political messages have to be tailored to fit the "uncompromising presentism" (Meyer, 2002: 47) inherent to news production (see also Cook, 2005). Time-related concepts are essential to understanding the news media institution, insomuch as immediacy is a core value informing the professional identity of journalism (Deuze 2005), to the point that timely/not timely has been identified as the binary code that provides guidance for action in the news media system (Hanitzsch 2006).

6.2.3. The commercial underpinnings of the news media logic

Both conflict and attention to the present, the two main features of the institutional news media logic discussed by research participants, are strongly connected to notions of newsworthiness and news production cultures, lending

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[74] In the original, "the topics of the moment" was actually referred to as *coyuntura*.

support to the idea that news values are at the core of what has been called news media logic (Strömbäck 2008; Esser 2013; Asp 2014). Notions of newsworthiness, then, structure much of the interactions between news organisations and other institutional fields. However, it is not trivial that levels of conflict, antagonism and polarisation are so uniformly highlighted as the most recognisable features of what makes the news in the political beat, since these are features of the news media located closer to the market pole of the journalistic profession (Landerer 2013).

The commercial underpinnings of the journalistic trade[75] are acknowledged by Chilean political elites, although it is important to distinguish between two different ways of discussing the market-driven nature of the media. First, they discuss the imperatives of audience maximisation that shape news production and second, they stress the relationship between ownership patterns and corporate interests, which would find an expression in the form of direct commercial pressures in news content.

With regard to the first point, politicians discuss the way a commercial orientation impact processes such as content selection and presentation, pushing news organisations to adjust political content to fit efforts of audience maximisation:

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[75] The commercial drivers of journalistic practice respond to imperatives of audience and profit maximisation combined with pressures of operational efficiency (higher news production at lower costs), which are often associated with concerns about decreasing standards of quality in contents (Franklin 2005; Davies 2008; McManus 2009). These tensions between values of public orientation and pressures for audience-maximisation have been also found in studies focused on public-funded media (Benson & Powers 2011), showing that they are transversal to the media institution. These commercial rationales are integral to definitions of news media logics (Esser 2013; Meyer 2002; Asp 2014). For a full discussion on news media logics see section 3.2.1.

There is an issue there and, I insist, I do not blame the journalists. I think - and I've talked about this with a few of them – that is related to the editorial line of **the media, which has a clear commercial drive. That is, they respond to the existing demand on consumption**. And to the extent that consumption demand points towards, for example, sensationalism, the type of journalism that gets done it will be that sort.

Politician 2, Deputy.

This is all mediated by what sells and what does not sell. (...) I refuse to dramatize issues so they are sold, you know what I mean?, to put up a show, to play along with the market in the media (...) So, it's like ... **it's easy to sell knickknack.** The press likes that.

Politician 1, Deputy.

I think the media have a great responsibility in providing space to certain people in political issues –which is my subject – to the most aggressive people, **those who are more bad mouthed, more vulgar, for obvious reasons because they produce shock, and that apparently sells or generates rating and profits**, and there is a linkage there, a vicious circle.

Politician 9, Senator.

These complaints about the pernicious effects of a logic of audience maximisation resonate with familiar concerns about the impoverishment of public debate and fears about the dumbing down of the media which may be the result of commercialisation processes (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999).

As mentioned above, the second interpretation of the commercial underpinnings of Chilean journalism, –discussed by politicians and press officers alike, stresses the links between the interests of commercial media and the specific configuration of the Chilean media system, highlighting potential biases associated with patterns of ownership concentration. While the former is closely linked to definitions of the news media logic and attached to news making routines, the second is attached to

contextual features and concerns about the impact that issues of ownership concentration might have upon journalistic autonomy.

> And obviously the concentration in a few hands, few hands that have some ideological orientation, and – worse still - **few hands that not only concentrate media ownership but are strongly linked to economic groups**. It establishes a linkage; something dangerous. And we have seen it when relevant issues such as the issue of abuses are discussed or the collusion of big economic groups.
>
> Politician 5, Assessor, political party.

> But I would say that they are rather … it is easy for corporative power to position issues they care about in the media, as well as to exclude the issues they are not interested in. And there, **politics is on a rather secondary level**. Today, they are able to outweigh positioning issues about how we understand the economy, development, labour relations. And in that respect**, corporative power positions topics as it sees fit.**
>
> Journalist 15, Senior editor, radio.

> Both La Tercera and El Mercurio, are receptive to denunciations involving the state, or the political class, or specific politicians, yet **they are almost impervious to criticism or investigations against private agents or business interests.** That is what happens in Chile today. I would say that there is not a fair play of sorts regarding politics. Perhaps some considerations in some aspects, but political denunciations get through. **When it comes to business interests there is a sort of reluctance.** I do not see the same treatment; the same receptivity from editors or journalists to receive that sort of denunciation.
>
> Politician 23, Deputy.

Markedly, opinions about business interests as being more difficult to tackle than political interests were rather common and resonate with the findings of Hanitzsch & Mellado (2011), as well as Lagos & Cabalin (2013) who argue that Chilean journalists perceive economic pressures as stronger than political pressures in their work.

The salience of a commercial logic as a prominent feature of the logic of the media has been repeatedly stressed (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Negrine 2008; Landerer 2013; Meyen et al. 2014). As highlighted above, avenues used by both Chilean political and media actors for discussions about the commercial underpinnings of the logic of the media are distinctive. Ultimately, however, they both point towards the subordination of journalistic criteria to market criteria, a diagnosis which figures prominently in academic analyses about the political economy of the media in Chile (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Couso 2012).

6.3 Political elites' adaptations to the news media logics

The present section looks at how political actors adapt themselves to news media logics to proactively pursue spaces of mediated visibility. Despite the reservations expressed regarding the formal and informal norms regulating the functioning of the media, politicians and press officers often adjust their practices, statements and actions to fit media languages to the end of achieving the goal of media exposure. Acknowledging that, for the most part, actors willingly adapt to news media logics (Stromback & Van Aelst 2013; Blumler 2014; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014; Van Aelst et al. 2014), a reflexive understanding of the mediatization process is favoured that recognises actors' agency and strategic actions in the process.

As was discussed earlier in the chapter, politicians and press officers identify salient features in the inner workings of news organisations, and an understanding of these norms often goes hand in hand with the possibility of instrumentally embracing some of these informal rules in an attempt at retaining control on the visibility of topics and stories of interest. What makes the news is

generally understood and articulated in a similar way for the politicians and press officers interviewed. Where they are more likely to differ is in the position they take when deciding how to deal with this institutional logic, which might vary from one actor to the next, but also from case to case. Overall, the adaptation to news media logic is best understood as a reaction to changes in the media environment.

A narrative of change was prevalent among all groups of research participants: changes in the relationships between politicians and journalists, changes in political strategies oriented towards the media and changes within the media environment itself. What all of these have in common is that they suggest a shift in power relations and a substantially damaged political ability to shape and steer media content, a shift that has been met with an awareness that old scripts of action have to be rewritten and routines of political communication updated in the context of a a more demanding competition for media attention.

Some elements of these descriptions stand out, particularly the idea that both spaces and time devoted to politics in traditional media have shrunk, limiting opportunities for visibility, an aspect in which Chilean politicians are not alone (Negrine 1996; Marcinkowski 2014) . However, these spaces have not only diminished but have changed in important ways. Traditional media actors have seen important transformations in recent years, particularly from the turn of the century onwards. Among others, important to the micro-climate of politics was the eruption of a more adversarial and interpretative form of political journalism since Cristian Bofill became director of *La Tercera* in 1999[76] (Ramos & Matus

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[76] Bofill is an important character in the recent history of political journalism in Chile. He was in charge of *La Tercera* during the period 1999-2013, consolidating the newspaper as up-market-oriented and a

2003), or the eruption of infotainment genres, which also fuelled the transformation of a newspaper, the successful tabloid *Las Ultimas Noticias.*[77] Although dissimilar in form and consequence, these changes dragged political elites out of their comfort zone, introducing new languages to be considered for public communication.

The collision between older and newer media logics has been acknowledged as a point of friction inside government, political parties and other groups aiming for political influence (Chadwick 2013), and that becomes especially clear when research participants discuss the impact social media have had on their daily routines. Twitter in particular, by far the most important social media network mentioned for the political communication community, is frequently identified as a disruption, not only because of the fluidity and uncertainty that social media add to communications, opening unexpected flanks for press officers throughout the day, but also because social media messages may have resonance in traditional media, the set of media which actors orientate most actions towards.

> **Before was the press release, was the press conference, and now is Twitter.** You know that parliamentarians – when they are not in person in Congress – they replied to each other on Twitter, sometimes they go with their gut in the replies, and although **they may be interesting sound bites for the press, that has provoked many problems too**.
>
> Communications 6, Senate.

> It has changed many things. **Twitter is a tool that makes us shiver constantly. I mean, at some point we have to silence two of our politicians**. I mean, please stop because you are causing a mess! Facebook

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direct competitor of *El Mercurio*. Revelations of corruption in Ricardo Lagos' government were unveiled in its pages. According to Ramos and Matos (2003) Bofill was known for a style based on formulating theses and then sending reporters to prove them. This confrontational style of work was acknowledged for some of the politicians interviewed.

[77] In 2000, Las Ultimas Noticias, former mid-market newspaper, adopted a classical tabloid editorial line, becoming the most read newspaper in the country by 2003 (Edwards 2009).

never caused anything to us; it was just about who had more followers, playing that game; but Twitter is different. You have to follow relevant characters. Many use Twitter as a formal means of communication because next day the *quotation marks* formal news media may publish easily something from Twitter. So, that has added an additional front to pay attention to.

Communications 12, Political Party.

At the level of everyday practice, in terms of how the political communication culture has developed as a result of these environmental changes, it is possible to identify domains of adjustment to the media that are common to most actors. These are (1) the professionalisation of political communication, (2) the adaptation to media languages, (3) the adaptation to media temporalities and (4) the dissemination of unattributed information as a form of covert information subsidy. These domains of change will be unpacked below.

6.3.1. Professionalisation of political communication

Most changes and adaptations to the news media logic are underpinned by a process of professionalisation of political communication. That is to say, a process of change over time that indicates new ways of doing things as well as division of labour as new specialities emerge (Blumler & Kavanagh 1999; Norris 2001; Holtz-Bacha 2002; Negrine & Lilleker 2002).

This is first and foremost an adaptation of an organisational nature, connected with the level of resources allocated to manage press and communications issues, as well as the roles played by senior press officers within a given organisation (Stromback & Van Aelst, 2013; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014). In Chile, the political elite have increasingly professionalised press and communications management (ICSO/UDP 2004; Santander 2013), and there are certain indications about how this process has been led by the Executive power which indicate, nonetheless,

uneven levels of development across political organisations (already discussed in section 5.2.).

Professionalisation in this context is a relative concept, as long as media systems are constantly evolving (Chadwick 2013). As such, the notion of professionalisation is often used to describe the application of new skills and knowledge that could also be addressed as an on-going process in the relationship between media and politics (Lilleker & Negrine 2002). In the grand narrative about mediatization of politics, the professionalisation of political communication and PR techniques is understood as a reaction and adaptation to greater media autonomy and an assumption of an increased capacity of news organisations to define political contents in their own terms (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Strömbäck & Esser, 2009).

6.3.2. Adaptation to languages: embracing conflict and sound bites

Embracing political conflict or exploiting personal stories as a way of retaining some degree of control is a strategy that some actors will accept as part of the rules of the game. As discussed in section 6.2.1., conflict and negativity are clearly understood as integral to the logic of the media, and as a result, most political actors refer to an increasing demand for these attributes in statements and actions by media organisations. Hence, antagonising political enemies (and occasionally political allies) is often mentioned as a common resort to capture media attention, which pushes press officers and politicians alike to turn messages into bold sound bites. It is not unusual that decisions about whether to seek visibility in the media with a topic were assessed on the availability and quality of these sound bites (or *cuñas*). Thus, despite complaints about how this environment might lower the

level of debate and the public perception of politics, many decide to use conflict

instrumentally on occasion. The following quotations illustrate these positions,

which are not necessarily exclusionary; the first narrates a staff meeting in which

the group reflect on how much to compromise in exchange for media visibility, the

second is a typical example of a politician with routinised relations with the news

media:

> [We ask ourselves] **What do we have to do to be on TV?** And then, let's see if we get a breakfast show, and what do we get for the breakfast show, and how do we get there. **And it is almost impossible, unless you are willing to pull down your trousers, you know what I mean?** Let's see how much we pull down our trousers to see if we get the breakfast show.
>
> Politician 17, Former Minister.

> Well, **I'm a pretty straightforward person**. From that standpoint, it is often best for the media to report on **what I say because it causes controversy**, rather than something duller (...) absolutely; absolutely. Then you know when you are causing something, you know how to say it, and there are different media for different actions.
>
> Politician 27, Deputy.

> If you manage to understand what the media is interested in, and **you transform your message accordingly, your storyline, they will perfectly be able to get hooked in what you are presenting** (...) It is easy to work with some parliamentarians when they understand this. Others are more complicated and you have to constantly advise and help them to build a storyline. That's the more difficult part, the fine tuning.
>
> Communications 6, Senate

Other traditional techniques widely used by politicians, especially

parliamentarians, to establish working relations with news organisations include

specialising or creating thematic niches. This was found to be a predictor of media

exposure in empirical work by Wolfsfeld and Schafer (2006), who show that one

of the most valued individual traits (of political actors by journalists) is the

potential to thematically link an individual to a certain topic. It was very common

for politicians to discuss specialisation in one or more topics as a standard strategy for visibility management, sometimes configuring thematic feuds that are respected by fellow politicians.

> Sure, but **what is the technique of parliamentarians: they specialise in something, they try to become a technical reference**, someone who knows more, from which they may have more work or more influence or more respectability (...) then specialise in one area or more and assume spokesmanship on the subject.
>
> Journalist 6, Editor, online media.

> When I started in Congress, when I was elected deputy, **one of the first [pieces of] advice I was given was not to talk about everything** but find topics that were relevant to me and focus on those. And that is what I have done (...) I have sought to have those niches. And **that has finally allowed me to gain a kind of respect from journalists on these issues**. Sometimes you appear more, sometimes less and you take the risk of not appearing at all if none of your issues are trending, but finally one gains a kind of consideration by journalists, and that's good.
>
> Politician 14, Deputy.

Although the search for attractive and bold sound bites is mainly associated with broadcast media, it is nonetheless a benchmark used to plan interventions and direct emphasis across media platforms. "Speaking the language of news", and being able to offer good sound bites is often described as a necessary step to improve communication with the media, and a learning process that most career politicians will need to undertake. Press officers prize those politicians who are "*cuñeros*" and, therefore, less demanding than other less-attuned authorities.

6.3.3. Adaptation to times: monitoring and planning on the go

In addition to professionalisation and adaptation to media languages, a third domain of change relates to reactions to the temporality imposed by a shorter and faster news cycle, developed along with the process of media convergence. The

clash between media and political times, especially driven from the acceleration of the news cycle and the implementation of 24/7 news media outlets, has often been highlighted as one central matter of friction between the media and political fields (Cook 1998; Meyer 2002). The Chilean political elite is no exception in this regard and adaptations to media temporalities can be observed on different levels.

It is a fact that political actors with regular exchanges with news organisations have adapted their communication practices to fit media demands and maximise chances of mediated visibility; for instance, making public announcements on days and at times where little newsworthy activity is expected, thereby increasing the chances of media coverage or releasing an announcement near the time of the central television bulletin and targeting live coverage. However, this is a somewhat superficial analysis on this issue. In addition to these extended practices, it is possible to identify a gradual shift from temporalities imposed by traditional media players to temporalities imposed by newer media players, which have injected an overall greater speed into the media environment. Particularly relevant for the micro-climate of politics has been the introduction of 24 hour television stations (*CNN Chile* and *TVN 24 Horas*), newspapers that operate on digital platforms only (*El Mostrador, Ciper, El Dinamo*) and social media (particularly Twitter), in addition to processes of convergence experienced by traditional media players (e.g*. La Tercera* and *El Mercurio, Bio Bio, Cooperativa,* television stations etc.). These developments have contributed to an alteration of news making routines within media organisations, which are learning to adapt. Jenkins (2004) claims that the process of "convergence alters the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences", and

different studies have shown how processes of convergence are often met with resistance and scepticism by media professionals (Huang et al. 2006; Quandt & Singer 2009), and that old media practices tend to dominate news production in new convergent media platforms (Himelboim & McCreery 2012). In Chile, processes of convergence and digitalization have been gradually adopted within newsrooms, though not without resistance from already over-worked and under-paid journalists (Godoy & Gronemeyer 2012). These developments which challenge news making routines and, accordingly, the very foundations of the news media institution, must certainly be faced by media actors but also by political actors, who face increasing new demands. In the absence of scripts, most reactions are intuitive and new routines are developed and co-created through practice.

The following quotation, from a journalist working in a 24-Hour television station, illustrates the idea of news stories that are in constant flux, whose life span is more difficult to determine, as well as possible ramifications:

> How news is produced today has also introduced changes, in the sense that it is a bit more radial... I mean news starts somehow and then evolves: someone gives an interview, says something and that generates immediate reactions. Before, it was what was said in the morning and in the evening bulletin; you could see the story with all the reactions collected throughout the day. And that was it. **Today actors know how others react, they can follow that throughout the day in 24-hour information channels; so the story adds new characters and may even substantially change, because it is gaining feedback from reactions** (...) For the same reason, going public has a greater cost and weight because of the speed of reproduction, the reach, the potential reactions.
>
> Journalist 16, Editor, TV.

The acceleration of news making routines adds an additional sense of urgency to the *presentism* inherent in news making routines, pushing political actors to

concentrate most of their media management activities on issues that arise throughout the day. Therefore, their ability to plan and anticipate scenarios is further limited. Perceptions that "day to day" issues generally surpass communication plans are in the majority, and as a result of this rapidly changing agenda, politicians and their aides invest great effort in monitoring the information environment, which involves online and offline practices.

The monitoring of the information environment involves observing news media outlets and also maintaining regular contacts and conversations with journalists and editors, a task that is partially assumed by communication staff, when available. Although patterns of media consumption vary individually, media monitoring implies being attentive to those media outlets considered relevant for the political beat, with the aim of observing how issues develop during the day and are potentially replicated by other outlets. In addition, the one-to-one mutual monitoring practice is also of great relevance. Conversations between politicians and journalists, as well as conversations between communication officers and journalists are an important input that feeds both news stories and press management decisions.

