

# A Persistent Gender Bias in Chilean Press: The Influence of Journalist's Gender and Editor's Gender

Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly  
1–27  
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DOI: 10.1177/1077699020958753  
<http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jmq>



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## Abstract

There is a lot of evidence about gender bias in the media, but not clear evidence about its causes. In this article, we study the influence of journalist's gender and editor's gender on gender bias in Chilean press through time. Based on content analysis of 2,645 news articles from Chilean leading newspapers and logistics regression, results confirm the relevance of the gender of both, journalists and editors, on the presence of gender bias in Chilean press, being a permanent behavior through time. Our research supports that the more women in the newsrooms, the greater women's representation by the news media.

## Keywords

gatekeeping, newspaper and online news, newspaper, Chile, logistic regression, content analysis, gender

Paradoxical is the adjective used by some authors to describe the current daily life faced by Chilean women (Fort et al., 2007; Kristjanpoller & Olson, 2015). Nowadays, Chilean female leaders may appear empowered, primarily due to the re-election of Michelle Bachelet as Head of State, but gender inequality still prevails in many ambits (Balch, 2009; Fort et al., 2007; Kristjanpoller & Olson, 2015; Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo [PNUD], 2017). Many domestic and foreign academics, think-tanks, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have confirmed that political,

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economic, and social opportunities are minimal for Chilean women today (Fort et al., 2007; Kristjanpoller & Olson, 2015; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; PNUD, 2017; SVS, 2015; Tokman, 2011; World Economic Forum [WEF], 2015). Regarding this, the OECD (2015a) has explicitly asserted that “despite strong economic growth, Chile remains a highly unequal society in terms of income, wealth and education” (p. 2).

In this context, what is the media responsibility? According to Lazarsfeld and Merton (1974), a person’s social status arises when the mass media give them favorable attention. They declared that:

The mass media bestow prestige and enhance the authority of individuals and groups by legitimizing their status. Recognition by the press or radio or magazines or newsreels testifies that one has arrived, that one is important enough to have been singled out from the large anonymous masses, that one’s behaviour and opinions are significant enough to require public notice. (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1974, pp. 238–239)

However, some authors have stated that the media are framed by gender, being men the norm as leaders or influencers (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross, 1996). There would be a subtle and unconscious male stereotype, with more men than women working as news reporters and reinforcing that male stereotype (Campbell, 2014). The loop would be: the more women in the newsroom, the lesser the bias, modifying the cycle communication-representation in a positive way (Rodríguez-Zoya & Rodríguez-Zoya, 2015).

An important question arises: Is there a positive relationship between the number of female journalists and female sources? According to Zoch and Turk (1998), female journalists tend to quote more women than do male journalists. Also, the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) found that the selection of newsmakers and sources is statistically related to the gender of the journalist and states that the more women in the newsroom, the greater women’s representation by the news media (Gallagher, 2015). Other scholars disagree, pointing out the existence of organizational culture in the newsrooms, which would help to guarantee objective coverage (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991; Van Zoonen, 1988; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). However, in practice that newsrooms’ culture would replicate or accentuate the unfair gender imbalance suffered by women versus men in the overall society: “Simply adding more female journalists to the newsroom may not reduce gender bias in the news. Female and male journalists share a common perspective on gender, which is deeply rooted within a culture,” wrote Vu et al. (2018, p. 18), as they found highly disproportionate media coverage by the Vietnamese media favoring male against female sources, concluding that

despite geographical and historical differences, women in industrialized and developing nations share the common bond of underrepresentation in news media. Journalists are products of their cultures and have internalized the gender scripts that position women as incidental and men as authoritative. (p. 18)

Due to the undoubtful role of journalists as gatekeepers of information to the public (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross, 1996), we considered the gatekeeper theory (Lewin,

1947) to analyze the role of female journalists as disseminators of female sources during two different periods. The first period was December 2013, during the Chilean presidential campaign, when only two women competed without male candidates, and the second one was December 2015, when Bachelet was President of Chile, but without the influence of a political campaign. This approach allowed us to evaluate two research questions. First, does the journalist's gender have any impact on a source's gender? Second, if gender has an influence, is this situation a persistent phenomenon or it just depends on the cultural-political environment lived in a moment?

