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# Mapping Source Diversity Across Chilean News Platforms and Mediums

Claudia Mellado<sup>a</sup> and Andrés Scherman<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>School of Journalism, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Valparaíso, Chile; <sup>b</sup>School of Journalism, Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile

## ABSTRACT

Previous research has analyzed the extent to which the structural characteristics of news organizations and the outlets where journalists operate explain differences in media diversity. Based on a content analysis of 16,281 news stories from Chilean television, radio, print, online media and Twitter, this study examines whether differences in source diversity remain stable across news media platforms within the same medium. The findings show that both platform type and medium significantly influence the presence of source diversity at different levels. Our results speak to the strong influence that each media platform has on how journalists manage news balance and number of sources when producing a story. They also provide strong evidence of the importance of the macro organizational structure of the medium for the type of sources included in the news. Likewise, our study questions common assumptions as it reveals that online media do not favor the presence of a greater diversity of sources and points of view in the news and are associated with a lower degree of diversity in general.

## KEYWORDS

Media diversity; journalism; sourcing; news; media outlet; medium; Chile

## Introduction

In the new digital media ecosystem, balance and diversity in news coverage are among the defining elements of journalism's ability to perform its public mission and ensure that a variety of perspectives are included in social discussions (Benson 2013; Tiffen et al. 2014). Indeed, media diversity is closely linked to democracy and journalistic freedom, and it forms the basis of the idea of journalistic work as a shared value (Schudson 1995; Gans 1980).

Both legacy and new media perform a crucial function by providing accurate information, offering audiences a diverse and plural position on current events of public interest (van Cuilenburg 2007; Humprecht and Esser 2018) and including a range of sources and stakeholders in their coverage.

Media diversity can thus be conceptualized as the presence of different types of social actors, voices and points of view in journalistic discourse (Unesco 2006; Karppinen and Korhonen 2013). On the one hand, it is related to the existence of different political positions and editorial lines across the mediums that operate in a specific media system

(Valcke, Sükösd, and Picard 2015). It can also be interpreted as diversity across media platforms regardless of the specific medium to which they belong (Gálik and Vogl 2015).

One of the key questions in journalism and media studies today is whether the media can be diverse and provide pluralistic information while forming part of a fluid news ecosystem in which online and social media claim an important position, and in which journalists jump from one platform to another, repackaging content as stories for other outlets that form part of the same medium (Deuze 2003; Koci and Rue 2016).

The literature has largely analyzed the diversity of official versus non-official sources, the dominance of political versus citizen sources, the existence of balance, and the potential increase in non-elite voices represented in the news (e.g., Powers and Benson 2014; Mellado and Humanes 2015; Humprecht and Esser 2018). So far, the results have been inconclusive. While some studies suggest that there has been a significant increase in the inclusion of multiple voices in the news (Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans 2017), others have found that the changes in media, journalists and audiences are not reflected in a more pluralistic landscape, keeping official and political sources at the forefront of the news. Traditional sourcing routines seem to be less expensive in that they do not require the same level of verification and filtering as citizen and non-official sources (Witschge 2013; Deprez and Van Leuven 2018; Van Leuven et al. 2018). Furthermore, an increasing number of institutional sources have professionalized their interaction with the press, positioning themselves as important social media sources (Engesser et al. 2017).

Considering both the multiplatform ecosystem and convergence in which most media operate today worldwide, researchers have examined the extent to which the structural, political and cultural characteristics of media organizations can explain differences in media diversity. They have also considered whether the media platforms in which journalists work become micro cultures that influence how news stories are covered (e.g., Carlson 2010; Valcke, Sükösd, and Picard 2015; Lecheler and Kruike-meier 2016; Van Leuven et al. 2018).

New institutionalists have suggested that media platforms share a set of features related to the larger structure in which they are embedded (Boczkowski and Ferris 2005; Benson et al. 2012). Scholars who advance this position argue that the macrostructure of the media is crucial for organizing and performing journalistic work. For its part, a more particularistic perspective advances the notion that each platform's affordances determine what is news, or at least how the news is packaged (Deuze 2003; Cushion and Thomas 2013). Scholars who support this approach view media as distinctive regimes of production.

Research findings tend to fall somewhere between these two competing perspectives (e.g., Reich 2011, 2016; Mellado et al. 2018). Previous studies show that media convergence and audience fragmentation have enhanced the flow of communication, providing an opportunity to foster diversity with a more comprehensive view of the perspectives that exist in society. Studies have also suggested that media convergence and strong competition for revenue and profits have caused the levels of news media diversity to drop, with journalists trying to survive in a 24/7 news cycle in which they have to produce more content more quickly and for less pay.

In spite of their important contributions, most of these analyses are based on case studies of media diversification and pluralism or compare different outlets of the same kind (Mellado and Humanes 2015). Furthermore, most are limited to independent

media outlets (e.g., Curran et al. 2013; Mellado et al. 2018), which means that they cannot determine whether differences in their measurements are due to the outlets' characteristics or the structural conditions of the media company to which they belong.