> **We are always alert.** We have a dynamic of talking daily to the media, in order to know what they are doing; we talk to the reporter that covers us. If we don't have further development with him, we talk to the editor; we get to know, **we try to have an idea, as early as possible, about where the day is heading towards (...) how is the ground**, and we manage the ground: talking to the media, know what they are doing, monitoring. That is us.
>
> Communications 12, Political Party.

The monitoring of the information environment, though, is not only a matter of being up to date with the news. It is primarily a constant search for appropriate

opportunities of visibility, aimed at detecting suitable issues and determining how to approach them. Since political actors understand that they have a limited capacity for agenda control, detecting and seizing communication opportunities is a key ability for maximising chances of media coverage. "Getting on" or "hopping" on issues (*subirse a los temas*) generally means reacting quickly to issues that are already visible in the media agenda, instead of positioning issues, an ability that generally demands greater resources.

The resource of going public, reacting to statements or actions does not necessarily point towards debilitated political actors and more powerful media, since opportunities to offer "reactions" are often proactively pursued, using the visibility of social media, for example. Instead, it emphasises the recursive nature of a mediated political agenda that has become increasingly fluid, posing challenges to media organisations and political actors alike.

The search for windows of opportunity associated with the *"coyuntura"* also becomes a constant task, and is often the only gateway to exposure for policy-topics. It is frequent for political actors, thus, to refer to these windows of opportunity as available spaces to render visible issues previously ignored by the media.

> For example, in the last few days I have been 3 times on television talking about lobby, and **lobby became a topic of interest** to people without understanding very well what it means, **as a result of the news about the pharmaceutical drugs law. If that had not happened...** For years the issue of lobbying has been a priority issue for me, the regulation of lobbying, **I have spent years and nobody cared; but they do care now as a result of something else.**
>
> Politician 20, Deputy.

> So, according to the quality of the topic we have is the possibility to appear. What I mean by this is **you have to adapt yourself**. You know that, **depending on the coyuntura, there are things that are going to receive**

tremendous attention and you have to work according to that**, in order to appear; at least [involved] as an aspect of the subject.** And that's the hard part. That's what I face every day; [to decide] when to position a topic and when to not position a topic.

Communications 9, political party

How can we get on that topic, and what opportunities we have to get on this topic, do you know what I mean? So, that's the first thing; what are the opportunities and the costs associated with getting on that topic. **There are issues that do not gain momentum. That is what happens in politics at least, opportunity is key (...)** something happened that is linked to your topic, and the issue goes up.

Politician 24, Assessor, political party.

Perceptions about the acceleration and increasing fluidity of the mediated political agenda are certainly contributing factors for the already discussed devaluation of old information subsidies. The case is different with covert information subsidies such as leaks, off the records and political operations which remain widely in use and are the focus of the next section.

6.3.4. Strategic disclosures and unattributed information as covert information subsidies

A fourth reaction to the perceived relevance of media visibility in the political beat is the adaptation of information subsidies. In particular, the extensive use of strategic disclosures that can be interpreted as a reaction towards more interpretive forms of journalism, in which traditional media subsidies (such as press releases) have lost efficiency.

One of the more frequent complaints among press officers is the devaluation of traditional information subsidies, such as press conferences and press releases, a traditional way for sources to define the content and tone of news (Gandy 1982).

Press conferences, scheduled press points and staged events – normally addressed as *pautas* – have structured an important part of information exchanges between politicians and news organisations. Although still used, there is a shared acknowledgement that these are increasingly ineffective techniques as a form of everyday communication, and therefore they are used selectively.

> **Here we do *pautas* on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays**, generally between 10.30am and noon. Sometimes we have, I don't know, 6 press conferences in *El Pensador,* which is a zone we have here in the Deputies Chamber; 6 scheduled conferences. **We have sent emails to our colleagues, we have explained to them which are the subjects to be covered, we have done all the prep work, and when the time comes, there is nobody here**.
>
> Communications 6, Senate.

> Many years ago we used to make denunciations in the media, but later**, the media discarded us and now they make the denunciations. They assumed that role and we deputies were left out.** We used to organise press conferences to make these denunciations public but that has become infrequent. **You see, very few media attend the press conferences that we organise** (…) We used to be invited to breakfast shows to give our opinions and now… experts**. There has been a decline in space.**
>
> Politician 13, Deputy.

> Sure, and in the process **journalists have clearly taken a more active role. I think they have gained greater prestige** and they are no longer the mere mailboxes that they formerly were, because there were those who had to go to the press conference because the minister wanted to talk, those who had to cover such a thing because such a parliamentarian requested it, or *La Moneda* or some Minister. **The media are taking greater distance**. I do not know yet about television stations. I feel they still receive a lot of pressure, especially TVN, with regard to some issues when they still may be influenced by the requests of the authorities.
>
> Journalist 10, Journalist, elite newspaper.

From different perspectives, the above quotations reflect a common panorama of changing languages, rhythms and priorities that not all actors are equipped to face, and thus require as much specialised skill as they do a trial and error approach.

Increasing covert information subsidies can be identified as one reaction to this development. Backstage information exchanges are generally addressed with the umbrella concept of 'off the record' conversations, although they include a variety of practices ranging from informal briefings to strategic information leaks. These exchanges are recognised as a standard form of communication within the political beat and between political and media actors. Informal conversations between politicians and political journalists are widely acknowledged as part of the in-built features of political reporting, as well as crucial for the understanding of the politics of news making (Cater, 1965; Sigal, 1973; Cook, 1998; Schudson, 2002; Davis, 2007). However, these are rarely discussed as information subsidies, partly because empirical studies which seek to measure the input of PR in news stories naturally rely on press releases as a unit of measurement (for example, see Turk 1985 or Lewis et al. 2008). In Chilean political reporting, these are frequently used as a way of monitoring the environment, as well as exchanging information and providing interpretive frameworks to understand political actions, decisions and statements.

Both journalists and politicians are ambiguous when they discuss the meaning and use of off the record conversations. Although many research participants deplore the abuse of unattributed information, they understand that this is often the only way for journalists to get access to stories and for politicians to openly discuss their views on on-going current affairs. However, the explicit dimensions of the

practice are unclear. Some research participants refer to off the record as information provided to journalists in strict confidence and, therefore, not meant for direct publication but rather as cues to pursue further reporting. Others understand it as information that journalists are free to use, as long as they do so without attribution. Otano & Sunkel (2003) also note that this distinction is blurred in Chilean political reporting, leading to the normalised use of unattributed information that may lead to a certain impunity for sources that are not accountable for their declarations.

The tension between a practice that is extensively used yet questioned becomes clear in all groups of reference when the underlying theme of risk, that underpins descriptions about how unattributed information is exchanged, is discussed. Communications officers highlight the need for previous trust in the journalist or media outlet you are passing information to for such exchanges, as long as they are not in control of what exactly is going to be published and how or if this information is going to be appropriately checked. This is especially the case when other politicians might be willing to leak information, therefore creating some vulnerability by exposing information that was not sanctioned for publication. Similarly, when politicians discuss off the record information they also refer to risk, but connect this to potential attacks from adversaries, including the intentional leaking of false or inaccurate information or personal accusations. Taking this into consideration, why is it that unattributed information remains so widely used?

A first explanation can be found in the already discussed definitional ambiguity of different forms of information exchanges, which leads to a blurred distinction

between practices. It was not unusual for politicians to identify the practice of leaking information to the media when done by others, but not by themselves, only later offering some contradictory remarks on their own practices:

> I'm always required by journalists and I always try to act with great caution (...) I immediately explain that I speak on [the record]. **Rarely have I had to use off the record to build something (...) strategically. A couple of times** we might have had to position a political issue according to this logic, or that line, to position an issue that the UDI was interested in (...) And if I had had a bad experience, I don't remember, and if I had it, it was quickly clarified with the journalist.
>
> Politician 12, Deputy.

> While I was in office, I never had off the record conversations, ever. Now, sometimes I have a couple of friends, people that I get along with and sometimes they call me and tell me: "Do you know something, what is happening in the party?", and sometimes I say, yes, such a thing. I do it for nothing, because I am not really involved today, it's to help them, you know what I mean? (...) **Sometimes I speak off the record and give information but with some care because it depends on what information you are giving away".**
>
> Politician 17, Former Minister.

> There are always conversations with reporters. I try to do everything on the record: **what I say privately I hold it in public, but obviously there are relationships of trust with some journalists**, but I try to make that infrequent; I do not try to generate some kind of business with them.
>
> Politician 22, Senator.

As the quotations above suggest, politicians frequently make a distinction between information passed without attribution to journalists with the aim of informally briefing on recent events and information strategically leaked with political ends. The former is considered a standard and acceptable way of discussing recent political developments while the latter is more questionable and generally oriented to either damage an opponent or obtain personal gain, whether in the form of protection or improved exposure. While the rationale behind this distinction is relatively self-explanatory, it is

reasonable to expect that partisan actors are bound to get involved in processes of strategic framing even when providing contextual background about events. That is to say, they will try to shape the meaning of events to favour certain public understandings over others (Esser & Spanier 2005; Entman et al. 2009).

The widespread use of backstage exchanges and unattributed information – which are especially important yet not exclusive to print and electronic newspapers – is also confirmed by journalists. The theme of risk is also present in this group, primarily in connection to the perceived double standard of politicians, especially if they provide information and later decide to deny in public what they have confided to journalists in 'private', therefore undermining the journalist's credibility.

> **What happens sometimes is that you lose certainty about what politicians tell you off [the record]...** At some point in life you associated off the record conversations with people telling you the truth, or close to that, and they did not say so on the record, because they did not want to speak openly. But **today, frequently you suspect that half-truths are always on the go in off the records.**

> Journalist 17, Journalist, radio.

> They have an obligation to say what they do, and explain what they do to the public. But no, as this is a cloudy preparation, they ultimately use the off. And what is told in off? Why resorting to off? **Why is everything they tell you in off? Because they are, usually, entanglements created to damage someone else**, and journalism plays that role. Then the guy tells you something that is going to bring down the other parliamentarian or will reveal some weird business of another politician ... and does so anonymously, because **as this is also a club of friends, they give sticks to each other under the table. And journalism plays along, which is unfortunate, because that should be above the table**.

> Journalist 15, Senior editor, radio

> I think **what is still prevalent in Chile, as a political technique with journalists, is doublespeak.** That has not ended and that has much to do with the society in which we live. Today, any of the actors we have in conflict, one journalist could tell you **what they are going to say publicly and what they are doing in private, because these are two things completely decoupled from each other,** and run on different tracks. And what happened

in the early 90s, as a matter of not hurting sensitivities, because people on the right would not speak of human rights, people on the left would not touch the market, today it is something institutionalised.

Journalist 3, Editor, elite newspaper.

Although risks are stressed by all groups involved in connection to off the record conversations, this is considered by journalists a valid and standard reporting technique, especially to understand processes and context and for getting access to interpretations of current affairs. What is more, when confronted with the possibility of being potentially used for political ends, most reporters accept this possibility as part of the rules of the game, as long as there is a convergence of interests between both parties, and the resulting story is newsworthy enough (or can be complemented with additional on the record sources).

I start, in any combination, **I start assuming that our conversation is always off the record,** and if I need anything, I ask the person if he can endorse what he has said on [the record]. That is my policy and also the newspaper's policy.

Journalist 10, Journalist, elite newspaper.

Sometimes I do pass information to journalists; if you want them to cover a topic, a little scandal, some denunciation. Now I have one here in my hand… If you want this topic to ultimately get published in the news media, sometimes you say 'look', instead of sending a press release that nobody will pay attention to; **I say 'look, I have a scoop, you can have the story and from there you ask me reactions. I give you all the background.'** And there are some news media outlets that will be actually interested.

Politician 10, Deputy

Here, I mean, **political journalism is 'off'. There is no choice**. There are two premises [you report off the record and] **all the sound bites they give you are good for nothing**, usually, with few exceptions (…) I mean, what I do is talk to the person, So, I call and say: hello Deputy, I need to talk to you; look, this issue is a little complicated, so tell me what you prefer, as it suits you better, I don't mind, if you want [to speak] on [the record], off [the record],

half and half, as you wish (…) **It helps me because if he is going to give me a sound bite with which I do nothing, I do prefer him to tell me the truth off the record.**

Journalist 14, Journalist, online media.

In addition to convergence of interests between political and media actors, a second explanation for the widespread use of unattributed information can be found in the slow movement towards more interpretive forms of journalism in the last couple of decades (Cordero & Marin, 2006; Mellado & Humanes, 2014). As a result of this trend, journalists may try to distance themselves from routine information subsidies by pursuing their own agendas. Nonetheless, these agendas appear to be heavily subsided by under the table information subsidies.

According to available evidence, dependence on official sources has remained stable (Faure et al., 2011; Mellado & Rafter, 2014). Distance from the source is expressed with techniques such as the use of the conditional form or a decrease in opportunities for direct quotations (Mellado & Humanes, 2014). Hence, for political actors the use of strategic disclosures appears to be as much a means to skew media contents in their favour, as it is a reaction to evolving forms of political reporting and media demands. In spite of the normative questions that may arise from these practices – a point that will be resumed in section 6.1.5 of the discussion – it is important to highlight that the different forms of political adaptations so far discussed (professionalisation of political communication, adaptation to media languages and routines and the use of strategic disclosures and unattributed information) are all accepted practice within news organisations. They are, indeed, often welcomed and understood as politicians being creative and facilitating the exposure of political issues on media platforms, which accentuates

the idea that political actors are those adapting to the needs of a changing and more autonomous media institution.

6.4. Final discussion and conclusion to the chapter

In this chapter, three key aspects for the mediatization of political actors were examined: goals attached to media-oriented practices, understandings of the news media logic and domains of adaptation to the news media logic. In a context where Chilean elites perceive the media as having increased their power over time (PNUD 2004; PNUD 2015; ICSO/UDP 2004), the chapter has focused on identifying drivers and consequences of the institutionalisation of media-oriented practices among political elites by looking at these complementary aspects. The main implications of these findings are discussed below.

6.4.1 The battle for public attention control

Identifying the main goals in the relationship between political elites and news organisations allows for a better grasp of the value politicians attach to mediated visibility as a political resource, the rationales for action mediating their interactions with news organisations and media professionals, as well as their adaptation to news logics of action; thus directly addressing the research questions that underpin the present chapter: how political elites understand and interact with the logic of the media and what are the drivers guiding that relationship

The chapter has shown that goals of media exposure can be grouped into two general areas: goals with a policy rationale and goals with an electoral rationale.

The first group of goals points towards strategies of agenda building and public bargaining, while the second group of goals points towards strategies of power reproduction (permanent campaigning) and communication with the public.

It is important to note that the visibility linked to goals with an electoral rationale is only partially pursued in the space of traditional media. This could be explained, on the one hand, as a result of promotional stories often being resisted by journalists while, on the other hand, the political press are understood as elite-oriented and therefore distant from the general public. Beyond the elite press, 'the people' are accessible via TV, a highly valued forum that, nonetheless, offers very limited space for political actors; through social media, which has not been evenly embraced by Chilean politicians (Fábrega & Paredes 2013) and in local media, which is often discussed by politicians as operating according to alternative dynamics and seen as more easily permeated by political agendas. Presumably for the same reasons, becoming visible to voters and interest groups through territorial work is identified as crucial, especially for parliamentarians and in spite of expanded opportunities for communication in a more diversified media environment. As such, although communication with the public is often raised as a justification for interactions with the news media, from the perspective of politicians this goal is not easily achieved.

Goals with a policy rationale, on the other hand, follow clearer scripts. That is not to say that getting media exposure for the purpose of entering into a policy debate is straightforward. On the contrary, it can be quite demanding. Yet the inward-facing function of the relationship with the media is more clearly established in the relationship with the press and validated as a legitimate aspiration. Davis

(2007) stresses that a major function of the news media is acting as a channel for inter-elite conflict, negotiation and communication, the latter often to the exclusion of the general public. Research participants readily identify this democratic deficit. Nonetheless, because media visibility is perceived as a tool inside the political community, it is all the same actively pursued. There is some awareness that this 'political conversation', relevant as it is in the microclimate of politics, is an intensive yet exclusive conversation, restricted to the limits of a certain informed elite. To this, it is possible to add that the configuration of the elite press in particular – close to corporate power (Monckeberg 2009; Couso 2012) and ideologically homogeneous (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002) –has added further distortions, capturing elite discussions along certain political lines.

By establishing the goals that provide rationales for politicians' actions in the media realm, this chapter has shed light on the way in which the media-controlled resource of public visibility operates within political institutions. In particular, how media visibility is primarily understood as a mobilising capability, a form of activation for other political resources. The latter is an important reminder that the mediatization of political elites is primarily and clearly grounded in the need for retaining control over public attention, and therefore it is a process where the struggle for control is central, and the main driver for adapting to news logics. As highlighted by March and Olsen (1995), issue selection, political decision-making and sense-making in political institutions are dependent on flows of attention. Thus, media visibility is seen as a tool in the context of governance processes, a point that the literature that understands political PR as an effort to intervene in processes of news making with the aim of contributing to media agenda-building has explored for some time (Cobb & Elder 1971; Turk 1985; Tedesco 2011).

On the one hand, the accumulation of media capital becomes necessary for career advancement in politics (Davis & Seymour, 2010). On the other hand, and even more so as a result of mediatization processes, the media have become a space where policy struggles are articulated (Thompson 2005; Crozier 2008; Hajer 2009; Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer 2011). Nonetheless, this is a process that comes associated with some risks, as research participants stress when they describe media visibility as a volatile form of currency. As has been noted somewhere else, the media might erode or destabilise control over policy problems definition (Hajer 2003; Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer 2011), which is closely linked to understandings of news media logic and notions of newsworthiness, as will be discussed next.

6.4.2. What the news media logic rules out

As discussed in section 6.2, political elites and press officers describe the operational logic of the media through highlighting the attributes of conflict, presentism and their commercial orientation. Certainly, the Chilean media system is firmly grounded in the market (Tironi & Sunkel 1993; Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Couso 2012) and therefore subject to market considerations and imperatives of audience maximisation. Generally, the literature stresses that although news media as a social institution are informed by both market and normative considerations (Landerer 2013; Asp 2014), the commercial logic is often favoured over public service logics as a result of dominant market forces (McManus 2009; Donsbach 2014). As argued by McManus (2009) and Lewis et al. (2008) it is more cost-effective for owners, advertisers and sources to follow an economic-based model of news selection criteria than a socially responsible one.