Our article contributes to the literature about gender bias in the media, analyzing this situation in a different context (not the United States or Europe), a developing country in South America. So, we add value to the body of English-language work on South American news media. Our research explores the relationship between the gender of the source and both newswriters' and section editors' gender, but contributing information about the effect of both variables, in conjunction, on the likelihood of quoting female sources. Our results suggest that both the gender of the newswriter and the gender of the section editor affect the possibility of citing female sources in newspapers. Being a female newswriter makes more probable to utilize female sources, and in certain situations, this situation is reinforced by a female section editor. Finally, our research expands theory considering if contingency has an impact on that likelihood. Specifically, it evaluates whether gender bias in the media is a persistent situation or not, comparing two periods: a particular presidential campaign with only two women competing without male candidates and a political "everyday life" situation (a period without elections).

To answer our research questions, we organized the article as follows: (a) description of the context surrounding the unequal situation of Chilean women in economic, political, and news media's ambits; (b) our theoretical background and hypotheses; (c) methodological description; (d) results and discussion; and (e) conclusions.

## **The Economic and Political Bottleneck in Chile**

Chile is a small country with a developing economy. Its population is almost 18 million people and its gross domestic product at market prices was \$247 billion in 2016 (World Bank, 2018), far behind the most prominent markets in the region, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Chile exhibits the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in Latin America, being around US\$22,254, due to a long stable financial and economic performance that "has improved the well-being of Chileans and reduced poverty dramatically" (OECD, 2015a, p. 2). Nonetheless, although Chile has been extraordinarily successful in its efforts to reduce poverty, sustain growth, and promote democratization in recent decades, it has not been so successful at reaching equality, especially in terms of gender (Fort et al., 2007; Kristjanpoller & Olson, 2015; PNUD, 2017). The OECD (2015a) has concluded that "growth [in Chile] needs to become more inclusive, especially for women" (p. 2).

First, there is an evident economic inequality in Chile, which favors men in detriment of women, affecting their financial well-being. According to the National Institute of

Statistics, employed Chilean men earned CL\$601,311 per month in 2016 (US\$947), while employed women got only CL\$410,486, or US\$646, per month (INE, 2016), a gender wage gap of 32%, similar to 2015, but higher than previous years. Even worse, the likelihood that men are represented in the most prestigious professions is 3.6 times higher than that of women (PNUD, 2017).

In addition, the Gender Gap Report by the WEF (2018) showed that Chilean men's salaries double those of women for doing similar work, appearing Chile in the 128th position, among 149 countries, in terms of gender income differences (WEF, 2018). Comparing at a regional level, Chile is surpassed by states with a lower income per capita such as Nicaragua (5th), Costa Rica (22nd), Cuba (23rd), Bolivia (25th), Argentina (36th), Colombia (40th), and Ecuador (41st). In general, Chile received a modest or mediocre classification in all the dimensions measured by the Gender Gap Report: (a) it was ranked 120th in economic and social opportunities; (b) 37th in educational attainment; (c) 59th in health and survival; and (d) 31st in political empowerment (WEF, 2018).

This situation is unfair for women, as women represent 42% of the Chilean labor force (INE, 2019) and they are as trained as men. Just one out of four women participating in the Chilean labor force is an unskilled worker (26%), compared to one out of five unskilled workers among men (19%) (PNUD, 2017). Moreover, women and men have similar access to tertiary education in the country, up to date, 96.4% of college-age women are enrolled in higher education versus 84.5% of men (WEF, 2018). Although this situation is a relatively recent phenomenon. In 2006, the male's enrollment in tertiary education was 44% versus 42% of women, but in 2011, women's enrollment reached 86% versus 83% of men (WEF, 2006, 2011). However, getting a college degree does not lead to looking for a job later, as many women abandon their career after marrying. As Greenwood et al. (2016) explain, many women attend tertiary education for status or a better life, but not necessarily to work.