In an effort to overcome these limitations, this study explores whether differences in media diversity can be attributed to the institutional structure of the medium (a news media company that has more than one outlet or platform for providing information to different audiences) or to the media outlet (a platform that operates inside of a medium) in which the news are produced. Mellado et al. (2018) invited researchers to examine whether differences in media performance remain stable when comparing types of platforms within a single medium. Our study responds to that call, analyzing nine Chilean media companies as well as 26 outlets that form part of these news organizations, including television, radio, print, online and social media.

We focus on three main aspects of media diversity, investigating the extent to which diversity of sources, diversity of points of view, number of sources in the news, and the dominant source differ in their prevalence in media coverage. Specifically, we determine the extent to which the affordances of media platforms contribute to understanding media diversity, whether pluralism transcends the affordances of news platforms and is better explained by the macro organizational structure in which operates, or if both aspects are necessary to map differences in media diversity.

## Affordances, News Platforms and Institutional Logics

Journalistic and media performance come to life through a series of dynamic interactions between journalists, news organizations and political, economic and societal contexts (e.g., Hallin and Mancini 2004; Mellado, Hellmueller, and Donsbach 2017).

At the societal level, countries that give media diversity public policy status tend to promote initiatives related to ownership regulation and anti-monopoly laws, widening the media spectrum in an effort to represent different viewpoints in media coverage of public events (e.g., Hallin and Mancini 2004; Downey, Mihelj, and König 2012; Valcke, Sükösd, and Picard 2015). Research has generally demonstrated a high level of agreement regarding the significant impact of media systems on media and source diversity in the news (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Benson 2013; Tiffen et al. 2014).

In transitional democracies and hybrid regimes (Vltmer 2013), including many of the governments in Latin America, media diversity that provides spaces for open discussion of controversial topics (Downey, Mihelj, and König 2012) has always been questioned (Waisbord 2013; Márquez and Guerrero 2014). Scholars in this region agree that media ownership structure is highly concentrated and prevents broader debate that represents the plurality of social actors that exist in society (Rodríguez and Zechmeister 2018).

According to different public opinion polls, the majority of Chilean citizens think that the media fail to reflect the various opinions that exist in society in the same way (Rodríguez and Zechmeister 2018; CEP 2019). However, no data exist regarding differences in media diversity across news organizations and media platforms.

Scholars who subscribe to the institutionalist approach argue that economic and technological changes have forced all types of media to face similar challenges, prompting technological convergence and homogenizing coverage across platforms (e.g., Boczkowski and Ferris 2005; Benson et al. 2012). They claim that differences in media diversity

exist regardless of the platform. For example, if two media have four outlets each (television, radio, website and Twitter), the differences among those outlets would be explained by the differences in the structures in which they operate rather than the affordances and characteristics of each type of outlet.

Scholars who support the particularistic perspective argue that the media platform plays a greater role in the dynamics and practices of the product, and that reporting styles might vary between media outlets that belong to the same medium regardless of the macro structures in which they are embedded (Deuze 2003; Singer 2008). This distinction is directly related to what has been called the “affordances” of media platforms (Hutchby 2001); that is, the physical, structural and context-meaning options provided by media technologies, which may shape the conditions and potential of their uses.

In this context, several normative and empirical assumptions have been posed about the proxy quality of different media platforms. For example, it is thought that newspapers exhibit superior diversity, depth, balance and higher performance of democratic roles, while television is thought to contribute little to democratic citizenship (Brants 1998). Scholars also agree that there are differences among media outlets in terms of their dependence on sources. For example, Reich (2011) found that reporting patterns in Israel were less source-dependent online and on the radio compared to print and television media, and that the latter present more complex and rich reporting patterns. In regard to the number of sources cited in the news, studies have found that television includes proportionally more sources than the other platforms (e.g., Montgomery 2007; Tiffen et al. 2014; Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans 2017).

Meanwhile, studies have determined that each platform offers a unique set of affordances that shape the nature of the content delivered to the public. For example, while television relies mainly on moving images, radio uses audio content, print news is based on text and static images, and online and social media platforms blend all of these elements (e.g., Tremayne, Weiss, and Alves 2007; Reich 2011; Chadwick 2013; Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Neiger 2015; McMullan 2017).

Despite these differences, research has also shown that while print and online content differ in production logic and the formats used to deliver the news and interact with the audience, they tend to be more similar. Marchetti (2005) notes that although we live in a media ecology in which market constraints and technological changes have transformed how we communicate, the structural organization of the media continues to exert significant influence over professional performance.

In their study of the differences between print and digital media, Mellado et al. (2018) found that the variations related to journalistic role performance in the news were not particularly strong. This suggests that they are linked to both affordances and the nature of news production, in which news-gathering routines and organizational factors play an important role (Mellado 2020). Reich (2016) found commonalities between immediate (online, radio) and daily (print, television) media. For their part, Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton (2012, 13) argue that while journalists tend to normalize media platforms to fit their traditional norms and practices from offline media, they adjust their media work to the emergent norms and practices of social platforms such as Twitter. Bentivegna and Marchetti (2018) also identified a “hybrid normalization” in which journalists share

the media culture of social platforms while legitimizing the professional approach of journalism on Twitter.