In the interviews, criteria such as social relevance or public interest are not regularly mentioned as main drivers in the daily information trade-off by politicians, and only occasionally mentioned by journalists. Within this logic of action, conflict and immediacy are core elements of a competitive environment in which political actors compete against each other for media attention and against other topics often judged as more catchy and interesting for audiences.

It has been established that notions of newsworthiness are the main predictor of the success of political information subsidies in newsrooms (Turk 1985), and as long as political elites recognise and adapt to news media logics, these notions of newsworthiness become an internalised standard for communication with the media (Strömbäck 2008; Stromback & Van Aelst 2013). A common concern among research participants is the perception that conforming to standards of newsworthiness in the political beat would lead to a certain homogenisation of news content, since most actors are constantly monitoring the environment and reproducing the most successful story lines. Empirical studies conducted in Chilean media lend support to this perception, emphasising the homogeneity of inter-media news agendas (Valenzuela & Arriagada 2009). Additionally, both groups acknowledge that some news stories can be impossible to avoid, especially if they are newsworthy enough to dominate the agenda for some time.

Two main arguments can be inferred from the characterisation of the news media logic offered by research participants. Firstly, the analysis of interviews lends support to the idea that political actors' adaptation to this logic is primarily a reaction aiming to retain control over media contents, secure some level of visibility and participate in the process of media agenda building. Secondly, the core elements of conflict and presentism, the main definers of this logic, are often

perceived by both politicians and journalists as an entry barrier for multiple topics of relevance within the political sphere. Regarding the latter point, the ongoing quest for novelty and confrontation inherent to news values and the dynamics of news production will discourage or limit the ability of both media organisations and political actors to pursue topics that do not easily fit those parameters. The news media logic, therefore, would act as an entry barrier for some political topics, restraining the scope of issues that enter the mediated political agenda, which is commonly referred to by political elites as a proxy of the political agenda.

6.4.3. Playing under the rules

The identification of domains of adaptation to the operational logics of the media allow a clearer visualisation of how media and political logics enter into dynamics of both collision and synergy. As discussed during the chapter, this logic is resisted by most political actors and though it is externally situated it is also instrumentally adopted, and occasionally internalised by those actors showing higher degrees of proximity to media routines.

The trading of information and news between politicians, journalists and political communicators is based on a mutual understanding of what is or might be valuable information for news organisations (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995) and political actors readjust their practices to changes in the media environment mainly to regain control capacity (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Wolfsfeld 2003; Negrine 2008). Overall, these practices show the form this adaptation has taken, triggered by the perception of a lessened capacity to define media contents.

Strömbäck & Van Aelst (2013) contend that the mediatization of political actors comprises organisational and communicative forms. Both of these forms of

adaptation are identified in this study. Perceptions about a more autonomous media have prompted the professionalisation of political communication, and the allocation of resources to the end of media management. Nonetheless, this process of professionalisation appears uneven across organisations and individuals. Additionally, communicative changes are detected; languages have to be adapted as well as the form of information subsidies. Regarding the last point, it is important to note that off the record briefings are a common technique of information exchange in political reporting, which serves as a means of informally controlling information flows (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Manning 2001; Cook 2005). However, the contention that these forms of reporting may have increased over time, together with the observation about the devaluation of routine information subsidies such as press conferences or press releases, could be reflective of a movement towards more interpretive forms of journalism where official versions become less valuable. Studies of content focused on newspapers have determined that the levels of media interventionism in Chilean journalism are low, though they have increased in recent years (Mellado & Rafter 2014; Mellado & Humanes 2014). This is consistent with the findings detailed here.

Marcinkowski & Steiner (2014) have argued that the mediatization of politics as a societal phenomenon is a reaction of the political system to increasing difficulties in getting public attention, which appears to be consistent with the description and interpretations made by Chilean political actors about the institutional rule of the media. Although this rule is frequently judged through a normative prism, it is instrumentally incorporated into routine practices of communication management. In other words, in spite of eventual reservations, political actors and

institutions have strong incentives to adapt messages, actions and statements to fit media parameters, in order to retain some control over their own visibility and the policy issues they favour.

By paying attention to political actors' goals in their interaction with the media, as well as their understandings of the news media logic and the main domains of adaptation to this logic, an overall sense of diminished control over media content becomes clear in the responses of political elites. Applying a systemic perspective, the media is clearly delimited as functionally distinct from politics, as long as is able to self-define and lives up to its "code" or primary rule, which appears strongly linked to notions of newsworthiness and strategies for audience maximisation, both of which place constraints over political elites' behaviour and policy problems definitions.

At this level of analysis the autonomy of the news media as a system is primarily built on a collective and consistent understanding of what makes it into the news. This understanding leads politicians to adapt strategically to this rule, in order to improve their chances of managing public attention. Understanding and adapting to the logic of the media, by means of professionalising strategies of political communication and adjusting languages, times and information subsidies to media demands, implies that political actors react to the increasing autonomy of the news media by developing more sophisticated strategies for control. This continuing struggle generates consequences for both institutional domains, some of them unintended.

The fact that the news media logic reflects institutional autonomy, while it is at the same time open to instrumental use, introduces questions on the assumption that

the mediatization of politics is to be understood as a loss of autonomy for political actors. Some of these practices, nevertheless, reveal important tensions in the relationship between political and media actors that might be better understood by paying attention to a micro-level analysis of the politician and journalist relationship, which will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

DYNAMICS OF AUTONOMY AND CONTROL BETWEEN POLITICAL AND MEDIA ACTORS

This chapter examines the interactions between media and political actors at the micro-level, exploring two complementary areas. First, (7.1) it looks at the practices and vocabularies of practice characterising the backstage of the politician-journalist relationship. Secondly (7.2), it examines role relations among these groups, paying attention to those elements that threaten journalistic autonomy. In doing so, the chapter examines how the idea of a media institution that is becoming increasingly autonomous (see Chapter 6) can be reconciled with a journalistic practice that appears restricted both in its connection to organisational constraints and the relationships it has established with powerful sources.

The narrative of the mediatization of politics focuses on the increasing institutional autonomy of the media as a field. The analyses presented in the previous chapter lend support to the idea that, at the meso-level, news organisations in Chile have been able to create some distance from political institutions and develop their own criteria for news production, for the most part a result of commercialisation processes. At the same time, the adaptation to the logic of the media has been delineated as a control-oriented reaction on the part of political institutions.

In this chapter attention will shift towards micro-level interactions between politicians and journalists, in order to examine how the narrative of mediatization fits into the dynamics of everyday practice and day to day information exchanges between political and media actors. I argue that only by doing so can the idea of increasing media autonomy that permeates mediatization theory be fully assessed.

The literature on source-journalist relationships paints a picture of high interdependency between government officials and journalists (Sigal 1973; Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979; Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Negrine 1996; Manning 2001; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014). These groups interact in "competitive symbiosis" (Wolfsfeld 2003); they develop relationships of proximity (Tuchman 1978; Davis 2007a) as both parties need each other. The permanent struggle that characterises this contentious relationship (Schudson 2005), marked by front stage adversarialism and backstage cooperation (Cook 2005), eludes generalisations. Some of the literature seems inclined to confer the upper-hand of the relationship to political sources as the main definers of what makes the news (Sigal 1973; Gans 1979; Manning 2001; Wolfsfeld & Sheafer 2006). More recent work articulated around the idea of media interventionism, though, asserts that as a result of mediatization processes, the media have gained greater autonomy in their ability to decide what is news and how to present it (Strömbäck & Esser 2009; Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011; Cushion & Thomas 2013).

For Chile, the literature highlights the "officialist" character of news-making (Faure et al. 2011; Mellado & Rafter 2014), and also identifies a gradual movement towards greater interpretive techniques (Mellado & Humanes 2014). The scarce information available about politician-journalist relationships, beyond studies on

content, depict a professional field rather submissive to political power (Leon-Dermota 2003) and easily permeable by means of routine information subsidies (Santander 2013).

In order to look at micro-level interactions, bringing journalists into the spotlight becomes important. Certainly practices of information exchange with politicians are institutionally shaped and therefore patterns of regularities described in the international literature are to be expected, yet these practices are also culturally embedded, "as the culture of social groups, of which individuals are members, provides individuals with symbolic structures to understand and construct their environments" (Thornton et al. 2012: 79). Thus, politicians' and journalists' interactions play a central part in the political culture of a country (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Pfetsch 2004).

This chapter pays attention to the relationship between political actors and journalists at the micro-level during daily interactions, looking at role relations and informal rules organising relationships within circuits of elite communication. These two aspects –roles and informal rules – have been reclaimed by the neo-institutionalist tradition as crucial for the understanding of continuity and change within institutions (March & Olsen 1984, 2006; Scott 2001), and provide a framework to connect individual behaviour and institutional constraints (March & Olsen 1984; Searing 1991; Thornton et al. 2012). In this tradition, as well as in the interpretive approach (Bevir & Rhodes 2001; Richards & Smith 2002), the understanding of roles and rules does not refer to the observation of formal rules, procedurally defined or legally binding, but to interpretations about social identities and unwritten rules that arise from social interactions.

By looking at roles and informal rules, attention is paid to different ways in which spaces for autonomy are asserted and reclaimed in their daily interactions. First, role definitions: identity-based dispositions regarding what is appropriate behaviour in a specific position (March & Olsen 1984; 2009) which allow both journalists and politicians to build boundaries and create distance from each other. Nonetheless, some problems for the assertion of journalistic autonomy are identified, including organisational constraints and a low esteem of journalism among political elites, a dynamic which may be at least partially explained by the transitional legacy. Secondly, those informal rules regulating the trade of political news are found to be bound by rules of expected utility, therefore departing from normative considerations usually raised in processes of role definitions.

As will be revealed in the following pages, research participants engage in an active process of boundary construction, reflecting on the limits of their own role and, especially in the case of journalists, using professionalism as a protective shield. At the same time, the findings highlight that some practices that are integral to political news making contribute to the blurring of those lines, such as the establishment of friendly relationships, the need to identify spaces for collaboration or the act of entrusting delicate information to others. This double-edged process demands individual strategies for boundary maintenance and management. In order to build platforms of collaboration, political and media actors will have to reconcile logics of action, yet this is less about reconciling media and political logics of action as it is about switching between rules of appropriateness and rules of expected utility; that is to say switching between

normative expectations placed upon professional roles and strategic actions oriented to the pursuit of instrumental goals.

7.1 Vocabularies of practice in the backstage: trading news in the political beat

This section examines the main features of the daily trade-off between political and media actors, highlighting the rationale of expected utility that underlies the relationships between politicians and journalists. As discussed in section 5.1, relationships between political elites and traditional media players develop for the most part within an elite micro-culture inhabited by a limited number of actors. The restricted nature of this community contributes to the establishment and reproduction of news making routines, and facilitates the formation of platforms of collaboration between politicians and journalists.

The geographical and social proximity between official sources and journalists is recognised in classics of the literature as a key element in the success political actors have in accessing the news (Sigal 1973; Gans 1979; Sparrow 1999). At the same time, the insider culture that facilitates journalists' access to privileged information (Tuchman 1978) naturally hampers journalistic autonomy (Voltmer 2013; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014). Inspecting this relationship is, therefore, key to understanding how the micro-level of the political communication sphere operates (Davis, 2009).

The platforms of collaboration between political actors and journalists are not disinterested. The daily exchanges between journalists and politicians are

structured by the drive for visibility, on the one hand, and the pursuit of news stories on the other. It is a relationship described as one of interdependency and reciprocity (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Schudson 2005). For research participants, understanding the relationship as one of mutual utility was prevalent. The acknowledgement of the instrumental nature of these exchanges is recognition that both parties – politicians and journalists – recognise that the actions of each party are permeated with specific interests and embedded in distinct institutional environments. Therefore, their interactions are shaped by distinct institutional constraints and loaded with overlapping but conflicting interests. Despite this, platforms of collaboration based on instrumental exchanges are constructed:

> **Just as he is trying to do his job, I am also trying to do mine. We do not lie to each other** (...) He or she knows where I am, and I also know where he or she is. I don't get lost there and I hope the people I speak to do not either.
>
> Communications 8, La Moneda.

> Journalists seek news. Politicians often seek (political) manoeuvres and occasionally **we can reach an agreement.** Crudely, that is the thing.
>
> Journalist 9, Journalist TV.

> **There is a clear relationship of mutual utility**, but that is... How could we say that? Good. You know what I mean?
>
> Politician 3, Political party board.

These short excerpts illustrate the consequentialist or utilitarian perspective that permeates many of the accounts of journalists, press officers and politicians. This perspective is realised in patterned strategies of collaboration, routines and normalised narratives to describe action. Thornton et al., (2012) identify the

emergence of narratives or vocabularies of practice as an indication of how practices are adopted or institutionalised at the micro-level. Crucially, they stress how these vocabularies of practice guide attention and decision-making, providing a framework for what constitutes appropriate behaviour for the group. Using this analytical perspective, it is possible to identify two major threads that run throughout the accounts of the three groups of reference regarding their daily interactions: first, the identification of trust and trust-testing exercises in the construction of long-term relationships and second, the use of business-like language for the description of most interactions. These features will be expanded in the following sections.

7.1.1. Trust and trust-testing exercises

When asked to describe their daily interactions, members of all groups interviewed highlighted the high frequency and routine nature of their exchanges. Most politicians claim to have direct contact with journalists and editors, an observation corroborated by political journalists. The higher the status of an authority, the more likely the existence of filters or mediators for reporters and editors. Nonetheless, there is consensus that, with some exception, access to politicians is not heavily intermediated. Unlike the corporate sector, PR and strategic communication agencies have not made great inroads into the political field, and they tend to act as external consultants for political actors and institutions but not in the activities of daily media management. This role is performed by press officers hired directly by the organisation (political party, public agency) or an individual politician, such as those interviewed for this study. These officers support the task of press management but do not necessarily act as

gatekeepers for the political actors they represent, with the exception of top level authorities in Government.

Trust is mentioned by members of all groups, indicating this is an asset in political reporting that works in all directions. Politicians and communication officers are more inclined to share information, especially off the record, with journalists they know; journalists are more inclined to make use of unattributed information coming from sources they have known for some time, and they also assume this information will be of better quality (up to date, truthful, more nuanced and outside of official lines).

> Sure, and trust-based because often we ask for some topic to be covered, but with no source, and then **you have to trust your colleague**, who will publish the story without a source but off the record, you know what I mean? (...) That is why the issue of trust with the colleague is there.
>
> Communications 3, Deputies Chamber.

> But I would say that you are **everyday speaking to either the politician you trust the most**, or the press officers, now that we're in campaign period. And not necessarily talking but communicating by text message, WhatsApp, e-mail. It is daily communication.
>
> Journalist 3, Editor, elite newspaper.

> I have a Head of Communications and a Press Officer who are in direct contact, who are doing the job every day, and the job of having corridor conversations in Congress. However, it is also important to do it myself sometimes, because **you obviously generate trust relationships** and you must generate those yourself.
>
> Politician 26, Senator

What emerges from these and many other similar quotations is that most politician-journalist relationships are regular and based on frequent contact. For politicians who engage in intensive relationships with the media, being perceived

as a reliable source who delivers truthful background information and newsworthy cues is considered an important asset, as this provides greater ability to occasionally position topics of interest or to offer interpretative frameworks to understand political developments.

> **What I do is try to talk to journalists with whom I have a closer relationship and that seem more influential.** I call and say, 'Look at this, why don't we enter this topic?' or give them information which might allow the topic to get in... That's it. It is that sort of dialogue, at the end... **because they often call me, I can call back those journalists and tell them, 'Look; you have not covered this issue'**. Sometime it goes well, sometimes badly. That is my dialogue with them.
>
> Politician 20, deputy DC.

The issue of trust, therefore, extends to the reputation of politicians as sources. Some of the research participants refer to issues of accuracy and consistency as features that gain the long-term respect of journalists, reflected in the words of a Cabinet Minister who comments on off the record conversations occasionally held with members of the press:

> I have codes of ethics that gain you respect from journalists. There are these famous cafes that the guys downstairs often ask me to, or sometimes chief editors. **I meet them and chat with them. And my code of ethics is always telling the truth**; never cheat, never bluff, because you are damaging the journalist and you're giving yourself a bad reputation as a source; you become an unreliable source.
>
> Politician 8, Minister.

Delivering, receiving and processing unattributed information could be seen on its own as a constant trust-testing exercise that characterises many of the exchanges between these groups. On occasions, though, journalists and politicians also reflect on more exceptional situations where trust is explicitly tested, as a way to delineate the rules of the game in a journalist-politician relationship.

- In other words, you had a close relationship with him…

- **Very privileged, and also he tested me and I delivered.** 'OK', he used to say, 'I will tell you this but you cannot publish'. And I just swallowed it. And suddenly, he would call me to tell me, 'OK, now you can publish'. And there you go, a huge scoop, you know what I mean? Some people teased me, they would say that I was a spoiled girl, but this is a relationship that I earned thanks to my effort, my work, for being respectful of the rules

Journalist 14, Journalist, online media.

Trust-building and trust-testing exercises are best seen as practices that enable platforms for collaboration between actors who also acknowledge conflicting interests. To this is added a practice of permanent courtship, especially in the press officer-journalist axis, and the cultivation of personal relationships, which occasionally result in grey areas that can challenge autonomous decision-making.

Social proximity between political and media elites is identified in the literature as a source of blurring boundaries between the two (Gans 1979; Davis 2009; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014). In Chile, although this is an important issue to consider in terms of the relationships between political actors and news organisations it is not often the case at the level of journalists and rarely at the level of editors. In those cases where previous relationships do exist, either by way of common social circles or family relations, the positions adopted by the different groups differ from each other. Those politicians who acknowledged having personal networks inside the media during interviews did not raise the issue in a problematic way. On the contrary, it was generally mentioned as a source of greater understanding of media demands and consequent willingness to collaborate. For communications and press officers, having personal contacts within news organisations and good relationships with former colleagues is explicitly considered a professional asset and a useful gate to media coverage. Journalists, instead, tend to be more

defensive regarding potentially conflictive relations, such as having friends or relatives in politics. Compartmentalising work and personal spheres is often mentioned as a strategy to face these problems, which take different forms, such as avoiding professional conversations with politicians/friends, not publishing information obtained in social contexts or avoiding personal socialisation outside work. How exactly to draw these lines will vary from one person to the next but the separation between professional and social interactions is perceived as an efficient mechanism to claim professional autonomy. The latter becomes crucial within a profession that has built a narrative of autonomy as one of its core values (Deuze 2005; Singer 2007).