Furthermore, at the top of the labor hierarchy, inequality remains, as Chilean female leaders clash against a robust glass ceiling. Indeed, among the most prominent companies listed on the selective index of Chile's stock exchange (IPSA), only 6% of board members were women in 2015 (SVS, 2015), far behind an average of 10.3% for the OECD (2012) countries. Likewise, 90% of companies traded in the Chilean stock exchange had no women on their boards in 2010, far behind countries like New Zealand or Canada, where almost 60% and 42% of corporations, respectively, had at least one woman on their boards (OECD, 2012). However, Chilean male board directors do not seem very concerned with the evident marginalization of women of the highest levels of the corporate hierarchy: just 21% of male board directors say gender diversity is on the corporate agenda (Egon Zehnder, 2016). Besides, in Latin America, 72% of board members say gender diversity in the boardroom needs to improve versus 33% of Chilean ones who think so (Egon Zehnder, 2016). The difference between Chilean board directors and Latin American ones is evident at this regard: 20% of Latin American board directors say that their companies have plans or policies to promote women in management positions, but in Chile, no board director (0%) says the same (Egon Zehnder, 2016). Besides, men perform 72% of senior-level jobs in Chile versus 28% of women (WEF, 2015).

Second, at the political level, despite having a woman, President Michelle Bachelet, running the country for two nonconsecutive stretches, Chilean women are still highly under-represented by both right-wing and left-wing political parties. During her first term (2006–2010), the socialist leader Michelle Bachelet formed the first egalitarian cabinet in Chile's history, 10 female and 10 male cabinet ministers. Still, after several cabinet reshuffles, she finalized her first term with women occupying 46% of cabinet seats (Vega & Vega, 2014). After Bachelet, during the 2010 to 2014 time of the conservative President Sebastián Piñera, women held only 7 of the 38 seats in the Higher Chamber (Senado de la República de Chile, 2016), 18 of the 120 seats in the Lower Chamber (Cámara de Diputados de Chile, 2016), and 6 of the 22 seats of the last cabinet. The first cabinet of Bachelet's second administration, following President Piñera's term, consisted of 14 men and 9 women (Wilson & Malig, 2014). Then, the Higher Chamber was formed by 32 men and 6 women (Senado de la República de Chile, 2016), and the Lower Chamber included 101 men and 19 women (Cámara de Diputados de Chile, 2016). Finally, in the last legislative election was applied a new electoral law guaranteeing at least 40% of female candidates, which helped to increase the female representation at the Chilean Congress. However, both chambers still show an unequal gender representation, with just 26% at Higher Chamber and 22% at the Lower one (Candidaturas Chile, 2017). It seems that a law is not enough as a solution.

According to the United Nations Development Program (PNUD, 2017), since the restoration of democracy in 1990, Chilean men have always been politically overrepresented. Between 1990 and 2017, the share of men in the Chilean population was 49%, while their share in the Low Chamber averaged 88%, in the High Chamber 92%, and in the Executive Branch 76%. As a result, the share of men in the political ambit averaged 87% in the period analyzed, more than 35 percentage points over their share in the Chilean population.

Finally, the overrepresentation of men in the political and corporate spheres is not related to a lower female's enrollment in tertiary education, as described above. In addition, Chilean women outnumber men in higher education since 2010, averaging 52% the share of women and 48% that of men in the period 2010 to 2019 (Mineduc, 2019). They also have a higher school life expectancy than that of men and show a graduation rate from college significantly higher than that indicated by men (Kristjanpoller & Olson, 2015; OECD, 2016). However, although men and women have equal access to education in the country, there are essential differences in the jobs and professions they do, in the opportunities to access to those activities and the payment they receive for the same occupation. "These differences in salaries and prestige in the labour market reinforce gender inequality" (PNUD, 2017, pp. 257–258).