In addition to offering different affordances, social media platforms such as Twitter follow different logics than traditional news outlets (van Dijck and Poell 2013). Nevertheless, we decided to integrate Twitter into the corpus of our analysis for two reasons. First, it has emerged as an important tool for the exercise of contemporary journalism and is frequently used by news organizations and journalists (Hermida 2010). Second, studies have shown that social media are an important source of public information (Barthel 2019; PEW 2017).

## The Case of Chile

In general, the Chilean media system is characterized by the dominance of private stakeholders, commercially oriented content and a growing level of professionalization. However, each media platform has complex characteristics and a limited amount of variety.

The greatest concentration of ownership is observed in the print press. Two private conglomerates – El Mercurio SAP and La Tercera – control nearly 90% of the newspapers that circulate in Chile. Both are situated on the right end of the political spectrum and target elites as well as less-educated readers and larger groups of the society.

Radio ownership is more diverse. The four main radio stations are ADN, Cooperativa, Bío Bío and Agricultura. Each is independent and has its own press department. All of these outlets offer national coverage and represent different political positions. However, there is much greater concentration in entertainment programming. For example, the group Iberoamerican Radio Chile (which is owned by PRISA, the company that controls the Spanish newspaper *El País*) controls 11 stations with national reach.

In regard to television, only Televisión Nacional de Chile (TVN) is run by the government, and it is subject to conditions that are rarely seen in public media. Although it is state-run, TVN is required to finance its operations through publicity revenue, which forces it to act in a manner that is quite similar to private media. The other free-to-air television channels are privately owned. Two are controlled by major local business groups that have a presence in various industries (Canal 13 and Mega), while the other, Chilevisión, is controlled by the Turner Group, which is based on foreign capital. Despite a gradual decrease in audience size over the past few years, free-to-air television is still the most frequently used medium in Chile. According to the XI National Television Survey (CNTV 2019), 85% of the population uses open television to learn about what is happening in Chile and around the world.

In structural terms, online media present the greatest level of ownership diversity in Chile. The newspapers *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* and the radio stations Bío Bío and Cooperativa have news portals with large audiences. The growth of the Internet also has allowed for the emergence of more independent media that have adopted critical positions regarding political and economic power such as *El Mostrador*, *Ciper Chile*, *El Dínamo* and *El Desconcierto*.

Finally, social media have become a major source of information and spaces that allow for the exchange of ideas. While only 10.8% of Chileans have a Twitter account (Yi 2019), this platform has become an important space for discussion among opinion leaders such

as business owners, academics and journalists, and the debates that take place on this platform often have repercussions in the traditional media.

## Research Questions

The relationship between media organizations, the platforms that coexist across and within news companies, and the diversity of sources and points of view in news stories is not yet clear despite the fact that these topics have been the subject of numerous international studies. Given that there is no systematic evidence that would allow us to pose formal hypotheses, we have turned our objectives into the following research questions:

**RQ1:** Are there significant differences in the diversity of sources and points of view, the number of sources, and the types of sources used in the news among the media platforms that operate within a specific news media organization?

**RQ2:** Which factor – the medium or the outlet- best explains news media diversity?

Given that a greater number of sources could be associated with a greater likelihood of having different types of sources in a story, we are also interested in controlling for the number of sources that each piece includes to address the following research question:

**RQ3:** Does the interaction between the number of sources and the news platform used (media outlet) impact the types of sources present in Chilean national news?

## Method

### Sampling

We conducted content analysis of television, radio, print, and online news stories published in 26 news outlets run by nine of the most important national media companies in Chile. We used various procedures to select our sample while ensuring that they would be comparable based on shared technical aspects. These shared aspects are connected to the temporal framework (2016), the days under analysis, and the unit of analysis (the news story).

First, we selected nine news media organizations (mediums) that represent the national media system. The criteria for selecting each medium were audience size, scope, audience orientation and level of influence on agenda setting (see [Table 1](#)). All of the news outlets that form part of each news organization were included in our study.

The sample units within each news outlet were the issues/editions/timelines and the most viewed and listened to news broadcast and radio news program.

For television and radio, the sampling units were the *primetime* newscasts and *news programs* offered by each outlet. For print media, the sampling units were the full issues of the papers published on the sampled days. We used the homepage of the websites on the sampled days as the sampling units for online media. For Twitter, the sampling units were the entire timeline published by the sampled outlets during the sampled days. For the purposes of this study, a news story is defined as a set of continuous verbal and (audio)visual elements that refer to a single topic.

In the case of television and radio, all news stories broadcast in the respective news program were coded. All news stories published in the print issue sampled were coded.