Proximity, nonetheless, is more generally built on the shared experiences of an insider culture. All actors occasionally play the 'friendly card', whether highlighting the 'colleague to colleague' nature of journalist-press officers' relationships or providing unattributed information upon the basis of mutual trust, in the case of politician/journalists relationships. Additionally, many of these relationships are actually built over time. Years and sometimes decades of work in the political arena, on the one hand, and the media arena on the other, facilitate the blurring of boundaries and the active pursuit of collaborative spaces using personal networks as a relevant asset.

The grey areas emerging from the proximity between politicians, press officers and journalists are multifaceted. For example, in the case of journalists, they need to assess the eventual impact of potentially damaging publications on key sources or relevant contacts. The protection of key sources is a practice that most experienced journalists –especially those who report regularly in the political beat

– recognise as part of the pragmatics of the job. This protection will not necessarily translate into communication 'armouring', but can result in greater lenience in any assessment of eventual public mistakes. Failure to comply with these trust-testing exercises tends to result in some form of implicit or explicit sanction against specific journalists or organisations. Whether short-lived or more durable, these practices, often executed by press officers, encompass cutting privileged access to information, denying interviews or privileging competitors and, occasionally, obstructing journalists' participation in press conferences, trips or other organised information subsidies.

7.1.2. News trading as business

When research participants describe their interactions, information trading as a business-like activity is mentioned as prominently as trust. Many actors expect reciprocity in the relationship, and often *invest* in their counterparts collaborating with each other and aiming to increase their bargaining power in future transactions. The perception of an on-going trade-off is articulated in the frequent use of business language to describe reporting and information exchange routines. Words such as 'business', 'currency', 'selling', 'buying', 'exchange' and 'deals'[78] populate research participants' accounts: politicians and press officers *sell* stories, journalists and news organisations *buy* them, some stories are used as *token*s in *exchange* for others and on-going *deals* are always suspected, among those who know the *business*.

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[78] In the original interviews: *negocio, negociar, moneda de cambio, vender, comprar, intercambio, tratos* or *arreglos*.

Sometimes you can be upset with someone, and you say, OK, this person never again, but you know that this is going to be short-lived and within two months, you will have to give him something and he, in turn, is going to need something from you. **It is a business after all**.

Communications, Senate.

I mean, look, some people do not like this expression, but I really think that **journalism, especially in politics, is a sort of – in the best sense of the word – business.** I mean, I give you something and you give me something.

Journalist 3, Editor, elite newspaper.

To generate certain complicity with the media; journalists, editors. You use off [the record] because you give information about others; not about you (…) and that implies certain facilities with that media outlet. They will owe you one. **And that pays back later**, so to speak. It is not very attractive, but actually **that sort of exchange** exists**.**

Politician 15, Assessor, political party senior advisor.

The acknowledgement of deals (information versus visibility) between politicians and journalists is mentioned in most interviews. Nonetheless, the practice reveals itself as conflictive to the parties involved. Some refer to these exchanges as an implicit rule dominating many relationships within the political communication community, and many do so in a very open way. However, it is usual to find mutual criticism or resistance, expressed in normative undertones, condemning the use or abuse of this practice when it is perceived as driven by self-interest in the case of politicians, and commercial interest in the case of news media outlets. These critiques feature more prominently among politicians, many of whom acknowledge the existence of deals in others but not themselves

> People who really knows this business realise what you are saying. Everyone could make a list with the cast of leaders who are repeatedly in the media. And – not all of them, because I do not want to be unfair – **but many have this sort of deal with the media; about providing information and, in exchange, having a certain level of prominence**.
>
> Politician 29, Former Minister.

Alternatively, some condemn the 'deals' selectively, judging the motives of the actors involved. On those occasions, they make a distinction; instead of condemning the trade-off in itself, some specific actions are judged as negative, if they are perceived as solely motivated by personal interests. In this sense, the trade-off or information exchange would not have an inherent negative burden, but its normative value would be the object of a situated and case by case assessment. This selective criticism is typically illustrated in the quotation below:

> In general I don't ask…. I mean, it is not this thing: 'look, I tell you this and you give me that'. **I don't do that. I must admit, though, that one develops a sort of friendly relationship with journalists**, and later one can say, for instance: 'can you make me a small favour: this topic is important'. And they do so; but it is not like 'what are you going to give me back?', something I feel also exists.
>
> Politician 14, Deputy.

The profusion of references to both trust-testing exercises, that operate according to implicit rules, and the adoption of business-like language points towards the construction of platforms of collaboration between political and media actors, through the instrumental identification of converging interests. Returning to the point raised by Thornton et al. (2012) and the role played by vocabularies of practice in the institutionalisation of logics of action, this section has shown how the backstage routines of political news production are permeated by a rationale of expected utility, wherein an instrumental stance prevails on both sides.

As explained by Cook (2005), the relationships between political and media actors comprise a backstage and a frontstage dimension. The former is the space of collaboration and exchange, typically hidden from public scrutiny. The latter is the space where politicians and journalists make assertions about their autonomy and display greater levels of antagonism. This suggests that the threats to autonomy that are inherent to political news making (Gans 1979; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014; Voltmer 2013) are normally compensated by strategies of distance-keeping and even occasional adversarialism. In order to assert their autonomy and counteract instrumental practices, journalists have to establish some defensive boundaries, a process that is often located in a normative axis (Revers 2013; Carlson 2015) and determined by professional considerations about what good quality journalism looks like. In the next section, the way roles and boundaries are constructed and threatened in the relationship between political and media actors in Chile will be examined.

7.2   Role relations and boundaries

When describing their interactions, politicians, journalists and communication officers actively reflect on the limits of their relationship. They do so by defining their own role or their expectations about other actors' roles. This section examines relevant aspects regarding how these groups articulate their *role relations*. That is to say, instead of examining how politicians or journalists understand their roles broadly in society, this section deals with how politicians and journalists understand their roles in relation to each other. Building boundaries, both around themselves and others, is a strategy often used to adopt

positions, justify or judge their own and others' behaviour (Gieryn 1983; Abbott 1988).

Roles are understood as part of the informal component of institutions in the sense that they are not fully specified in the formal scheme (Searing 1991). Examining how roles and identities are constructed within institutions is crucial to understanding how cognition and behaviour are, in turn, institutionally shaped (Thornton et al. 2012), how individuals locate themselves within institutions (March & Olsen 2009) and how belief systems inform practice in specific contexts (DiMaggio 1997). Reflecting on what their own role is or is not works, therefore, as an open or implicit rhetorical strategy to create distance and draw limits.

During the interviews, these limits are sometimes drawn through affirmation and sometimes are drawn through opposition. For instance, some communication officers might emphasise that they are not "political operators", and some journalists would insist they are not in the PR business.

> **Roles, you know what I mean? My job is not PR**, I'm doing my... There are politicians who understand how it is and politicians and sources who do not understand, and they always have a bad relationship, or complicated, because they believe that criticism is an attack. Or they think that because you criticise or raise an issue, you are a... Communist (laughs). So the spectrum is really wide. **I've got sources and I've got other sources that I have lost over the years because I've had problems, precisely because that line has blurred on their part.**
>
> Journalist 14, Journalist, online media.

Contributing to boundary building or the identification of limits in the politician and journalist relationship, the concept of distance or distance-keeping is also relevant in many participants' accounts as they aim to balance cordiality and trust with a clear distinction of functions.

> **I always try to keep a distant treatment,** I know that not all agree on this, but I avoid being on familiar terms with them, **it's like my main professional barrier. I avoid being on familiar terms**, and as long as I build a respectful treatment, I hope**... My way of working has worked out fine; they also respect me, they know that I also keep some distance from the things they tell me**.
>
> Journalist 10, Journalist, elite newspaper.

Observing boundaries is intrinsically linked to the definition of professional roles and the connection between those roles and society at large (Abbott 1988; Lamont & Molnar 2002). As the quotations above suggest, establishing boundaries is seen by journalists as a necessary step to establishing a working relationship where there is a mutual understanding of each other's roles.

7.2.1. Journalists and narratives of professionalisation

At the time of identifying the boundaries in the relationship with political actors, journalists and editors use the narrative of professionalisation as a defensive shield. Professionalisation is recognised in the literature as a major movement towards the autonomous pole of journalistic practice (Hallin & Mancini 2004), and a counterbalance to clientelism in transitional contexts (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos 2002; Örnebring, 2013; Voltmer, 2013). Therefore, it is not surprising that journalists assert their professional status as a framework for information exchanges and trust-testing exercises with political actors.

Among journalists, the main claims of autonomy in the relationship with political sources stem from the recognition of shared notions of newsworthiness, that allow them to make judgments about events and happenings based on professional criteria about what is considered news.

When political journalists describe their daily routines and their exchanges with their sources, they commonly refer to news values[79] as something obvious, self-evident, a characteristic element of events and actions that guides the processes of news gathering and news production. Among the elements that distinctly add value to stories, journalists highlight conflict and exclusivity, the latter an increasingly elusive and difficult to attain feature, in an environment where the speed of the news cycle has shortened and information circulates faster. Conversely, stories pertaining to the policy sphere, such as technical discussions and legislative procedures, pose a challenge, since they are perceived as generally uninteresting for audiences.

Some of these elements overlap with politicians' and press officers' descriptions of the news media logic. Perhaps not surprisingly, considering that this is the institutional realm they inhabit on a daily basis, the way political journalists refer to this logic is less critical compared with the other groups of research participants. Many journalists show an awareness of the limitations and constraints imposed by these norms, especially with respect to the topics that do not get coverage or get very limited coverage, such as policy discussions or legislative processes. Nonetheless, what makes the news is identified as something almost objective and self-evident.

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[79] News values and notions of newsworthiness are used here interchangeably referring to those patterns of regularity observed in the journalistic selection and production of news. In an abstract sense, these are regarded as those values that enshrine the logic of appropriateness of journalistic practice, therefore reinforcing the description of news media as a social institution (Schudson 2002; Cook 2005; Esser 2013). More concretely, some research literature has attempted to delimit and describe such values, stressing factors regarded as significant by journalists; among others, conflict, relevance, personalization, negativity, reference to elite persons and nations (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Harcup & O'Neill 2001; Allan 2010). This set of factors comes to be associated with "implicit biases" (Cook 2005: 89) and "ideological imperatives" (Allan 2010: 71) attached to the journalistic trade, socialised through collective understandings of public events and reproduced in day to day practice (Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979; Zelizer 1993).

I reckon what some politicians pose can be extremely undemocratic. If someone is highly popular, there will be expectation about what they say (...) they have an influence. Why should I give the same space to someone who just decided to be a candidate, why should I? (...) There are politicians who believe that because they are candidates for something you are obliged to offer the same coverage than you offer to others, and I think that is not the case. **There are journalistic standards they misunderstand. Someone who is more popular than others deserves more coverage because it generates more interest** and, ultimately, this is also the art of what is interesting and what people might be interested in.

Journalist 12, Editor, elite newspaper.

There are characters that will always be newsworthy. Now it is Bachelet, for example, and others are less interesting. Some young politicians have managed to enter this circuit (...) who have managed to develop a particular imprint, through having bold positions (...) **Sometimes people try to sell you stories and they are completely promotional... no chance. But sometimes someone clever manages to find an angle that is journalistically attractive**. And then you can do something with it.

Journalist 13, Editor, print press.

Just as politicians define the news media logic using normative undertones, journalists embrace news values in order to establish distance from their political sources, making statements of professional autonomy upon them. The fact that journalists set limits and create resistance to external pressures from the understanding and acceptance of shared notions of news suggests that this dimension of journalistic autonomy pertains to the institutional level. Inter-organisational consensus about what is news, together with consistency on rules and outcomes of news making have been identified as what gives institutional status to the news media (Benson 2006; Cook 2006; Asp 2014). Likewise, the striving for journalistic autonomy stems from collective notions of what Schudson calls "news judgement" (2005: 218), which becomes the main boundary-drawing device for media actors, providing space for journalists to distance themselves from external pressures at the time of gathering information and producing

content. This shared understanding becomes a guiding value and a source of legitimacy, as the following quotation illustrates:

> I mean, requests and pressures you get them all the time, but what I can say is that we have absolute editorial independence (...) Therefore we build the news agenda that we consider convenient, and we receive comments, we receive suggestions, all of them, but we define the agenda and we do so in a very independent way (...) **Hence there is total independence, based on identifying journalistic criteria, professional criteria about what is news and what is not news.**
>
> Journalist 18, Editor, TV.

In spite of its constraints, the news media logic becomes a central asset for self-defining parameters of political content, asserting professional identity and offering some resistance against political influence in the news; all elements identified as the basis of the autonomy claims of news media institutions regarding political institutions (Strömbäck 2008). It is important to note that the most frequent co-occurrences when journalists discuss definitions of what makes the news in the political beat are references to organisational editorial lines and frequent contact with sources. These co-occurrences are not trivial, and they indicate that news judgements exhibited by journalists are strongly shaped by the organisation they work for and the routinised relationships they have with their sources, an aspect highlighted in the literature about political news-making (Tuchman 1978; Cook 2005; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014).

Their accounts, though, signalled that these shared news values allow them to offer some resistance from both organisational constraints and sources' requirements. In other words, although political journalists are acutely aware of the limitations of their work, news values are generally perceived as boundary-drawing devices that can, at least on occasion, challenge some of those external

pressures. For instance, by drawing a line between what is news and the promotional coverage that some politicians expect, or serving to indicate the extent to which key sources may receive special treatment; if they are involved in events of high journalistic interest, coverage will be unavoidable.

Important for its almost complete absence are those direct references to the public interest or the civic-orientation of political journalism among the journalists interviewed. The public is conceived and discussed as audience: concrete, fragmented and attached to specific socioeconomic and political features. Thus, distance from sources and notions of autonomy appear less rooted in normative notions of the public, and more in the ability to make decisions on content based on professional criteria. Accountability to power, though, is brought up among journalists as a goal and the ideal outcome of journalistic work in the political beat, together with the idea that nowadays it is more difficult than before to block potentially damaging information from the public. Cases such as that of Laurence Golborne, the candidate who abandoned the presidential career due to allegations about tax evasion, was mentioned as an example of how political malpractice is being exposed by the media, a trend that has maintained and increased since then (this case unfolded during the time of the field work).

7.2.2. The contested autonomy of (Chilean) political journalism: organisational constraints

Notions of professional autonomy among journalists are also discussed against an organisational narrative. Different factors have been collapsed in this dimension. The concept is used as a shortcut to cluster incidents in the data referring to a range of constraints expressed at the organisational level and which shape

political reporting. These constraints emerge either directly from news organisations (editorial lines and direct commercial interests) or indirectly, reflecting external pressures channelled through news organisations (corporate or political). This mainly refers to decision-making processes within the organisational level of news media outlets that journalists perceive as restraining contents and with which they have little, if any, involvement.

From the analysis of interviews it is possible to identify a prevalent sense of subordination among journalists, and even editors, as an awareness of being employees who are naturally subordinated within an organisational hierarchy. In other words, most of them understand they work for organisations that have more or less explicit editorial lines and commercial interests, which occasionally become explicit restrictions and editorial biases. This sense of subordination is often reinforced by the relationship established by politicians with high-level media executives. As a consequence of the latter, it is often assumed and accepted that many decisions affecting content are taken in "higher" spheres, as the following quotation illustrates:

> And sometimes you are asked to do stuff because someone who is above you was asked by someone else (…) **It was agreed in a sphere that is not yours, and where you don't have much say**. It is not most cases but there is always something. Not all the time, but from time to time there is some, let's say, request, a request or a topic that is beyond your control, which does not come from your reporting, that is beyond your ability to turn the agenda around.
>
> Journalist 7, Journalist, elite newspaper.

The recognition and naturalisation of these constraints among media professionals leads to a form of "pragmatic subordination" (I am aware of my place in the organisation and act accordingly). On a few occasions, research

participants refer to themselves and their colleagues as "the last link of the chain", especially at the reporter level.

> And it frequently happens that **the relationship between the journalist, who is the last link of the chain, with the politician, has been settled in two or three previous conversations**. And that happens every day (...) there is no leeway, no, **there is no power in such situations**. When the director or the editor asks the journalist to interview someone, and he says 'I think he wants to speak about a certain thing'. What do you think the journalist does? Does he rebel and lose his job or obey? What do you think?
>
> Journalist 9, Journalist, TV.

Additionally, political pressures are often channelled via higher levels of the organisational hierarchy. Responsiveness to these pressures will vary, depending on the organisation. However, they are not isolated cases. Practices involve requesting favours in order to secure coverage to certain events, or 'compensation' coverage for negative stories or difficult interviews. As reportedly happens in other transitional democracies (Pfetsch & Voltmer 2012; Örnebring 2012), there is no evidence of bribery in the politician/media relationship in Chile. Direct pressures on content are subtler, and often channelled top-down.

The fact that the greatest restraints to journalistic autonomy appear to be expressed at the organisational level should not be overlooked and deserves greater attention in order to avoid the risk of univocal interpretations. The collective nature of news making and the relatively hierarchical structure of newsrooms is integral to standard descriptions of the journalistic trade, which generally suggest a loss of individual autonomy at newsroom level (Singer 2007). However, some scholarship, especially in Latin America, lends support to the idea that a vertical organisation of news media outlets, together with restrictions coming from superiors, can work as significant barriers to an open communication

and an influential constraint to journalistic practice (Hughes & Lawson 2005; Sapiezynska et al. 2013).