## **The News Bottleneck**

Chilean men do not only dominate political and corporate arenas, but they also dominate the news domain. Many more men than women are journalists or sources in the country. Regarding the number of journalists, two out of three of them working in Chile are men (Gallagher, 2010, 2015; International Women's Media Foundation

[IWMF], 2011; Mellado et al., 2010). Besides, men occupy 72% of the higher rank positions at Chilean newsrooms (Mellado, 2012) and earn substantially more than newswomen in the journalism's management levels (IWMF, 2011). These statistics are similar to those observed in the United States, for instance (Reinardy, 2012).

Regarding the male/female sources' ratio, most content reports confirm that in most countries, men are quoted as sources much more often than women (Gallagher, 2005, 2010, 2015; Harp et al., 2014; Matud et al., 2011; Y. Rodgers & Zhang, 2006; Sánchez-Aranda et al., 2003; Valenzuela & Correa, 2009; Van Zoonen, 1988). In the case of Chile, similar results have been reached by Valenzuela and Correa (2009) and others. The Global Monitoring Media Project has stated that, in Chile, news featuring men as main actors, or containing male subjects or sources are by far more recurrent than those featuring women, reaching 68% versus 32% (Gallagher, 2015). Therefore, a likely consequence of this gender imbalance in the Chilean newsrooms could be the asymmetry observed in the newspaper sources.

## **Female Journalists and Female Sources: The Role of Journalists as Gatekeepers**

Journalists are the prime selectors of sources and story subjects (Armstrong, 2004). Journalists are continually seeking for sources because those people have witnessed a newsworthy event or have been entitled by the news media to talk with authority and credibility (Armstrong & Nelson, 2005). Sources are those actors interviewed by journalists, quoted in news articles, and/or supplying background information or story suggestions (Gans, 1979a), including their information and viewpoints in the news (Zoch & Turk, 1998).

As the media help to establish the parameters which structure public thinking about the social world, journalists act like gatekeepers of relevant, valuable, and reliable information to audiences when they edit news or select sources, images, or other elements (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross, 1996). This gatekeeping process could explain why, although women have made considerable progress in ameliorating the gender gap in the real world, they often appear to be losing the battle in the mediated one (Collins, 2011). According to Krefting (2002), this misrepresentation of women by the news media has consequences in the real world, such as devaluing women's contribution to society and limiting acknowledgment of women's work by audiences, affecting the way they are viewed and perceived (Cantrell & Bachmann, 2014).

Gatekeepers are those individuals or groups empowered to feature some news items and discard others (Lewin, 1947). Therefore, gatekeeping can be conceptualized as "the process by which the vast array of potential news messages is windowed, shaped, and prodded into those few that are transmitted by the news media" (Shoemaker et al., 2001, p. 233). Through selecting, writing, editing, and "massaging information to become news" (Shoemaker et al., 2009 p. 73), gatekeepers show audiences their vision of the world. In the process of selecting and ranking some facts, events, and people, gatekeepers minimize or ignore other facts, events, and people (White, 1950).

In news media organizations, gatekeepers include all those who have editorial responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other information items, including full-time reporters, newswriters, correspondents, columnists, and editors (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). As only limited space and time are available to report about the whole world, journalists select and rank news on some objective attributes, such as newsworthiness, proximity, conflict, and so on, minimizing or ignoring facts, events, and people. As gatekeepers, they decide what to report and who the newsmakers and sources are, and in the way, they influence audiences' perceptions about women (Valenzuela & Correa, 2009). Thus, a reporter's selection of newsmakers and/or sources within a story is considered a crucial element influencing the story's overall impact for readers. As each source brings his or her viewpoint to the story, it seems very clear that readers get mostly the maleness frame from many stories (Zoch & Turk, 1998), a process which begins as soon as audiences start consuming news.