**Table 1.** Sample.

MEDIUM	MEDIA OUTLETS	SAMPLE UNIT	N
La Tercera	Newspaper	La Tercera	678
	Online media	<a href="http://www.latercera.com">www.latercera.com</a>	405
	Twitter	@latercera	1,680
El Mercurio	Newspaper	EL Mercurio	1,251
	Online media	<a href="http://www.emol.com">www.emol.com</a>	644
	Twitter	@emol.com	1,494
El Mostrador	Online	<a href="http://www.elmostrador.cl">www.elmostrador.cl</a>	206
	Twitter	@elmostrador	474
El Dínamo	Online	<a href="http://www.eldinamo.cl">www.eldinamo.cl</a>	208
	Twitter	@eL_dinamo	625
TVN	TV	24 Horas Central	193
	Online	<a href="http://www.24horas.cl">www.24horas.cl</a>	393
	Twitter	@24horasTVN	912
Chilevisión	TV	Chilevisión noticias	164
	Online	<a href="http://www.chvnoticias.cl">www.chvnoticias.cl</a>	203
	Twitter	@CHVNoticias	440
Canal 13	TV	Tele13 Noche	173
	Radio	Canal 13 Radio	425
	Online	<a href="http://www.t13.cl">www.t13.cl</a>	218
	Twitter	@T13	943
Cooperativa	Radio	La mañana de Cooperativa	546
	Online	<a href="http://www.cooperativa.cl">www.cooperativa.cl</a>	375
	Twitter	@cooperativa	1,664
Bío Bío	Radio	Radiograma	328
	Online	<a href="http://www.biobio.cl">www.biobio.cl</a>	474
	Twitter	@biobio	1,195
Total			16,281

For online media, all news stories included on the homepage of the respective websites were coded by clicking on each of them to analyze the entire corpus of the news. Since online news tends to be dynamic, we captured the homepages once in the morning and one at the end of the day. In the case of Twitter, all news stories posted in the sampled timelines of the news media were coded.

Each news piece posted by the media outlets analyzed in this study was considered a separate case. In the specific case of Twitter, a threaded news post was considered one case.

The timeframe for the content analysis was 2016. We used the constructed week method to select a stratified-systematic sample for each media outlet. We randomly selected one Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for each half of the year. This means that two constructed news weeks were sampled per media outlet within each medium. Given that daily and monthly variations are important factors for conducting news content analysis, we divided each year into two sets of 6 months (January 2-June 30 and July 1-December 31), randomly selecting a starting date for each period. We then used a 3–4 week interval to select the next day, which is the following day of the week three weeks later. After that, we selected the third day, which is the following day of the week four weeks later, and so forth. When we arrived at the end of the half-year, we started again. This allowed us to include seven-week days with regular intervals – three and four – between the weeks, avoiding periodicity.

We content analyzed all stories on politics, economics and business, police and crime, court, defense and national security, health, education, public work, housing, transportation, energy and the environment, accidents and disasters, religion, human rights,

protests, science and technology, sports, culture, lifestyle and entertainment for each of the selected issues/homepages/timelines/programs from TV, radio, print, online, and Twitter media accounts. Our final sample consisted of 16,281 news stories.

## **Measurements**

We used four variables to measure different aspects of media diversity:

- (a) Number of sources, defined as the total number of sources (people, institutions or documents) quoted in the news story including both direct and indirect quotes (paraphrases). If a source was quoted twice, it was counted as one ( $M = 1.7$ ;  $SD = 1.9$ ).
- (b) Diversity of sources, defined as the inclusion of sources representing different reference groups in society (e.g., a politician and an educator discussing education funding) (Yes = 11%, No = 89%).
- (c) Diversity of points of view, defined as the inclusion of different perspectives on an issue (Yes = 89.2%, No = 10.8%).
- (d) Types of sources, defined as the different types of sources in the news story. These were classified in four groups: official political sources (19.2%), official non-political sources (16.1%), media sources (7.1%) and citizen sources (4.5%).<sup>1</sup>

Two competing independent variables were measured: medium, understood as a news media organization that has more than one outlet or platform to disseminate information to different audiences, and media outlet, understood as the specific news platforms that operate inside a medium.

We also controlled for news topic, given that several studies have shown the influence of this variable on reporting styles and journalistic role performance (Mellado et al. 2018). The content analysis originally covered 17 different news topics, but this variable was recoded as ten values for our study (politics = 20.4%; police = 9.3%; court = 3.4%; economy = 6.3%; public affairs = 14.6%; accidents and disasters = 4.3%; sports = 20.7%; science and technology = 3%; culture and entertainment = 12%; and miscellaneous = 5.9%).

Six coders who were trained by the principal investigators of the study carried out the coding of each news story. In order to reduce bias, the body of news was assigned randomly to the coders.

We conducted several pretests to ensure that the coders had a shared understanding of the codebook. Final intercoder reliability tests were calculated based on a post-test using a randomly selected 5% of the final sample. The overall Krippendorff's alpha ( $K\alpha$ ) based on an average of all of the indicators was .79. The variation of intercoder reliability per indicator within each role ranged from .73 to .87.

## **Results**

### ***Sourcing Methods and Media Diversity***

RQ1 focuses on potential differences in media diversity between the media platforms that operate within different news media organization in Chile.

In an effort to analyze the diversity of sources and points of view and determine whether the number and type of sources used in the news differ across news media

organizations and/or by the specific media outlet in which news are produced, we ran Chi Squared and Anova tests.

Taking all of the data together, we found significant differences among the media platforms of each medium for the four variables measured. Given that this result could be due to the strong differences between the affordances and logics of Twitter and legacy media, we ran the same analysis excluding Twitter.