Suspending a normative judgment on this matter and attending to the concept of autonomy in political reporting, from the perspective of journalists it does not seem plausible to avoid editorial lines and organisational hierarchies. These have to be addressed and appear to have considerable weight. However, journalists pose that they can eventually be overridden –or at least- counterbalanced with stories of high news value:

> **It may be the case that the editor of the newspaper may have a legitimate political opinion** and, obviously the people he trusts the most also think like him, but there are different visions among journalists and, because this is a participatory process, **if there are objective factors that are news, even if they go against the political interests of the editor or the owner, they will be published by objective criteria that are undeniable, because it's news**. So, are there some top down requests? Yes. But the view of the editor prevails, weighs more than that of a journalist only if the reporter does not have enough evidence to support his opinion.
>
> Journalist 10, Journalist, elite newspaper.

The belief expressed in the quotation above – that of the criterion of newsworthiness perceived as bending editorial lines in news organisations with clear political alignments – indicates some capacity of field resistance to both organisational and political pressures, stressing yet again that journalistic autonomy is mostly built upon notions of newsworthiness, and enacted on the back of "unavoidable" news stories, which are conferred space, albeit limited, for the sake of editorial credibility.

7.2.3. Powerful media, harmless journalists

Generally speaking, politicians do not address the need of distancing themselves from journalists in the same way than journalists do, which could be explained by

the power differentials between these groups; this point that will be resumed and expanded in the discussion. Instead, they distance themselves from the news media institution as a whole. This is done by means of downplaying the relevance of media visibility in the performance of their roles, and particularly by criticising the conflict-driven nature of news, showing attitudes of distrust and discomfort towards media considerations. In doing so, they make claims about the legitimacy of the political work, situating politics as a domain truly interested for the common good and oriented to the public, as the following quotations illustrate.

> But also **the media have their own logic; they are interested in scandal and they make questions upon that logic**. There is no vision of, say, let's get these topics out because they are relevant from a public viewpoint. What is news is what stands out.
>
> Politician 11, Senator.

As discussed in section 6.2, the news media logic is defined as conflict-oriented, attached to the present and permeated by commercial considerations. This set of attributes allows political actors to use the cleavage between market and normative considerations to position themselves as guardians of the public interest, in opposition to news organisations concerned with strategies for audience maximisation. This line of argumentation is frequently found among politicians who articulate their views on the media on normative grounds, accusing news media outlets of marginalising public interest, relegating discussions about the country and therefore contributing to lowering the level of public debate and damaging public perceptions about politics.

> That is not interesting for the press. Once we managed to attract a million dollars in medical supplies for a hospital... two hospitals; a million dollars for each of them in medical supplies. **When I went to talk to the editor about it**

... he told me: 'good news is no news'. Then you feel a deep disappointment (...) and you say here we have a problem because, ultimately, the function of generating public opinion through the media is abandoned. On the contrary, **the media sometimes become a tool for further discrediting the institutions**, when we now live a critical situation in Chile.

Politician 22, Senator.

And [the media] inform us that parliamentarians do nothing... No: **I would say that parliamentary work is arduous**. I don't know if that goes aligned with the allowances we receive; but it is arduous. You work here [in Congress] from Monday to Thursday, but then you have to keep working; Friday, Saturday, Sunday, you have to work and be available for people at any time. If there is a public service vocation it does not matter but (...) it is hard work, **and then [the media] incubates this misconception about parliamentarians and the political class, senators; nobody does anything.**

Politician18, Deputy.

Gieryn (1983) stresses how scapegoating can be used as a rhetorical strategy for the protection of autonomy. It can be argued that by criticising media routines, politicians reclaim the value of their own role, particularly when public trust in their practices has decreased. This is reinforced as another stance taken by politicians to distance themselves from the media; that of the need of going back or reclaiming political convictions and beliefs as a strategy to deal with excessive media demands, negative media coverage or information overload, lending support to the idea that the politicisation of discourses is understood as a strategy to manage uncertainty and counterbalance the demands of a mediatized environment.

When you are a protagonist, which was my case when I was a minister, there you operate in different levels. First, is about what you are advised to do because of what is going on in the news media market. Second, **where your convictions lay, which is very important because this does not work according to any rule or general theory** or system (...) A new face, a change, can give you a communication opportunity, **but at some point - and the curve is getting faster - you have to go back to basics**, meaning that you

have to go back to talking about those things about which human society has been debating, sometimes for decades, for centuries.

(Politician 29, Former Minister)

I think that now, today we got more used to think that that's part of the logic, that one has to act in conscience, with conviction, and that one can be criticised on one side or the other and that's part (...) **In the end, you have to make decisions upon your convictions, beyond what you are being told on, say, Twitter.** I think that in the end, we have achieved a better handling.

(Politician 10, Deputy)

While these forms of boundary construction are mostly based in criticism directed at news media institutions, an additional point frequently mentioned by politicians and press officers alike was that of a generalised view of journalists as accepting with little questioning the inputs of politicians for the construction of stories and the interpretation of events. This is an issue that deserves attention, as it reveals a perception of passivity in journalists that appears counter-intuitive to the prevalent consensus about a diminished field capacity of agenda control on the part of political institutions discussed in Chapter 6.

[The quality of the political press is] poor, deeply poor, with few exceptions. **I think they accept what they are told, there is little research, they accept little things, they are interested in minor things**; the assistance of deputies (...) It has improved a little bit more but I think there are only a handful of serious political journalists today.

Politician 20, Deputy.

And I'm very critical of the way journalism in Chile is done, particularly political journalism**. I think overall we have a guild** – and I say this without generalising to all – [that is] **rather weak, lazy, which makes little interpretation**, and instead reflect the inputs provided by the very same actors they should make accountable.

Politician 5, Assessor, political party.

But yes, I think we have a press that could be even more inquisitive, looking at the international context and how journalism has progressed in those niches. **Sometimes I feel that one provides two, three leads to reporters and that's it. And there is no counter-checking. There is some superficiality**... some journalists are rather superficial.

Politician 23, Deputy.

I found them little creative. **It strikes me how they buy stories. I mean, I say, hey but do a little bit more research**, ask a little bit more to really know what had happened.

Politicians 26, Senator.

Criticism on the grounds of the passivity of journalists and their dependence on official versions of events was a somewhat unanticipated finding, considering available data shows that 62.1 per cent of politicians believe that the news media control the public agenda and help to create a negative image of politics (ICSO/UDP 2004). This reliance on official sources, recognised and criticised by political actors themselves, could be explained by a variety of factors, including entrenched journalistic routines, professional cultures, and the commercialisation of media markets, among others. On the one hand, this observation is consistent with literature on sources' relationships that has supported the idea of political elites as primary definers of news stories (Gans, 1979; Sparrow, 1999; Wolfsfeld, 2003; Davis, 2007). On the other hand, it is a statement consistent with local literature that stresses the "officialism" of Chilean journalism (Faure et al., 2011; Mellado & Humanes, 2012). However, it is a revealing point about the power inequalities observed at the micro-level in the relationship between political and media actors, which comes into conflict with the idea of an increasingly autonomous news media institution.

7.3. Final discussion and conclusion to the chapter

This chapter has examined the politician-journalist relationship by looking at practices shaping routine interactions, as well as exploring role relations between these groups of actors. In doing so, this chapter explores how politicians and journalists engage in strategies for collaboration and detachment. Or in other words, it identifies practices that contribute to the establishment and management of boundaries in the relationship. While boundary drawing tends primarily to the aim of protection of autonomy (Gieryn 1983), boundary blurring refers to the capacity to identify and facilitate spaces for cooperation (Revers 2013). Taking into consideration the deficits identified in the literature about the Chilean journalistic field, particular attention has been paid to the identification of spaces where journalistic autonomy is asserted or threatened, identifying organisational constraints and asymmetrical power relations with sources as critical areas in this regard. The implications of these findings are discussed below.

7.3.1. Drawing and re-drawing boundaries

This chapter analysed the practices associated with the trading of information between political and media actors, paying attention to both their vocabularies of practice and the rhetorical construction of role relations. This analysis lends support to the idea that the negotiation and re-negotiation of boundaries plays a fundamental part in the relationship between these groups. Andrew Abbott (1988) conceives professions as interdependent systems, which claim jurisdiction over certain types of knowledge, practices or occupational domains. However, he claims, "jurisdictional boundaries are perpetually in dispute" (Abbott 1988: 2).

Similar to Gieryn (1983), Abbott emphasises the social construction of these limits which are constantly challenged by the environment. By drawing boundaries within the politician-journalist relationships, these groups claim jurisdiction over distinct institutional domains, shedding light regarding the processes of roles' definition embedded in discourse.

The negotiation of boundaries becomes important for communities that are exposed to frequent and habitual information exchanges, routinely converging around physical spaces, shared practices and common interests. Continuous and intensive exchanges demand the ability to transition between relationships of collaboration and distancing, and practices such as those identified in the chapter (construction of relationships of trust, handling of leaked information) constitute spaces for the blurring of those boundaries (see Table in next page).

The idea of boundaries "points to fundamental relational processes at work across a wide range of social phenomena, institutions, and locations" (Lamont & Molnar 2002: 169). Contrary to other liberal professions such as Medicine or Law, Journalism is a permeable profession (Abbott 1988; Cook 2005), which has historically struggled to define its boundaries (Bourdieu 2005). Recently, considerable attention has been placed on analysing how journalism attempts to define the limits of the profession from within (Chadwick & Collister 2014; Eldridge 2014; Carlson 2015). However, the definition of limits in relation to external pressures is also an ongoing concern within an institutional domain open to influences from power and market forces (Bourdieu 2005; Champagne 2005). This defence from the outside corresponds to the boundary-work that aims towards the protection of autonomy (Gieryn 1983), which in the case of political

journalism is mostly played out at the relational level of the politician and journalist axis.

Figure 15: Political and media actors boundary work		
Boundary-work	Political actors	Journalists
Perceived threats to autonomy	*Relevant political topics ruled out by the media *Adaptation to media languages comes with compromises (e.g. constant attention to present and polarisation)	* Sense of subordination within organisational structure (acknowledgement of political and commercial biases of own organisation) *Political elites perception about journalists passivity (journalists' adoption of political logics of appropriateness) *Direct political pressure from sources
Boundary-drawing (autonomy protection)	*Mentions of convictions and beliefs as necessary to counterbalance information overloads. *Definitions of the media rule are made by opposition (notions of newsworthiness seen as arbitrary or opposed to the public interest)	*Notions of newsworthiness seen as self-evident *Relationship with sources and organisational constraints can be subordinated to notions of newsworthiness
Boundary blurring	*Frequent contacts, personal networks, construction of relationships of trust * Off the record information exchanges * Encapsulation of political agenda (elite-oriented disposition)	

When it comes to boundary-drawing, or autonomy protection, political actors demarcate their institutional domain by "coming back to basics" and pointing towards issues of political convictions, while criticising news organisations' criteria for news selection. Journalists, instead, embrace news values in order to

establish distance from pressures coming from sources and news organisations, and engage with demands of accountability to power. As such, both groups protect their autonomy with normatively grounded arguments, and at the same time build platforms of collaboration with arguments based on the expected utility of those exchanges.

The neo-institutionalist literature offers some tools to better understand how actors reconcile these different rationales for action. March and Olsen (2009) state that actors' behaviours can barely be explained by one logic of action only, as long as "behaviour is driven by habit, emotion, coercion, and calculated expected utility, as well as interpretation of internalised rules and principles" (Ibid: 17). In particular, they distinguish between the identity-based logic of appropriateness, and the preference-based logic of consequentiality. The first one is based on the fulfilment of duties, and therefore associated to normative implications of the own role. The second one is based on individual preferences and expected outcomes, and therefore associated to rational-choice behaviour (Shepsle 2006). Arguably, politicians and journalists resort to identity-based argumentations when they engage in boundaries-drawing practices and arguments; for instance, by criticising the quality of the media or sources' attempts at controlling content. However, they engage in self-interested behaviour when creating spaces of collaboration, while acknowledging their counterparts' interests.

The construction of relationships of trust based on frequent contacts and trust-testing exercises, comparisons of information exchanges with business, the use of personal networks, frequent monitoring and exchange of information based on off the record exchanges are some of the more important practices identified by both

politicians and journalists, and seen as part of regular information trade-offs. All of these could be described as rational strategies of collaboration that frequently imply levels of compromise regarding normative conceptions of their own role. Berkowitz & Terkeurst (1999) highlight this, describing how reporters often "find themselves in a duality of meanings, by engaging from both their professional interpretive community and the interpretive community of their sources", thus navigating between multiple logics of appropriateness. Allegedly politicians experience a similar duality of meanings as a result of processes of mediatization, which have made the logic of the media more visible and easily identifiable. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in sight the power asymmetries between these groups of actors, particularly when analysed at the micro-level. When perceived threats to autonomy are identified, it is the journalistic field that emerges as historically and culturally constrained.

7.3.2. Journalistic autonomy vs. media autonomy

The institutional autonomy of the media refers to their capacity to resist external pressures, and to abide by their own standards of news making (Strömbäck 2008). As discussed in section 7.2, role relations between journalists and politicians appear to be demarcated by shared understandings of notions of newsworthiness, and therefore grounded in the recognition of the news media logic and the process of mediatization. Still, important threats to journalistic autonomy are identified. This begs the question how to reconcile a context of greater institutional autonomy of the media and yet limited journalistic autonomy.

An initial explanation lies in the nature of political news making. Journalists are certainly more powerful in the aggregate than individually (Örnebring 2013), and

external pressures manifest in multiple ways around journalistic work. This is why the striving for journalistic autonomy is best understood as a constant struggle against both commercial and political considerations (Bourdieu 2005; Schudson 2005) rather than an in-built capacity of the field.

A second explanation lies in the linkages between political communication cultures and the moderating effect they may have on processes of mediatization (Strömbäck & Dimitrova 2011) and professionalisation (Örnebring 2013). In other words, although the media as an institution is understood by Chilean political elites as increasingly autonomous, this autonomy has not necessarily changed previous relationship patterns that are rooted in professional cultures and therefore appear resilient to change. As discussed in Chapter 2, the idea of an autonomous press in Chile has been challenged on several fronts. Some of these point towards structural features, such as the persistent duopoly in the print press, the high concentration of media ownership (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Mastrini & Becerra 2006; Gonzalez-Rodríguez 2008) and the proximity of the media to political and economic elites (Monckeberg 2009). However, other concerns have been raised regarding the capacity of Chilean journalism to challenge those in power, which are rather connected to a professional ethos that had led scholars to characterise Chilean journalism as passive (Gronemeyer 2002), uncritical (Santander 2013) and highly dependent on official sources (Faure et al., 2011; Mellado & Humanes, 2014).

Organisational constraints, expressed in top-down decisions in which journalists have little involvement, were identified as a major source of limitations for autonomous journalistic practice, and are consistent with the findings of

Sapiezynska et al. (2013), who found that greater restrictions to journalistic practice in Chile were located in newsrooms. This verticality in decision-making processes has been highlighted more broadly as a problem to overcome across Latin America (Hughes & Lawson 2005).

In addition to these constraints, a problematic perception of the journalistic field among political elites has also emerged as prevalent, and the power differentials between sources and journalists have become evident. On the one hand, this asymmetry along with politicians' perceptions about the passivity of journalists opens the door for co-optation, particularly when political affinities might exist between news organisations and political elites. On the other hand, it reflects a long tradition of officialism (Gronemeyer 2002; Faure et al. 2011) that reminds us of an authoritarian past (Otano & Sunkel 2003). Studies on political communication cultures in transitional democracies have frequently found legacies of authoritarian practices coexisting with professional communication strategies (Örnebring 2012; Pfetsch & Voltmer 2012). Chile seems to be no exception in this regard, which might at least partially explain the characterisation of the journalistic field as passive and ambivalent in their commitment towards their professional autonomy (Gronemeyer 2002; Mellado & Humanes 2012; Lagos & Cabalin 2013) as well as the apparent paradox between a powerful media inhabited by harmless, or at least highly pragmatic, journalists.

CHAPTER 8

ON INSTITUTIONAL CONTRADICTIONS AND POWER RELATIONS

IN THE MEDIATIZATION NARRATIVE

This chapter brings together the conclusions of the thesis by providing a schematic answer to the research questions that foreground this enquiry, as well as discussing the main implications of the findings presented in the preceding chapters. These findings endeavoured to fill an important research gap by taking an actor-centred approach to explore the mediatization of politics in the Chilean context. First, this is one of the first academic studies analysing Chilean politicians' perceptions of their relationships with the news media by inspecting their interactions with press officers and journalists. In doing so, practices that constitute the staple of the political communication culture within elite circuits of communication were identified and contextualised within wider debates about the mediatization of politics, from an actor-centred perspective. Grounding the analysis in a specific context allows for an identification of how structural conditions and cultural features interact with the process of mediatization. By doing so, this study has developed a better understanding of the claims of greater media autonomy that precedes the mediatization of political actors, highlighting how processes of mediatization of political elites mainly reflect mechanisms for the reproduction of political power, and not necessarily weakened actors. Secondly, and connected to the previous point, I argue that some of the findings of the thesis shed light on theoretical concerns within mediatization research,

particularly by proposing a multi-level analysis of the dimensions of autonomy and control in the relationship between political and media actors that can better account for issues of power distribution that have often been overlooked by mediatization research.

In the first section (8.1), the working definition of mediatization of politics elaborated in Chapter 3 is revisited in light of the findings of the study, and research questions are answered, offering a brief summary of findings. In the second section (8.2), key theoretical implications of the findings are discussed. Finally, in the third section (8.3), normative implications of the mediatization of Chilean political elites are examined, highlighting the cultural factors that appear to moderate the potential democratising effects of greater media autonomy.

8.1. Revisiting working definition and research questions

The following working definition of mediatization of politics was introduced early in the thesis as an operational framework to guide further analysis:

> Mediatization of politics is the process activated within political institutions as a result of increasing institutional autonomy of the news media and the necessity of mediated visibility, in which the actions and decisions of political actors, organisations and institutions are adjusted to news media logics.

This definition identifies four distinctive aspects of the process of mediatization, built on a critical survey of the literature on mediatization in its institutional variant: greater media autonomy, media visibility as resource, adaptive practices and news media logics of action.

Looking at the available literature, it was possible to reach a preliminary conclusion that Chilean politics have become mediatized on the grounds that the news media as a social institution have increased their autonomy, largely as a result of processes of commercialisation (Tironi & Sunkel 1993). Additionally, political actors demonstrate an increased need for mediated visibility to compensate for a weakened connection between the party system and civic society (Godoy 2003; Luna & Mardones 2010) and have therefore reacted by adopting tools from marketing and related areas (Silva 2004; Espíndola 2008), as well as adopting professional help to mediate their communication with the news media (ICSO/UDP 2004; Santander 2013). Despite these indications, there remained an important research gap, one that could be addressed by assessing how political elites conduct their relationship with the news media in Chile and the extent to which they have adopted news media logics of action in their everyday practice.

Having identified this gap, the present study has developed initial answers to the guiding research question of *how have Chilean political elites adapted to the mediatization of politics*. This question can be schematically answered by connecting the findings presented in the preceding chapters to the four dimensions identified in the working definition of mediatization of politics, while adopting an inductive and actor-centred approach. As some of these points were developed in the preceding chapters, these dimensions will be briefly revisited below to highlight, on the one hand, how they connect to the different sub-research questions and, on the other, what they add to existing knowledge. In addition, a final sub-section will elaborate on findings that offer empirical support

to mediatization of politics over time by identifying directions of change in political elites' relationships with the media.

8.1.1. Actors' need for mediated visibility: on media and political resources

Paying attention to the nature of the resources controlled by the media is a necessary step to understanding how these resources operate within political institutions, as they are the main drivers of individual and organisational adaptive practices to media demands.

The sub RQ1, *What are Chilean politicians' goals when interacting with the news media,* was addressed directly in Chapter 6. Goals attached to media-oriented activities by political elites were discussed first by research participants, in close connection to their potential as power resources, and classified in goals of electoral and policy rationale. The elitist nature of traditional media players was stressed in discussions about the limits of media visibility as a main resource, especially in electoral processes, where other forms of direct communication, particularly territorial work, remain relevant. As such, control of public attention through traditional media is primarily understood as a resource that may activate other political resources. This insight is directly connected to sub RQ2, *To what extent is media visibility considered a valuable resource for political activity?* This question was addressed in chapters 5 and 6, where the value attached by political elites to media visibility was discussed as a mobilising capability, using the concept coined by March & Olsen (1995), which refers to how controlling flows of attention constitute a major tool for governance that may compensate for the lack of other resources.

By paying attention to goals, the intentionality of action is taken into account (Thornton et al. 2012). Yet, it is recognised that these actions are embedded in a specific political and media structure. The analysis of structural factors shaping political actors' interactions with news organisations highlight important features about the nature of the media-controlled resource of public attention (Kunelius & Reunanen 2012) in the Chilean context. First, this is a resource that appears to be centrally managed; it is mostly consolidated in the Presidency, Santiago and a group of media outlets that together form a circuit of elite communication. Secondly, self-mediatization – that is, actors' reflexive responses to the media environment (Esser 2013; Marcinkowski & Steiner 2014) – appears to be more likely dependent on the actors' positions and aligned to both individual and organisational resources. As such, the drive and ability to control public attention through traditional media platforms is differentially distributed among political elites, dependant on their proximity to the Executive power, the centre of the country and their links to traditional media outlets. As the literature suggests, the use of the resource of mediated visibility is identified as driven primarily by the need to control public attention (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Seymour-Ure 2003; Berkowitz 2009; Kunelius & Reunanen 2012; Stromback & Van Aelst 2013), and part of a bigger struggle for political control (Wolfsfeld & Sheafer 2006). Yet, this resource is also seen as particularly effective and therefore necessary for intra-elite communication. At a societal level, nonetheless, exposure in traditional media outlets is understood as a tool that has to be complemented with others. Overall, its effectiveness is perceived by political elites as both limited and difficult to achieve, as more fragmented and horizontal forms of communication that do not necessarily operate according to traditional news media logics spread.

8.1.2. Actors' understanding and interactions with news media logics of action

Media and political logics were discussed as hybrid institutional logics shaping actors' interactions (Meyer 2002; Esser 2013). These provide organising principles influencing action in given institutional domains (Dimaggio & Powell 1983; Friedland & Alford 1991; March & Olsen 2006). SubRQ3, *How do political elites understand and interact with news media logics of action?,* was addressed directly in chapter 6, where the operational logic structuring politicians' interactions with the media was discussed in connection to the accounts of research participants. Political elites highlighted elements such as conflict and negativity, permanent attention to the present and the commercial underpinnings of news-making. As such, news media logics were seen mostly as reactive to a news media system grounded in market considerations (Sunkel & Geoffroy 2002; Bresnahan 2003; Couso 2012). Political elites' interactions with this prevalent operational logic were also described as highly ambivalent, since it is often criticised on the grounds of being short-sighted and limiting the range of topics that secure public exposure; hence, attitudes of discomfort or unease towards a logic perceived as external and not necessarily oriented towards the public interest were common among interviewees. Nonetheless, politicians widely discuss this logic in terms of opportunity, since adapting to it is a natural gateway to mediated visibility. In other words, compromises are made by political elites towards a logic of action recognised as external, in order to retain control over the terms of their own visibility.

8.1.3. Adaptive responses to news media logics of action: the staple of mediatization

Individual, organisational and institutional adaptive responses to news media logics have been the staple of mediatization research focused on political actors (see Kepplinger 2002; Campus 2010; Reunanen et al. 2010; Elmelund-Praestekaer et al. 2011; Kunelius & Reunanen 2011; Korthagen & Klijn 2012; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2014). In this study, the adaptive practices of Chilean political elites were investigated in chapter 6 and 7, with the aim of answering subRQ4, *What are the prevalent media-oriented practices among Chilean politicians and how are they accommodated in their daily activities?*

The typology of mediatization developed in Chapter 5 offers a first indication of how media-oriented practices are not equally adopted by all actors. Instead, their adoption is often aligned with the centrality of actors' position in the political system and organisational resources available for media management. Crucially, the adoption of media-oriented practices and the relevance these actions have within individual routines is also the outcome of individual decisions regarding the value of mediated visibility as a political resource, which results in the active pursuit of relationships with the media.

Chapters 6 and 7 present different aspects of the way political elites have responded to changes in the media environment, responses that are grounded in a need for retaining control on the terms upon which public attention is attained. Chapter 6 identifies four main areas of adjustment, in which news media logics appear to shape politicians' everyday actions. The first of these is the professionalisation of political communication; that is to say, the proliferation of

professional and time resources devoted to press and communications tasks, together with the systematisation of media-oriented practices (e.g. professional press monitoring, regular meetings to define future actions, production of standardised information subsidies). Second, adaptation to media language, which includes efforts to offer attractive storylines to the media often by means of exploiting conflict and personalisation, tailoring messages and working on catchy soundbites. Third, adaptation to media temporalities, an ongoing process of adjustment connected to the acceleration of news making routines, convergence of media platforms, fragmentation of audiences and the multiplication of 24/7 online and offline channels of information. The majority of politicians and press officers see these changes in the configuration of the media as demanding a greater ability to both monitor politically relevant information and to detect windows of opportunity to pursue spaces of mediated visibility, limiting the scope for positioning new topics in the agenda. The fourth and final area of adjustment is less visible, as it is connected to the backstage of political news making and relates to the proliferation of covert information subsidies. The latter takes the form of off-the-record briefings together with the wide circulation of unattributed information. This has become an alternative route for political elites to influence the news when traditional information subsidies appear to have decreased their value.

8.1.4. Actors' perception about increasing media autonomy

The concept of autonomy has been inspected in this study from a relational perspective; that is to say, from the perspective of interactions between media and political actors over news making in the political beat. This transversal topic was

approached in all of the chapters, each addressing different perspectives. Overall, the findings lend support to the idea that both politicians and press officers perceive the news media as having increased their institutional autonomy, inasmuch as their ability to control media contents have diminished and the operational criteria of the news media has emerged as the main guiding principle regulating information exchanges. Yet, at the same time, this greater autonomy appears moderated by structural and cultural factors, particularly a prevalent centralised political communication culture, clientelistic practices in some news organisations and a legacy of submissive journalism.

The identification of prevalent practices in the relationship between political and media actors, developed in chapters 6 and 7, reveal the complexity of these interactions and the ways in which media content remains the object of a permanent negotiation, where both topics and frames to interpret those topics are disputed. The latter does not preclude a greater institutional autonomy on the part of the Chilean media, but suggests that a more nuanced interpretation of the implications of the mediatization process is needed. This final point will be returned to and expanded on in the next section of this chapter.

SubRQ5, *What are the prevalent practices in the trade-off between Chilean politicians and journalists?,* was approached in Chapter 7, where dynamics of autonomy and control in the relationship between media and political actors were explored. Findings lend support to the idea that practices of information exchanges that have developed between these groups could be understood within a framework of expected utility, supported by the construction of trust relationships through frequent contact, the development of trust-testing exercises,

the cultivation and use of personal networks as well as the extended use of off-the-record briefings. These complementary practices point towards the rational construction of platforms of collaboration between political and media actors, which nonetheless require active distancing on the part of journalists if they are to claim some levels of autonomy from their sources.

SubRQ6, *What are politicians' and journalists' perceptions about their ability to control media messages?,* can be answered by taking into consideration both the direct claims made by research participants regarding their capacity of shaping news making, as well as the different threats to autonomy identified along the study. Among these, it seems relevant to highlight those threats to journalistic autonomy identified by participants, which oppose a narrative of increasing media autonomy. In particular, organisational arrangements that constrain autonomous journalistic practice emerge as a major issue that amplifies the consequences of already-asymmetrical power relations between journalists and their political sources, especially in a context where observations regarding the passivity of journalists were common for both politicians and those press officers who assist them. In this regard, a tension is observed regarding the way in which perceptions about levels of autonomy change according to the levels observed; overall, politicians and press officers retain high degrees of control in the relational-individual level as well as important scope for negotiation at the organisational level. At the institutional level, however, the news media are seen to be increasing their autonomy and their ability to challenge political control.

8.1.5. Main directions of change

It is important to highlight that some of the preceding findings are indicative of change in the communicative practices of both politicians and journalists over time. As such, they provide insight into how the process of mediatization has developed from a longitudinal angle in the Chilean context, and more importantly how political elites have negotiated these changes.

The first area of transformation is connected to changes in the relationship between politicians, press officers and journalists, which have evolved as a result of what appears as greater capacity of the media to define news contents according to their own criteria. According to several research participants, important changes can be identified in this relationship throughout the transitional period, all of which point towards news organizations less inclined to reproduce official versions and more prone to interpretive forms of journalism. This shift in the relationship, nonetheless, is counterbalanced with greater awareness of news media logics among both politicians and press officers, a movement towards the professionalization of political communication and changes in the form taken by information subsidies, as well as organizational constraints in the journalistic field that seem resilient to change.

The second area of transformation is connected to the erosion of dynamics embraced by the circuit of elite communication during the transitional period, as a result of the emergence of new actors –both in the media and the political domain- that appear less responsive to the practices that organized the relationships between these fields in the first decades after the recovery of democracy. As it was discussed in Chapter 5, these changes threaten the capacity of controlling the

agenda on both sides, since media and political actors appear to be struggling to cope with some of these changes and are still in the process of defining ways of dealing with important transformations in the pace of the news cycle, the amount of information available, as well as the participation of audiences through social media platforms, developments that demand a readjustment in the relationship between political and media actors.

8.2. Theoretical implications of findings: a multi-level approach to mediatization

This section will briefly review theoretical points that emerged from the analysis of findings and can be of use outside the specific case in which they have been raised. In doing so, it establishes a contribution that extends beyond empirical observations within a contained national environment. Specifically, this section questions the assumptions of political actors' autonomy losses implied in the narrative of mediatization of politics, and proposes a multi-level approach to explore the dimension of autonomy as crucial for the understanding and assessment of conflicting rationales for behaviour, as well as patterns of power relations between political elites and the news media.

Because of the centrality traditional media platforms have in the mind-set of political elites, the media institution impose constraints on politicians' behaviours which, ultimately, reflect the ways in which political actors negotiate potentially contradicting value-systems (that of politics versus that of the media) with the aim of remaining visible. This is a transformative process for political actors and institutions. However, I argue that the independent power the media has on politics tends to be overstressed. News organisations and journalists do have to

negotiate their behaviour as well. This opens mediatization processes to multiple outcomes and prevents a linear understanding of the process.

This study has examined different patterns of power relations in the interaction between political and media actors, which tempers the assessment of causal links between mediatization and political elites' autonomy losses. Yes, in the context studied, the media appear to be increasing their institutional autonomy, in the sense that they have claimed the power to define how news content is presented. Nevertheless, the process of mediatization of political actors can be interpreted as a field-reaction to manage uncertainty over mediated visibility. At the same time, political elites seem able to exert significant influence over what information is reported by news organisations, as well as to generate relations of inter-dependence with media professionals in a number of ways. This is connected to three key areas identified in the study that condition political elites' access to mediated visibility: the availability and allocation of resources for managing media visibility, adaptation to news media logics and the construction of relationships with media organisations and media actors.

As argued by Hjarvard (2013), the need for visibility has altered the performative requirements of political actors, yet many remain in position to take advantage of the process (Elmelund-Praestekaer et al. 2011). The latter becomes clear, for example, in the analysis of news media logic during interviews with politicians and press officers when these actors directly link adaptation to media language and anticipation of media requirements to the instrumental pursuit of political objectives.

Deacon & Stanyer (2014), some of the more open critics of mediatization studies, have critiqued assumptions about the "net effect on communicative practice" (Ibid: 1035) brought about by mediatization processes when failing to acknowledge that these occur alongside other social processes and bound to produce causal combinations contextually relevant at different levels of social interactions. This study offers some empirical support for these allegations. First, chapter 5 acknowledges that communication practices of Chilean political elites are embedded in a political and media system that reflect institutional arrangements within a particular political culture, favouring some actors over others (e.g. the Executive power, Santiago-based politics, elite media organisations), constituting a macro-level framework for understanding politicians' and journalists' relationships. Later, chapter 7 discusses how the organisational level appears crucial in the Chilean context as prevalent organisational cultures and potential political allegiances may prevent some journalists from pursuing more adversarial styles of reporting. This is particularly the case for quality newspapers, which remain highly relevant as articulators of inter-elite disputes. Additionally, at the relational one-to-one level, power imbalances often lean in favour of political sources, which by and large see journalists as ill-prepared and dependant on the information provided by them through means of traditional media subsidies and strategic leaks. These perceptions appear to be favoured for issues such as the high rotation of reporters and precarious job conditions, contributors to power imbalances that are amplified in the relationship between political actors and journalists in regional media outlets, which politicians judge as more permeable with stories of interest.

8.2.1. The autonomy dimension

Interrogating the overlooked dimension of media autonomy – the second phase of the process in the model developed by Strömbäck (2008) – can serve as a way to develop this argument further, and concretely explore the aspects outlined above; namely, how mediatization processes interact with other social processes and cultural factors, as well as inspect the power relations between media and political actors. This phase is described as "the degree to which the media are independent from political institutions in terms of how the media are governed" (Strömbäck, 2008: 234), later expanded and equated to the process of institutionalization of the media via professionalisation of journalistic practice and commercialisation.

In the preceding chapters, findings were presented and discussed, paying attention to and distinguishing between levels of interaction: macro, meso and micro-levels. This distinction emerged from the analysis of the data itself, and is supported by an institutionalist perspective for analysis of media and politics relationships (Sparrow 1999; Cook 2005) and the process of mediatization of politics (among others, Hjarvard, 2008, 2013; Strömbäck, 2008), as well as the use of the institutionalist perspective as employed outside of media studies (DiMaggio 1997; March & Olsen 2006; Thornton et al. 2012). In the latter group, Friedland & Alford (1991) stand out for having greatly influenced the institutional logic perspective proposing a "non-functionalist conception of society as a potentially contradictory inter-institutional system", adding that "an adequate social theory must work at three levels of analysis – individuals competing and negotiating, organisations in conflict and coordination, and institutions in contradiction and interdependency" (Ibid: 240-241).

Paying attention to multiple levels of interaction allows for an exploration of how these levels are nested into each other but may be actually distinct (Friedland & Alford 1991; Schudson 2002; Görke & Scholl 2006; Thornton et al. 2012). What seems clear from the analysis of findings in the Chilean case, for example, is that as a social institution (meso-level of analysis) the news media have certainly increased their autonomy during the transitional process, and therefore, it could be argued that traditional media outlets – as a whole – have increased their ability to act according to their own operational criteria. By that measure, news media would appear able to determine the conditions for the visibility of political elites in these platforms. As such, news media logics potentially provide a mechanism to enforce distance from sources. Nonetheless, as discussed in chapter 6, the field-level reaction of political institutions – adapting to the news media logic and
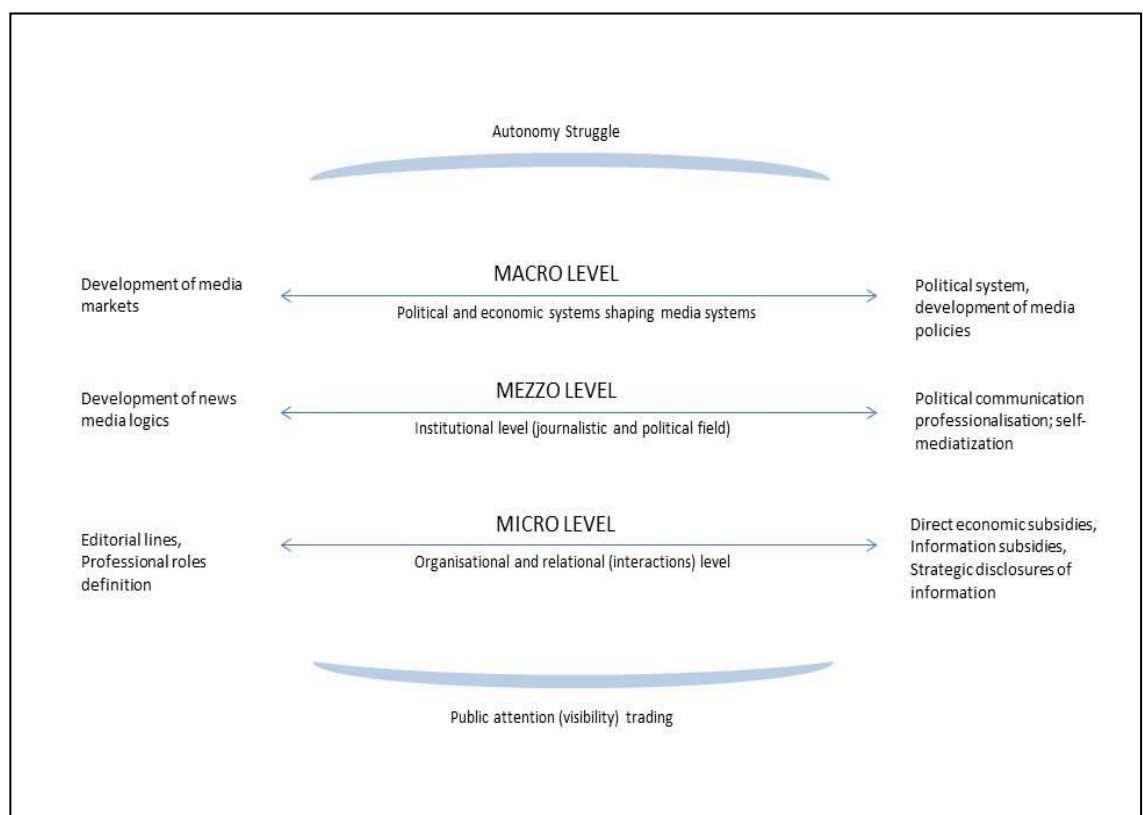
Figure 16: Multi-level model of media-politics relationships

therefore being able to anticipate media requirements – can be interpreted as a move to counter-balance this power shift.