When Twitter is excluded from the analysis (see Table 1), some of the differences between the media outlets disappear. For example, the differences between the news media organizations in regard to source diversity cease to be significant for El Mercurio, Cooperativa and Bío Bío; the differences between the outlets that form part of El Mercurio were non-significant for diversity of points of view, and the differences between the number of sources and points of view disappear for La Tercera, El Mercurio, Cooperativa and Bío Bío.

In contrast, the exclusion of Twitter did not change differences in source diversity, points of view and number of sources in the news in media organizations where the main outlet was a television channel (such as Canal 13, TVN and Chilevisión).

The results also show that the type of source (official political sources, official non-political sources, media sources and citizen sources) present in each news story is significantly related to the media outlet (newspaper, radio, TV, online or Twitter). Chi Squared tests show that the outlets present significant differences regarding the type of sources cited within each medium. When Twitter is excluded from the analysis, these differences disappear for the case of radio stations (Cooperativa and Bío Bío) and, to some degree, print outlets (El Mercurio).

In order to more precisely establish whether diversity of sources, diversity of points of view and number of sources have a stronger relationship with the medium or the media outlet within each news organization (RQ2), three logistic regression analyses were conducted.

Table 2 shows the contribution of each independent variable to the explanation of the variance of each model. According to the data, the media outlet is the main factor that explains the variance of source diversity (Incremental Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .394$ ), diversity of points of view (Incremental Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .396$ ), and number of sources (Incremental

**Table 2.** Differences in the diversity of sources, diversity of points of view and number of sources among outlets that are part of the same medium.

Medium	Source diversity (Chi Squared of Pearson)		Diversity of points of view (Chi Squared of Pearson)		Number of sources (Anova Test, F).	
	All outlets	Outlets without	All outlets	Outlets without	All outlets	Outlets without
		Twitter		Twitter		Twitter
La Tercera	603.504***	12.961***	604.535***	11.452**	539.181***	2.874
El Mercurio	420.247***	0.272	390.223***	1.865	488.918***	0.621
El Mostrador	238.677***		211.582***		311.315***	
El Dinamo	192.719***		173.947***		482.175***	
TVN	421.411***	74.945***	538.319***	117.179***	441.429***	105.343***
Chilevisión	376.974***	110.115***	326.061***	95.906***	504.965***	217.450***
Cooperativa	409.155***	3.795	443.593***	3.913*	377.298***	0.981
Bío Bío	363.468***	3.064	446.935***	10.720**	530.645***	0.003
Canal 13	441.942***	140.085***	442.576***	141.885***	312.716***	121.076***

Note: When Twitter was excluded, the bivariate analysis of El Dinamo and El Mostrador could not be conducted because these media have only two outlets.

Adjusted  $R^2 = .294$ ). When Twitter is excluded, the media outlet continues to be the most important variable for explaining source diversity (Incremental Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .059$ ), diversity of points of view (Incremental Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .064$ ) and number of sources (adjusted Incremental  $R^2 = .068$ ), although its relevance decreases.

These results support and complement the findings of our previous analyses. In all regressions, the presence of news stories on television increases the odds of having more sources, more diverse viewpoints and more diverse type of sources in the news.

Similarly, nearly all of the individual mediums analyzed in this study show a significant relationship with the presence of the dependent variables. In the case of source diversity, for example, the data show that the presence of El Mostrador as a medium increases the likelihood of finding source diversity while the likelihood of finding source diversity decreases for other six media organizations (El Mercurio, TVN, Chilevisión, Cooperativa, Bío Bío and Canal 13). These results follow a similar pattern for diversity of points of view and number of sources.

News topics also turn out to be significant for the model, with almost all topics increasing the odds of finding diversity of sources, diversity of point of views and a higher number of sources. Only two news topics present different results. While sports news has a negative impact on source diversity, cultural news does not show a significant relationship (Table 3).

### **Types of Sources**

Our analysis of the relationships between source type, media organization and media platform yielded important differences again (see Table 4). The outlet has the greatest explanatory power for each type of source analyzed: official sources (political) (Incremental Adjusted  $R^2 = .149$ ), official sources (no political) (Incremental Adjusted  $R^2 = .132$ ), media sources (Incremental Adjusted  $R^2 = .201$ ) and citizen sources (Incremental Adjusted  $R^2 = .153$ ). However, the medium explained more variance than the type of media outlet in the majority of the analyses that did not include Twitter. The only exception is citizen source, where the outlet continues to be the most important predictor, possibly due to the impact of television on the presence of citizen sources (Exp B = 11,703). This result is in line with previous studies that show more source diversity in television (Montgomery 2007; Tiffen et al. 2014; Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans 2017).

Another variable that provides a significant explanation of the presence of different types of sources in the news is number of sources. As one might expect, the likelihood that various types of sources will be present increases when the medium cites more sources. The number of sources thus has the greatest impact on the presence of official political sources, while the weakest connection (though it is still significant) on the presence of media sources.

In order to establish whether the number of sources has the same impact in the relationship between media outlet and types of news sources, we looked for potential moderation effects between each outlet and the number of sources.