As the figure above illustrates, at least three complementary levels can be distinguished in order to examine this relationship, each of which has been discussed in the findings chapters in relation to the Chilean context. First, a macro-level dependant on prevalent media and political systems and those media policies and regulations that provide the framework for the interactions between these groups. Second is a meso-level dependant on the media acting according to their own criteria, which is generally met with professionalisation of political communication and processes of self-mediatization. Third, is a micro-level where actions are in fact observable in terms of organisational routines and relational exchanges between journalists and politicians. In the context of inter-institutional relationships of great inter-dependency (Sigal 1973; Gans 1979; Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Negrine 1996; Meyer 2002; Cook 2005; Wahl-Jorgensen 2014) these continuous disputes over the representation of politics need to be acknowledged.

I argue that media autonomy is not a given of mediatization processes. Instead, it is a dimension that claims comprehensive attention, beyond the institutional level. In the context of democratic theory, Dahl (1982) stresses that autonomy and control are dyadic concepts rarely found as absolutes. Likewise, relationships of autonomy and control between news organisations and political elites are, as well, always relative, and this becomes increasingly evident when the multiple dimensions for mutual influence are inspected. By paying attention to this dimension, variance between mediatization processes can be better captured.

8.3. Normative implications of findings

Having established some of the theoretical contributions of this study at a general level, this section now moves to discuss the normative implications of the presented findings. These are naturally of a contextual nature and directly linked to Chile, where the mediatization of political actors has been observed and analysed. Making a normative assessment of processes of mediatization is not uncomplicated, particularly as the literature generally portrays mediatization as a process not loaded normatively (Hjarvard 2008; Strömbäck 2008) and therefore equally able to increase or decrease the quality of deliberation and decision-making (Kunelius & Reunanen 2012). As such it is not straightforward to establish a relationship between mediatization of political actors and democracy. As mentioned in the Introduction Chapter, Blumler (2014) argues that the mediatization of political actors – the fourth phase of mediatization in Strömbäck's (2008) model – is the phase most linked with the performance of democracy as it is paired with assumptions about possible losses of autonomy on the part of politicians and the eventual concurrence of politics and media concerns; which points towards potential detrimental effects for the public, an assessment shared by Kriesi (2013). It is fair to say, however, that attempts to examine the relationships between the mediatization of political actors and democratic performance empirically have generally ended up acknowledging that the process is open to different outcomes (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Reunanen et al. 2010; Korthagen & Klijn 2012; Thorbjornsrud et al. 2015). Overall, normative implications of the mediatization of political elites are, therefore, not inherent to the process of mediatization, but demand a situated assessment.

Likewise, the findings of this study reveal a complex picture of tightly interwoven features in the Chilean media system, suggesting that political elites' adjustments to the media environment are naturally reactive to the sort of news media institutions that have emerged in a post-authoritarian context. Moreover, they show some of the implications the elitist and commercial biases of Chilean traditional media have had in the relationships established between politicians and journalists. The latter group use news values as a protective shield to distance themselves from political sources and organisational pressures, which may enable – and sometimes has enabled – instances of accountability to power. Yet the same news values which journalists claim for their professional autonomy are often perceived, by politicians, press officers and journalists alike, as the main reason for politics being reduced to conflict stories and personal disputes, to the exclusion of topics of greater public relevance. Additionally, because the routines that sustain the relationship between politicians and news organisations generally demand time and human resources, access to media platforms depends on the availability of those resources, and the capacity to spin policies according to media demands. This clearly generates some inequality of access to platforms of mediated visibility. Finally, the self-referential nature of elite-driven coverage can easily lead towards disconnection between an elite public opinion and general audiences. The latter is especially acute in the Chilean case since it is not only the case of news agendas that may not be relevant to some sectors of the population, but additionally because elitist political practices and lack of participation have been repeatedly identified as one of the main shortcomings of the Chilean transitional process (Godoy 2003; Siavelis 2009; Garretón & Garretón 2010). As such, it is not too adventurous to state that an inward-facing circuit of elite

communication can be considered a maintenance mechanism of the political status quo as well as a substantial factor contributing to the crisis of trust that political elites now experience in the country.

As such, the consequences of the mediatization of Chilean political elites that this study identifies are multi-faceted and not necessarily unidirectional, leading to the formulation of a key question: what sort of normative expectations can be placed on the relationship between institutional political actors and news organisations in a democratic system? Generally, news media is expected to be an independent actor participating in public life by observing, informing, and providing an arena for sources to reach the public (Habermas 2006; Christians et al. 2009). In the context of democratisation processes specifically, the news media is expected to resist clientelistic practice and function to hold power to account, provide citizens with meaningful information and become a forum for discussion among a diversity of voices (Jebril et al. 2013; Örnebring 2012, 2013; Voltmer 2013).

The findings developed in this thesis expose serious questions about whether the relationship established between political elites and traditional media outlets in Chile has performed effectively across these ideal roles. Intra-elite clientelistic practices can still be observed in some news organisations, research participants expressed concern regarding the range of actors and topics that access traditional media platforms and, most importantly, the allegiance of news organisations to the public interest is generally subordinated to editorial lines, news values and strategies for audience maximisation. This is certainly problematic, as it calls into question the quality of public communication in Chilean society. If the information available for accountability processes is so strongly shaped by the power

dynamics between politicians and journalists, there is no guarantee that the media will act as an independent link between elites and society, or the information they produce will enable the public to make informed decisions about their leaders, instead of merely reflecting the extent to which political actors have learnt to manage a rather small circuit of relevant media outlets.

Additionally, it seems crucial to acknowledge that the idea of mediatization inspected in this study is built upon a set of assumptions that today are seriously challenged by a changing media environment that enables new information flows and political participation. As argued by Blumler (2014), mediatization debates belong to a certain underlying model of the political communication process that is linear, privileges top-down transmission and is based in inter-institutional relationships between politicians and journalists. Politicians in different parts of the world tend to privilege these platforms (Chadwick 2013; Blumler 2014; Schulz 2014), something that the findings of this study confirms, and despite shared perceptions that the mass media paradigm is seriously eroded, politicians continue acting, for the most part, within it. More challenging, and still open to discussion and academic enquiry, is determining the extent to which the erosion of the models that have sustained the institutional media-politics binomial in the last decades have had an effect at the level of routines, norms and news values that shape media institutions themselves. Considering the media has traditionally worked for the reproduction of elite discourses (Schudson 2002; Bourdieu 2005; Habermas 2006), a shift in this inter-institutional relationship could indicate greater responsiveness to civil society, which may be a welcome development.

8.4. Directions for future research

The strengths and limitations derived from the methodological approach in this study were discussed in detail in section 4.6, yet it is important to return to some of these in identifying the avenues for future research that derive from this thesis. Three main directions for future research are identified: quantitative or comparative approaches to assess the progression of processes of mediatization over time and in different places; case studies that allow researchers to ground analysis in concrete policy processes; and finally, exploring whether newer media logics might alter the routines of media and political actors and whether these are changing the relationship between the studied reference groups.

For its design and purpose, this study does not lend itself to providing comparative evidence of change in the relationship between Chilean political elites and the news media. The analysis of data has offered some support for findings that are indicative of dynamics of transformation, some of which were discussed in section 8.1.5, yet they certainly demand further research, possibly of a comparative nature. One of these is the narrative of historical changes in the politician-journalist relationship, and in the communication practices of politicians, political parties and political organisations along the transitional process (1990-2015). A different area for potentially fertile comparisons can be detected from the sharp differences in politicians' and press officers' perceptions and practices directed towards national media, compared to those directed towards regional and local media, which suggests differences in national and sub-national journalistic and political communication practices.

Recognising these limitations, this study has succeeded in identifying several points for understanding mediatization processes. Key among these, this research has identified how processes of mediatization interact with different dynamics in the Chilean context, shaping the communication practices of political elites and the relationship between politicians, press officers and journalists. Using the findings of this study to explore communication practices and media coverage in alternative, specific, case studies could further advance the understanding of some dynamics of mediatization. In the Chilean context in particular, 2014 and 2015 have been years in which levels of trust in political elites have plummeted (COES 2015; PNUD 2015), a situation at least partially fuelled by a series of cases that have exposed the dubious links between corporate and political power. From a research perspective, these revelations offer an opportunity to inspect, under the auspices of mediatization theory, how traditional media outlets have incorporated and reported on these cases, as well as how they have interacted with new media platforms, and whether the relationship between political elites and journalists have experienced changes as a result

Additionally, it is important for mediatization studies as a whole to move beyond the institutional binomial of media and politics, in order to assess how news media logics interact with newer media logic (e.g. social media or community media in digital platforms). For example, analysis of the ways mediatization theory can be applied to look at political actors' interaction with media platforms that do not fit traditional definitions of the institutional/journalistic media. In this sense, the findings of this study suggest that a new media environment has at least partly eroded the functioning of circuits of elite communication in Chile, posing

challenges for both political and media actors. This line of enquiry becomes especially relevant in the broader Latin American context, where the link between traditional media outlets and civil society has been rather weak in post-authoritarian contexts (Waisbord 2000, 2012; Guerrero & Márquez-Ramírez 2014).

8.5. Closing remarks

This study was developed with the aim of better understanding how Chilean political elites understand and cultivate their relationships with the news media, using the theoretical framework of mediatization of politics. In doing so, this thesis has produced new knowledge regarding the communication practices of Chilean politicians, gathering data that has been used to examine some of the theoretical assumptions of mediatization theory and in particular to better understand the notions of media and political autonomy within this field of research.

This study contributes to existing knowledge by expanding the range of cases studied and methodological approaches used within this tradition. Using a qualitative approach to the study of mediatization, this thesis identifies how mediatization as a process occurs and interacts with the Chilean context, and how it shapes political elites' communication practices and the relationship between politicians, press officers and journalists in a market-driven, elite-oriented and centralised political communication culture. In doing so, this thesis promotes the use of qualitative approaches to illuminate mediatization studies, not only by shedding light on the way a rather abstract process such as the mediatization of politics interacts with contextual features, but also contributing to the theoretical

understanding of the mediatization of political actors. In this regard the thesis argues that the mediatization of political actors primarily translates in constraints on politicians' behaviour, yet assertions about power shifts in the relationship between both institutional domains require situated assessments. Remaining within the institutional tradition for the study of mediatization and using some conceptual tools from the institutional logics perspective, the thesis claims that by inspecting the micro-level of social interactions it is possible to improve understanding about how institutional-level logics are exported, but also how they are resisted and how they are often willingly adopted for instrumental ends.

In recent years, mediatization studies have greatly developed theoretically. However, much work needs to be done in the field of mediatization studies to offer an empirical basis to theoretical claims, and especially to examine material and normative implications of the process both in politics and in other fields. In this study I hope to have made a small contribution in this direction, by examining theoretical claims with empirical data, and acknowledging the complexity of the process and some of its multiple consequences. In contemporary Chile, the mediatization of political actors cannot be decoupled from the media system and the political culture developed during the transition. Indeed, it has been a key mechanism for the reproduction of the institutions that support it. It is for this reason that this thesis identifies some of the challenges the mediatization paradigm will have to address in order to engage with dynamics of continuity and change in the relationship between political and media actors, in a context of increasing public scrutiny and changing communication patterns, where extra-institutional actors have greater visibility. This is a consideration scholars must

engage with in order to develop mediatization theory in a way that appropriately

reflects changing media and political landscapes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

FIELDWORK QUESTIONNAIRE- POLITICIAN

MEDIA-ORIENTED PRACTICES

1. Let me begin by asking about your media consumption. Could you tell me what news media you regularly use for information purposes?
    What news media would you consider more relevant for your functions?

2. Do you have a routine for media monitoring? How is that?

3. Overall, how would you define the relationship you have established with the news media during your political career?
    In terms of your direct relationship with news organizations, how often do you speak to journalists or editors?

4. In what ways do you plan your media presence?

    How do you decide whether to appear or not?

    Do you work with supporting professionals in this area?

5. Thinking about the time you spend getting informed, planning your media presence and interacting with journalists. How relevant is the media within your work routine? Could you estimate how much time you invest in this area?

CONTROL-AUTONOMY

6. How would you describe the relationship you maintain with journalists that cover your beat?

7. Do you think that the professional standards of political journalism in Chile are appropriate?

8. Who would you say has more power in negotiating content that is published: you as a politician or the news organization? How come?

9. Which are, in your experience, the strategies more commonly used to try to steer media coverage in your favour (or generally in politicians' favour)?

10. Do you have regular off the record conversations with journalists/editors? What kind of information you normally get/give from these talks?

11. Would you say that you spend more time looking proactively to appear in the media or reacting to calls or requests from journalists?

12. Would you say that you generally understand the dynamics and priorities of the main news organizations?

GOALS

I would like now evaluate the goals associated with media exposure, or in other words, the exchange value of the relationship with the news media for you as a politician.

13. What are the main goals or goal that you pursue in your interaction with news organizations?

>   What are the main benefits of having media exposure?

Would you consider necessary to appear in the media to advance positions in negotiations for example? (Some example if you find it useful?)

Do you obtain relevant information (for the exercise of your functions) through the media?

Do you see news organizations as a space for communication with the public mainly or a space for communication with peers/ other politicians?

14. In your opinion, to what extent media coverage affects political relationships? (e.g. with politicians within your coalition, with your opponents, with interest groups).

15. Do you think some people prioritize issues in the political agenda because they are likely to have good media coverage?

WRAP-UP

17. Finally, I would like to know how relevant media management is for someone actively working in politics and why. Is it possible to do politics outside the media?

18. Do you think is there any relevant issue that we are leaving out?

19. Could you recommend someone else to discuss this subject?

FIELDWORK QUESTIONNAIRE- COMMUNICATIONS OR PRESS OFFICER

MEDIA-ORIENTED PRACTICES

1. Let me begin by asking about your media consumption. Could you tell me what news media you regularly use for information purposes?
   What news media would you consider more relevant for your functions?

2. Do you have a routine for media monitoring? How is that?

3. Overall, how would you define the relationship you have established with the news media during your political career?
   In terms of your direct relationship with news organizations, how often do you speak to journalists or editors?

4. In what ways do you plan your media presence?

   How do you decide whether to appear or not?

5. Thinking about the time *[the name of the person you work for]* spends getting informed, planning your media presence and interacting with journalists. How relevant is this area within [*the minister, senator, deputy]* routine?

CONTROL-AUTONOMY

6. How would you describe the relationship you maintain with journalists that cover your beat?

7. Do you think that the professional standards of political journalism in Chile are appropriate?

8. Who would you say has more power in negotiating content that is published: you as a source or the news organization? How come?

9. Which are, in your experience, the strategies more commonly used to try to steer media coverage in your favour (or generally in politicians' favour)?

10. Do you have regular off the record conversations with journalists/editors? What kind of information you normally get/give from these talks?

11. Would you say that you spend more time looking proactively to appear in the media or reacting to calls or requests from journalists?

12. Would you say that you generally understand the dynamics and priorities of the main news organizations?

GOALS

I would like now evaluate the goals associated with media exposure, or in other words, the exchange value of the relationship with the news media for you as a politician.

13. What are the main goals or goal that you pursue in your interaction with news organizations?

What are the main benefits of having media exposure?

Would you consider necessary to appear in the media to advance positions in negotiations for example? (Some example if you find it useful?)

Do you obtain relevant information (for the exercise of your functions) through the media?

Do you see news organizations as a space for communication with the public mainly or a space for communication with peers/ other politicians?

14. In your opinion, to what extent media coverage affects political relationships? (e.g. with politicians within your coalition, with your opponents, with interest groups).

15. Do you think some people prioritize issues in the political agenda because they are likely to have good media coverage?

WRAP-UP

17. Finally, I would like to know how relevant media management is for someone actively working in politics and why. Is it possible to do politics outside the media?

18. Do you think is there any relevant issue that we are leaving out?

19. Could you recommend someone else to discuss this subject?

FIELDWORK QUESTIONS- JOURNALIST (Editor or reporter)

DESCRIPTION OF ROUTINE PRACTICES

1. Let me begin by asking about your media consumption.
   Could you tell me what news media you regularly use for information?

2. What news media would you consider more relevant for your functions?

3. How would you describe your beat (if you have one)? What kind of organizations and people are your regular sources?

CONTROL-AUTONOMY

4. In terms of your direct relationship with political actors (parliamentarians, ministers, deputies, party leaders). How would you describe your professional relationship?

   How often do you talk to them or their press officers?

   How would you describe the relationship you have with mediators: press officers or communication advisors?

5. Do you have regular off the record conversations with your sources? What kind of information you normally get from these talks?

6. Do you think that the professional standards of your counterparts are appropriate? Do they understand your role as a journalist?

7. Do you think that the professional standards of political journalism in Chile are appropriate?

8. From your perspective and experience, who has more power in negotiating content that is published: you as a journalist or your sources?

   And thinking about agenda generation, are generally the topics you cover/stories you detect or reactive to your sources proposals?

   Which are, in your experience, the strategies more commonly used by political actors to try to steer media coverage in their favour?