In general, a larger number of sources is always associated with a greater likelihood of the presence of each type of source analyzed. However, the magnitude of this relationship varies significantly by media outlet (RQ3). As Table 4 shows, the media outlet with the greatest influence on the presence of source variety is television. However, the interaction

**Table 3.** Explaining sourcing and balance in the news across mediums and platforms.

Variable	Diversity of sources		Diversity of points of view		Number of sources	
	Total sample Exp (B)	Sample without Twitter Exp (B)	Total sample Exp (B)	Sample without Twitter Exp (B)	Total sample No standardized coefficients	Sample without Twitter No standardized coefficients
<i>Block 1 – Medium</i>						
La Tercera (REF)						
El Mercurio	0.765**	.758**	.678***	.677***	-.096**	-.176*
El Mostrador	1.391*	1.399*	1.247	1.259	-.012	-.060
El Dinamo	0.805	.789	.721	.740	-.166**	-.548***
TVN	0.281***	.276***	.349***	.344***	-.311***	-.869***
Chilevisión	0.399***	.397***	.285***	.283***	-.225***	-.521***
Cooperativa	0.597***	.596***	.665**	.670**	-.049	-.444***
Bío Bío	0.738*	.728*	.751*	.755*	-.135***	-.317**
Canal 13	0.207***	.206***	.201***	.198***	-.374***	-.970***
Nagelkerke $R^2$	0.014	.024	0.009	0.019		
Adjusted $R^2$					0.011	0.017
<i>Block 2 – Media outlets</i>						
Radio (REF)						
Newspaper	.927	.925	.957	.960	.490***	.184
Television	9.402***	9.432***	9.987***	10.151***	2.262***	2.396***
Online	1.138	1.138	1.036	1.042	.416***	.298***
Twitter	.002***		.002***		-.977***	
Incremental Nagelkerke $R^2$	0.394	.059	0.396	0.064		
Incremental Adjusted $R^2$					.294	0.068
<i>Block 3 – News topic</i>						
Miscellaneous (REF)						
Politics	1.860***	1.843***	2.920***	3.003***	.404***	.674***
Police	2.529***	2.489***	2.560***	2.614***	.216***	.504***
Court	1.793**	1.789**	2.814***	2.845***	.274***	.409**
Economy	1.566*	1.559*	1.810**	1.860**	.140*	.278*
Publics Affairs	2.690***	2.666***	2.667***	2.736***	.348***	.771***
Accidents and disasters	2.501***	2.503***	2.651***	2.733***	.185**	.593***
Sports	0.696*	.693*	.958	.979	-.103*	-.284*
Science	1.679*	1.679*	1.819*	1.876*	.099	.429*
Entertainment and Culture	1.065	1.062	1.018	1.048	-.031	-.037
Constant	.279***	.283***	.237***	.230***	.905***	1.392***
Incremental Nagelkerke $R^2$	.025	.05	.024	.049		
Total Nagelkerke $R^2$	.433	.133	.429	.132		
Incremental Adjusted $R^2$					.017	.043
Total Adjusted $R^2$					.322	.128
N	16.281	6.854	16.281	6.854	16.281	6.854

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

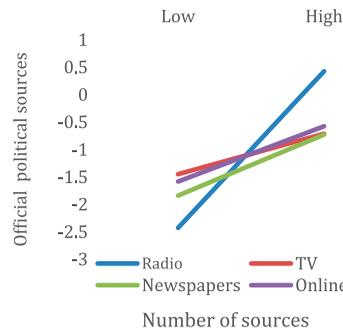
**Table 4.** Explaining type of source used across mediums and news platforms.

Variable	Official sources (Political) <sup>a</sup>		Official sources (nonpolitical)		Media sources		Citizen sources	
	Total sample Exp (B)	Sample without Twitter Exp (B)	Total sample Exp (B)	Sample without Twitter Exp (B)	Total sample Exp (B)	Sample without Twitter Exp (B)	Total sample Exp (B)	Sample without Twitter Exp (B)
<i>Block 1 – Medium</i>								
La Tercera (REF)								
El Mercurio	.951	.876	.844*	.784*	.676***	.806	.735	.778
El Mostrador	1.191	.917	1.414*	1.428	.855	1.079	1.082	1.027
El Dinamo	.924	.736	.806	.886	1.602**	2.253***	1.458	2.048*
TVN	.667**	.633**	.618***	.609**	1.239	1.532*	.958	1.060
Chilevisión	.709*	.612**	.899	.950	.784	.926	1.036	1.192
Cooperativa	.932	1.062	.831	.681*	.677**	.833	.680	.803
Bio Bio	1.354**	1.330*	.877	.947	1.158	1.360*	1.172	1.046
Canal 13	.862	.684**	.493***	.477***	2.461***	2.651***	.591*	.637
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.010	.021	.021	.032	.014	.027	0.34	.070
<i>Block 2 – Media outlets</i>								
Radio (REF)								
Television	2.661***	2.926***	1.863**	1.805**	.637	.624	2.962**	2.693**
Newspaper	1.800**	1.808**	1.244	1.229	.877	.890	1.053	1.012
Online	2.325***	2.349***	1.102	1.078	1.556**	1.464*	1.009	.950
Twitter	.027***		.023***		.031***		.100***	
Incremental Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.149	.012	.132	.019	.201	.018	.153	.088
<i>Block 3 – News topic</i>								
Miscellaneous (REF)								
Politics			.151***	.164***	.461***	.777	.161***	.216***
Police			.311***	.234***	.561**	.846	1.037	1.012
Court			.318***	.326***	.406***	.674	.260***	.262**
Economy			4.233***	3.287***	.342***	.525**	.124***	.142***
Publics Affairs			1.120	1.065	.349***	.542**	.558**	.561*
Accidents and disasters			.555*	.520*	.448***	.729	1.254	1.314
Sport			5.831***	3.883***	.641**	.984	.145***	.180***
Science			4.105***	3.615***	.635	1.021	.086***	.114***
Entertainment and Culture			4.308***	3.133***	.768	1.183	.406***	.556*
Incremental Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			.119	.158	.005	.007	.061	.071

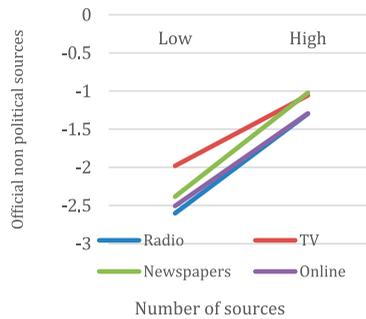
<i>Block 4 – Number of sources</i>								
Number of sources	4.165***	4.046***	1.922***	1.835***	1.382***	1.348***	1.853***	1.832***
Incremental Nagelkerke $R^2$	.167	.211	.139	.155	.042	.061	.100	.131
<i>Block 5 – Interactions</i>								
TV × Number of sources	.347***	.357***	.826**	.839*	.796**	.817**	1.010	1.017
Newspapers × Number of sources	.419***	.431***	1.029	1.025	.993	1.011	.781**	.785**
Online × Number of sources	.397***	.411***	.954	.951	.996	1.024	.826*	.840*
Twitter × Number of sources	66.910***		137.525***		11.269***		15.005***	
Incremental Nagelkerke $R^2$	.149	0.56	.138	0.002	.037	0.004	.050	.006
Constant	.093***	.098***	.080***	.114***	.163***	.095***	.068***	.061***
Total Nagelkerke $R^2$	.475	.267	.549	.366	.289	.117	.398	.366
<i>N</i>	16.281	6.854	16.281	6.854	16.281	6.854	16.281	6.854

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup>The coefficients for news topics were not calculated in this analysis in order to avoid problems of multicollinearity with the dependent variable (especially in politics and court categories).



**Figure 1.** Interaction between type of media outlet and number of sources (political sources).



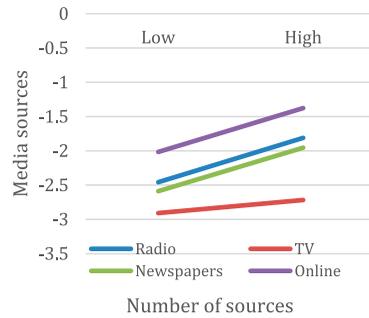
**Figure 2.** Interaction between type of media outlet and number of sources (official non political sources).

between each of the outlets analyzed and the number of sources present in the news seems to operate in a different way for each type of source.

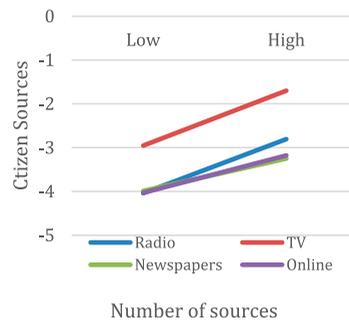
As [Figure 1](#) shows, in the case of official political sources, the most important interaction is between radio and number of sources. In other words, a larger number of sources increases the likelihood that this type of source will be present in a radio news story. The greatest interaction among non-political official sources is found between newspapers and number of sources ([Figure 2](#)). The behavior of the outlets in terms of media sources is similar with the exception of television, where an increase in the number of sources has a very low impact on the increase this type of source ([Figure 3](#)). Finally, the greatest (and most positive) interaction effect for citizen sources was identified again between television and number of sources ([Figure 4](#)).

## Discussion

This study is based on a content analysis of 16,281 news stories from national Chilean TV, radio, print, online media and Twitter media accounts. It examines the relationship between the level of pluralism of the media – measured through the diversity of sources, diversity of points of view, number of sources and types of sources included in the news–, the characteristics of the media outlet (television, radio, newspapers, online media and social media), and the media organization to which each outlet belongs.



**Figure 3.** Interaction between type of media outlet and number of sources (media sources).



**Figure 4.** Interaction between type of media outlet and number of sources (citizen sources).

Our data show that among the various outlets that form part of a single media company (medium), significant differences exist regarding the presence of diverse sources, a diversity of points of view, the number of sources, as well as the type of sources cited in the news. This result is reinforced by the analysis of the factors that impact the presence of media diversity. The data suggest that the main factor that influences the presence of source diversity is the outlet rather than the media news organization (medium) or the topic of the news.

These findings align with the particularistic perspective, which suggests that the affordances of each type of outlet significantly influence what is news and what is presented to their audiences (Deuze 2003; Cushion and Thomas 2013).