   Have you ever been forced to modify or not publish contents due to external political pressures? (And what about other pressures from within the organization you work for?)

POLITICAL ACTORS GOALS

9. What are, in your opinion, the main motivations of your political sources to seek media exposure?

WRAP-UP

10. Do you think is there any relevant issue that we are leaving out?

11. Finally I wonder how relevant you think media management is for a person who is active in politics and why. Is it possible to do politics outside the media?

12. Could you recommend someone else to discuss this subject?

APPENDIX 2

Node Classification Summary

Attribute Value	Attribute Value Description	Number of Nodes
Classification	**Actors (people, organizations)**	
Attribute	**Gender**	
Female		24
Male		36
Attribute	**Group**	
Politicians (1), Journalists (2) or Communication Officers (3)		
1		30
2		18
3		12
Attribute	**Institution**	
Main affiliation- type of news or political organization they work for		
Congress		28
Moneda		3
Online Media		4
Political Party		11
Print press		7
Radio		4
TV		3
Attribute	**Political affiliation**	
Affiliation to political party		
DC		12
IC		1
Not Applicable		21
PC		3
PPD		8
PRSD		1
PS		2
RN		6

Attribute Value	Attribute Value Description	Number of Nodes
UDI		6

Attribute   Position
Specific position the participant have within the organization

Assessor		2
Deputy		14
Editor		10
Journalist Communicatic		12
Journalist Media		8
Minister		1
Senator		6
Senior party member (board)		7

Attribute   Years of Experience

10-15		26
15-20		13
20+		20
5-10		1

APPENDIX 3

Introductory Interview Request Letter

[Full name of person]

Dear [name of person]:

The purpose of this letter is to request your participation as a respondent in the research project conducted at the University of Sheffield, about the mediatization of Chilean politics.

My name is Ximena Orchard, I am a journalist of the Catholic University, currently studying for a PhD in the UK. This project is funded through Conicyt Chile, and aims to research the relationship between political actors in Chile and the news media, with an emphasis on identifying practices, as well as the use of the news media in processes of decision making and negotiation. Your trajectory as a [insert salient details of research participant career] make you an excellent participant for the project.

This research is supervised by Professor Ralph Negrine, specialist in Political Communication, and has ethical approval from the University of Sheffield.

I understand that your time is limited but I'll be very grateful if you could make a space in your agenda for a 30-minute interview at the place and time of your convenience. The interviews will be conducted between May 20 and July 12, 2013. The identity of respondents will be kept in reserve for purposes of academic publications derived from the thesis. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. My email is x.orchard@sheffield.ac.uk.

I appreciate your time and willingness to participate,

Ximena Orchard
Journalist, PhD Candidate
Journalism Studies Department

APPENDIX 4

TREE NODE- NODES FIRST STAGE OF CODING

Name	Description	No. Sources	No. References
Politicians practices and attitudes	Container Node		
Goals of media exposure	Container Node		
Policy-making & media	Statements that deal with the relevance of using the media as a management tool. Media coverage activates policy agendas or triggers management decisions (container node)		
Triggering debate-agenda control	Interviewees refer to "installing topics" or "triggering debates" as end of media exposure.	56	223
Setting oneself apart	Calling attention to oneself or one's position	12	18
Velocity (accelerating discussion)	Media exposure or the generation of media opportunities is seen as an activator of political discussion.	15	22
Sending messages-intra-political comm	Media content serves a function for trespassing messages within a political party or within a political "class". Politicians give signals and messages to other politicians or groups of interest, sometimes hostile signals.	24	41
Elite container (validation)	Media exposure is perceived as designating active participation within a political elite	26	64
Influence-power	Media exposure is links to influence upon peers, public opinion, etc. Mentions to media visibility as a power resource or currency that can work as a tool.	37	79
Reactive decision-making	Decisions on public management, legislative agendas, etc, are taken as a result of media exposure of the issue.	25	44
Informing-communicating with the public	Media exposure is associated with informing the public about activities, projects or initiatives that might be relevant to them.	34	92
Listening	Media exposure is associated to the exercise of listening to the citizenry	5	7
Reinforcing representation duties	It is important to be seen fulfilling representation tasks, fighting for issues of concern to your electorate	12	19

Electoral aim	Media exposure is planned and tailored in relation to win elections. Media exposure is used as a tool for managing visibility and earning votes	32	68
Existence-visibility (existir, aparecer en los medios)	This node groups direct mentions to "existence" as goal of media exposure (e.g. be seen, get out, be, image).	55	181
Attitudes	Container node		
Expecting promotional coverage	References to politicians' expectation of promotional media coverage	13	27
Double standard	Politicians says A and does B (created originally in references to the off the record practice, politicians cannot say in public what they say privately)	8	14
Being at ease with the media	Politicians feel comfortable with the media. He or she claims to understand how the system works.	18	34
Anticipating envy-strain	A greater media exposure is seen as a potential source of strain among peers. Politicians or their assessor foresee that gaining visibility (over party comrades, for instance) might be a source of internal conflict	7	11
Adaptability	It refers to the ability of the politician to adapt to the requirements of the media, for instance, depending on his/her current position	20	35
Unfamiliarity-discomfort	The politicians shows unfamiliarity with the media or discomfort in their contacts with journalists, or express a limited understanding of how to manage the relationship with the media (even from more experienced communicators)	23	58
Acknowledging difficulties	To gain media coverage, to access the media.	27	71
Struggling to cope	Media demands are too high in terms of time and resources needed. Politician expresses lack of ability to deal with everything	9	16
Selectivity	References to the action of selecting media appearances. Generally, because the actor is in a position of confidence and has the ability to choose.	20	33
Being left out	References to being "left out" for not fitting into media criteria	14	27
Place of media in politicians' routine	Answers to the question what space the media occupied in your work routine?	32	77
Absence of news management	References to actors that do not engage in news management techniques (whether because they can't, they don't know how to do it or they decide not to)	7	10

Political communication professionalization	References connected to the standardization of polcomm practices, specially planning of media actions, generation of information subsidies (press conferences, press releases) and the availability of specially trained staff (generally journalists) devoted to content generation, press relations and communication management.	46	167
Targeting audiences	Selecting news organizations depending on the public one need to reach.	13	23
Detecting opportunity	Seeking and using opportunities of "jumping into topics" (that are in the agenda) in order to participate in the public debate.	32	118
Diverting attention	Activities or media interventions oriented to divert attention from other story	9	13
Language-format command	The politician knows how to speak or construct messages that have a higher possibility to get across the media.	19	38
Politician monitoring information	The politician uses his/her relationship with the journalist to know what is going on.	17	40
Competing for media attention	References to the competitive nature of mediated politics (little space, too many actors)	19	35
Changing routines	This node accounts for changes in the pattern of media-oriented activities.	18	46
Specialising-creating media niche	Politicians work in creating thematic niches in which they become experts (often connected to their membership to related committees or professional expertise). They seek to position themselves in those subjects.	29	58
Constructing a story	Working on building a story or media subject, steps given towards that.	16	34
Strategic disclosure of information	Information is disclosed to a journalist (generally within an off the record conversation) in order to reach a goal. That information it is not always reliable	19	51
Political Operations	References to political operations articulated through the media. In colloquial jargon, an "operacion" implies a coordinated effort to use media coverage to reach some political goal, often damaging a political adversary.	27	65
Off the record	Mentions to the practice of obtaining off the record information. How this term is understood, dynamics around the trading and use of this information, etc.	48	173

Context information	References to the "use" of politicians as technical sources or sources that provide "context" to stories, regardless of the use the journalist will give to that material. Often this information is provided off the record.	11	15
Buying space in the media	References to payment for media exposure. Sometimes it is formulated as a regulated practice in regional and local media (to buy micro programmes), sometimes as bad practice, often not associated to oneself.	8	23
Patronising behaviour (politician to journalist)	References and examples of harassment or patronising behaviour from politicians to journalists.	7	21
Complaining (about a story)	Journalists received comments and complaints about the selection of a story (angles or sources included)	12	18
Constrains-Limits of media exposure			
Damaging media exposure	References to risks or costs associated to uncontrolled media exposure.	16	25
Acknowledging limited impact of media	This node groups referenced to the limited impact that media might have upon policy making processes, which are seen as political bargaining processes that happen out of the media eye.	24	64
Non-mediated networks	Political work that is done building relationships with people, organizations, interest groups, etc	17	38
Territorial work	Mentions to grassroots politicians work, sometimes defined as opposed, or at least differentiated from media strategies.	26	46
Volatility of media currency	References to the episodic nature of media visibility (you are up and later you are down) or the erratic nature of media visibility (not all exposure is good, very often is a double edged resource, can be damaging)	14	21
Actors' position-differentiated access	RP reflects on how his/her relationship with media organizations has changed or is dependent upon the position they occupy (for instance, having a position in the leadership of the party, being in the Executive power, etc). Also, some actors are careful about making generalizations in terms of politicians access to the media, stressing that ideological issues might play a role	22	35

Presidentialism	Some actors complain about their limited ability to generate agenda, since all legislative initiatives belong to the Executive branch. Also other comments connected to limitations for political actors associated to the nature of a presidential political system.	7	10
News Agenda Generation (Drivers)	Where stories come from	8	16
Information Monitoring Strategies	References to strategies of reporting, news gathering and information monitoring	14	47
Media Consumption	It refers to routines of media consumption	11	17
Organizational constrains affecting content	Container node		
Editorial line	Expressions that denotes awareness of the editorial constrains or limits within which the journalist works and affects the selection of sources or topics of interest	32	83
Explicit biased coverage	The news organization takes a position in the coverage of a topic and the editorial staff receive more or less clear instructions on how a specific topic will be covered	17	27
Journalist subordination	The journalist understands that there are decisions in which he or she plays no role. Main directions and selection of news are beyond their responsibility	21	63
(Political) Editorial committee	An editorial committee, integrated by politicians, oversees some of the newspaper decisions	5	11
Relationship with directors-owners	The politician maintains a relationship with senior executives within media organizations (press director, owner of the media, etc). Journalists are aware of those relationship and understand that they are subordinated to the decisions made at that level	21	50
Competence-InterMediaAgenda	Statements that reflect relations of competence in reporting or newsgathering strategies, among media outlets or colleagues. Often El Mercurio and La Tercera are quoted as benchmarks.	20	42
Media-driven content (pauta propia)	News that is perceived by the journalist as generated by himself or herself	26	69
Politics-driven media content	It is the politician who decides -albeit in informal conversations- the information that is going to be news	28	61

News Values- What becomes news	Statements or references to the elements that define the news value of a story, situation, etc. in order to justify reporting and especially publication. References about what makes it into the news, what is relevant for the media.	50	162
Conflict-driven media content	News are perceived as driven by conflict	45	109
Celebrity-led coverage	References to the news value of celebrity politicians, personalization	11	17
Contingency	It refers to what is perceived of "the news of the day that cannot be avoided". Short term news management as opposed to long term aims. Often politicians and press officers especially complain about the difficulty of positioning topics beyond the day-to-day declarations and responses dynamics that consume much of the news cycle.	32	82
Journalists-Politicians Relationships	Container node		
Roles definition	Mentions to the definitions of professional roles (both political and journalistic roles)	8	17
Normative media role	This node groups references to the role that the media should play in a democratic society; the ideal journalists work or should work towards.	24	47
Defining politics	Definitions of what interviewees understand as "political" (both from the perspective of journalists that defines the beat they work for, or politicians defining the boundaries of their activity)	19	37
Quality of political journalism	References and judgments on the quality of journalism/ political journalism	36	92
Lack of understanding	Mentions to lack of clarity or lack of understanding in one's professional role, whether as journalist or as politician, which eventually leads to expectations' mismatching.	8	14
Rules of the game	References to norms that "everyone" working in the media/politics should understand. What are the rules that govern the relationship	20	38
Little world-isolation	References to politics as a clearly demarcated space (little world, in this world, etc) with shared rules (albeit implicit). Occasionally, references to the "small world" are extended to the idea of a "small country", which generally means a small elite, relevance of family and school networks. etc.	30	66

Boundaries with sources (personal vs. work relations)	Statements related to boundaries maintenance in the relationship between politicians and media professionals. References to "amiguismo" and how to deal with the limits of personal and professional relationships.	17	37
Understanding utilitarian-base of the relationship	Reference to the relationship between political actors and the media as mutually utilitarian	16	22
Keeping distance	Events, happenings that make politicians and journalists to take distance from each other. Also efforts to do so.	23	48
Risking corruption	Reference to risk of corruption in the relationship, as long as boundary maintenance is not entirely clear	7	11
Being friends-close relationship	References to relationships of friendship or personal proximity between journalists and politicians	26	48
Domestication of sources	Key actors are "domesticated" by a news organization that actively promotes a relationship with a prominent politician. The relationship works in the opposite direction as well, as long as politicians court the media and journalists, promoting an informal relationship.	7	11
Practices	Container node		
Trading of Information-News	References to the active exchange of potentially newsworthy information between political elites and the media; exchange as an active process of negotiation	38	122
Symbiosis-synchrony	Media and political interests converge. A political goal is served -often with media awareness- as long as the information has inherent news value	11	20
Collaboration	It refers to descriptions of relationships journalists/source based on mutual collaboration.	18	24
Rough negotiation	Administrating media visibility under strain	11	18
Building and testing Trust-Loyalty	References to practices oriented to build or test trust in the politician/media relationship	30	70
Frequent contact (habitual relations)	It includes sentences and comments that denotes a day to day relationship with politicians or relevant aids; regularity in contacts and mutual knowledge.	46	147
Interpretive community	Journalists/media as interpretive community, filtering political information	10	25
Media professionals practices and attitudes	Container node		

Work conditions (journalists)	References to generally precarious conditions of journalists' work: low wages, extensive workload, others	13	18
Poor training (journalists)	Mentions to precarious preparation of journalists.	10	16
Time-constrains	References to time-constrains that limit the fulfilment of one's ideal role	6	7
Experience- circulation	Background of the journalist. Previous work in different media outlets	12	21
Beat	The journalist covers a specific beat, frequently relating to the same sources of information	9	15
Practices			
Pack journalism (coleguismo)	References to practices oriented to lend support to a colleague. Sometimes this is seen as a problem for the implications to the quality of reporting	4	7
Self-censorship	References to journalists self-censoring themselves in terms of anticipating editorial lines, commercial and political interests of the organizations they work for.	2	5
Assessing quality of information-checking	Journalists have to discern whether what they are told by political sources is reliable information	11	28
Investigative Journalism	References to the relevance or lack of investigative journalism	11	18
Key Sources	References to political sources that provide information on a regular basis to a journalist	9	19
Protecting the source	Journalists comment on the relevance of taking care of good sources, the special treatment they receive and the limits of that special treatment	5	14
Checking on power	Accountability role of the press	15	32
Attitudes			
Agency-Autonomy (journalists)	It refers to autonomous decision-making in the process of newsgathering. It denotes journalists' agency in reporting processes. Creating space for "professional" agency.	17	40
Little anticipation capacity	Journalists lack of ability of anticipating social conflict or potential themes outside the comfort zone demarcated by regular journalist/source relationship	8	13
Adversarial-Confrontational coverage	Mentions to media content as challenging to politics and politicians (confrontational)	12	24
Passivity-dependency to authority	References to high reliance on official sources	20	45
Apparent Objectivity	News organizations (and people) are politically committed, yet they believe they are objective	3	4

Cultural and Political Context			
Demands on politics			
Transparency	Direct references to the new *Ley de Transparencia*, whether as a tool for journalists or for civil society empowerment and political accountability	11	21
Scrutiny (civil scrutiny)	References to bigger scrutiny, both towards politicians and media (often connected to new technologies)	12	28
Public-politicians disconnection	Statements that address the distance between politics and "the people"	15	32
Distrust	References to citizens distrust towards politics or politicians	5	6
Political System			
Voluntary vote	References to recent changes in voting regulations..	4	6
Transition	References to the transitional process and how the relationship between media and politics has changed during the transition	11	18
Centralisation	Santiago is Chile; centralisation	5	10
National reach	References to the status of a story, source, etc, depending on whether it is perceived as "national" (as opposed to local, regional)	24	57
Regional reach	References to the regional reach of a story (localized as opposed to national)	22	53
Media System	Container node		
Market-oriented system	Mentions to the commercial nature of the Chilean media system	15	29
State role in media system	References to the role the state has or should have within the media industry.	3	5
Pluralism(diversity)	Statements that refer to the plurality or lack of plurality of the Chilean media system	35	85
Absence of citizen voices	References to the lack o citizen voices in the media or alternative channels of expression	4	6
Independence(interests)	The source reflects on the ability of the media to be independent (from political pressures) in their editorial judgements.	40	110
Ownership-Concentration	Comments connected to the concentration of ownership within the Chilean media system	15	31
Examples-cases	Mentions to examples or cases. For consideration for further development.	21	69
Good quotes	Selected quotes that illustrate points graphically, or are fairly representative of a type of comment among a group of people	39	93
Actors (Institutions, People)	Container node		
Political actors	Container node		

Social movement	References to active civic society (often these are mentions to 2011 student-led protests and movements of different nature: environmental, LGTB groups, regionalism, civil liberties, etc),	25	88
Press officers-mediators	Statements that define the role of the press officer or mediator between the politician and the journalist	46	132
Political parties	Describes dynamics of news reporting in political parties (as differentiated from Congress or Government)	6	22
New Political Actors	Mentions to new political sources that has broaden up the political spectrum	8	22
Moneda-Cabinet	Describes dynamics of news reporting in *La Moneda* or among Cabinet (as differentiated from Congress or political parties)	16	48
Congress	Refers to reporting dynamics within Congress particularly	9	18
Media actors	Container node		
Television	Role of TV or direct mentions to TV	44	109
Social media-Twitter	It describes uses of social media - particularly Twitter- within the cycle of news generation.	38	130
New media actors	References to the way in which media actors have broadened (thanks to new digital media outlets such as *El Mostrador, El Ciudadano*, etc, citizen media and others)	34	69
Local media	References to local and regional media as differentiated from news organizations of national reach	23	76
El Mercurio-La Tercera as political actors	Direct references to the role *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* play within the political process	36	120
Print Press	References to print press at a general level. Actions undertaken to gain coverage in print press, comments about what is/ is not possible to do within this medium	27	49
Radio	References to the radio as a medium. Strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of PolComm goals	20	28