Our data also show that the news platform that impacts the presence of media diversity the most is television, as previously reported by Tiffen et al. (2014); Montgomery (2007), and Kleemans, Schaap, and Hermans (2017), among others. Twitter is located on the other end of the spectrum. We found that it has fewer levels of diversity linked to the use of sources than any other type of platform. This is probably due to the formal characteristics of writing on Twitter and its technical affordances, which allow for a specific number of characters, limiting the writers' ability to include several sources in a single tweet.<sup>2</sup> This finding led us to question how balanced the information delivered on Twitter can be and whether it allows the audience to access different points of view simultaneously.

According to our findings, organizational and editorial orientations do not seem to work in the same way in all of the news outlets that are part of the same medium. Based on their affordances, some platforms have a greater diversity of sources and

points of view within each editorial and organizational framework (medium). These possibilities, which are specific to each platform, are frequently used by television, which seems to take advantage of its affordances in representing Chilean society.

The results of our study also show that online media are not clearly linked to a greater diversity of sources or perspectives. This contradicts common assumptions that digitalization creates a more diverse space for the expression of new voices and news diversity. Our study actually finds that traditional media outlets offer a greater diversity of sources and points of view.

The low level of diversity found in online media can be explained by several elements that characterize the way digital media work is done in Chile. In general, the journalistic teams are small, have few resources, live under immense pressure to publish their content as quickly as possible, and make many decisions with the goal of maximizing readership (number of clicks), all of which might prevent the performance of journalistic work that features diverse representations of the social world on a daily basis. This is even more evident in media outlets that form part of non-traditional media and that have scarce resources. In the case of Chile, this group includes media that are exclusively digital (like *El Mostrador* and *El Dinamo*) and have websites with fewer interactive elements and capabilities such as videos, animations and live streaming.

We were also interested in exploring the type of sources present in the various news outlets and media organizations analyzed so that we could understand the space given to official sources versus unofficial or citizen sources (e.g., Powers and Benson 2014; Mellado and Humanes 2015; Humprecht and Esser 2018). The results showed that the medium variable has a greater explanatory capacity than the news outlet in regard to the presence of official sources, media sources and citizen sources. In this regard, our findings lend greater support to the institutionalist approach, showing that the organizational and editorial characteristics of each medium are very important for choosing the type of sources cited and thus for the way that reality is framed in the news.

In other words, our results show that the medium is more important than the outlet in regard to determining which types of sources obtain greater visibility and predominance. This may be linked to economic and political connections as well as the ideological positions of the different media companies.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that online media are only linked to the presence of media sources. As the previous findings discussed in this study suggest, online media do not seem to contribute to greater diversity in the representation of social actors, and would seem to have a predilection for reporting on celebrities and individuals who appear in the traditional media, especially on television.

These findings are reinforced by reviewing the effect of interaction between each type of outlet and the number of sources over the types of sources included in the news. Overall, a larger number of sources increases the likelihood of the presence of more types of sources. Although this is fairly intuitive, the fact that the impact is different for each type of outlet is not. In the case of television, the increase in the number of sources has a greater impact on the presence of citizen sources compared to other outlets. Television also has the lowest impact on the increase in the number of sources on the presence of media sources.

Putting all these results together, our study reveals that the level of media diversity in national Chilean news coverage is related to both the organizational characteristics of the media and the news outlets that they develop to inform the public. While these results

prevent us from categorically supporting either of the competing hypotheses in our study, the data tend to lend more support to the importance of the different affordances of the outlets and the logics that each media platform develops when analyzing news balance and number of sources. Our data also speak to the importance of the macro organizational structure for analyses of the types of sources included in the news.

In a post-truth era, it is fundamental for the media to present diversity of opinions and of viewpoints. Quality public discussions are only possible when there is a high level of media diversity. The main contribution of this study is its comparison of a wide range of outlets (television, radio, newspaper, online media and social media), which allowed the authors to analyze the diversity of sources and perspectives within outlets that operate within a single medium.

However, this research does present limitations. For example, it only analyzes the media system of one country and does not address alternative media, which tend to operate online and through social media. Furthermore, it only analyzes national media and does not include regional outlets.

While our study takes into account the differences between independent news platforms and between media platforms within specific media organizations, future research should also further explore several aspects that need attention. First, it will be important to explain why the performance of online media does not seem to be associated with a greater level of news pluralism and mostly favors the presence of sources linked to the media and entertainment. Finally, while we are aware of the limitation related to not measuring news organizations' Twitter accounts through social data analyses, we believe that including Twitter in our study helps us to understand some general differences that can be further developed in future in-depth studies that focus on the opportunities and challenges that social media platforms present for news media diversity.

## Notes

1. Anonymous sources were not included in the analyses because they represented less than 3% of the total number of sources found in our study.
2. The media and standard deviation of the number of sources in each outlet are as follows: Radio ( $M = 1.2$ ;  $DS = 1.4$ ); TV ( $M = 3.3$ ;  $SD = 2.8$ ); Newspapers ( $M = 1.8$ ;  $SD = 2$ ); Online ( $M = 1.6$ ;  $SD = 1.6$ ); Twitter ( $M = 0.2$ ;  $SD = 0.4$ ).

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