Gatekeepers may think that their characteristics, such as their gender or race, do not influence their news decision making, and that their daily editorial creation is based on impartial criteria. Still, some researchers have recognized that reporters come with different perceptual frameworks, based on their experience, attitudes and expectations, and that those perceptual frameworks affect their decisions about what news, sources, or newsmakers fit (White, 1950). Furthermore, some researchers who have surveyed to journalists who expressed some concern about the gender imbalance commonly featured by their media, discovered that those same journalists tended to produce gender-biased contents in practice. In effect, although journalists may acknowledge that gender discrimination exists, male and female journalists may believe anyway that men are better news sources on almost all topics:

A possible explanation for such discrepancies is that journalists may be eloquent when speaking about gender issues that require them to be politically correct; they may not, however, have sufficient knowledge of gender prejudice and how it manifests itself in professional evaluation of news sources. (Vu et al., 2018, p. 18)

As both male and female journalists are not able to deal with their gender stereotypes, this "may affect workplace practices, eventually reflected in the news content they produce" (Vu et al., 2018, p. 18).

Thus, individual characteristics of reporters and newswriters appear as a crucial variable affecting news contents and news outcomes (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). For instance, since the gendered-mediation approach, the gatekeeper's gender is a determinant variable at the time of explaining why so many male contents are disseminated compared to female ones because a gender schema internalized by journalists through their life. This gender schema is related to the way people "process information in light of existing, highly organized structures of knowledge and beliefs, such as gender stereotypes" (Goodyear-Grant, 2013), in a more unconscious elaboration (Gidengil & Everitt, 1998).

Some scholars are fond of saying that in the age of the internet, when many people get their news from social media, the gatekeeping theory is less valid. However,

Chileans get their news from the new social media (WhatsApp, for instance) and traditional media (commercial TV, for instance). According to a recent national survey, Chileans get their news mainly from WhatsApp (61%), commercial TV (57%), cable TV (50%), and Facebook (45%). However, they tend to distrust more on new social media than on traditional outlets, as they trust more on the radio (61%), commercial TV (53%), cable TV (48%), online newspapers (46%), and print newspapers (42%) (Cadem, 2018). In consequence, as Chileans rely more on traditional than on new social media, the gatekeeping theory appears as a validated communication theory in the Chilean context.

## News Genres' Differences

Although newswriters and section editors share some distinctive characteristics, not all news genres are equal. Newswriters and section editors exhibit some styles and biases that can depend on the news genre they work for: being a reporter of the economic beat is not the same as being a reporter of the political section. For instance, the financial press has always been considered a journalism genre produced by the reporting elite for the world corporate elite (Islam, 2002; Parsons, 1989). Having a financial section with dedicated business reporters has been considered the *sine qua non* factor to discriminate between the popular press (i.e., tabloid newspapers), and the elite/quality press (Parsons, 1989). Most readers of the financial press have a job as a top manager and have a university or postgraduate degree (Dow Jones & Co, 2010a, 2010b; Pew Research Center, 2010). This also explains why the idiosyncratic coziness between the financial press and corporate leaders (who are, at the same time, consumers, sources, investors, and the advertisers of the business press) has been so criticized as inbreeding in recent times (A. Davis, 2000).

Men around the world commonly form the corporate elite. In the United States, for instance, although women constitute almost half of the U.S. workforce and hold more than 50% of management and professional positions, they make up only 2% of Fortune 500 CEOs (Catalyst, 2007). And the financial press has always replicated this unequal representation: since one of the first studies of gender representation in the business journalism field, by Greenwald (1990), the economic and financial press has been accused of promoting exclusively male corporate leaders (Gallagher, 2005, 2010, 2015; Krefting, 2002; Y. Rodgers & Zhang, 2006).

Not much has changed in last years, as global reports systematically show that the number of women breaking through the corporate glass ceiling, as female board directors, for instance, is still scarce in more Western countries (OECD, 2012). "Ignoring women [may be] simply part of the structure of business coverage." (Greenwald, 1990, p. 74).

As McShane discovered in the early 1990s, business publications have always undermined the economic contribution of women. For instance, in the early 1990s, 27.5% of senior management jobs were occupied by women. Still, when a business publication as Fortune had to quote top management sources, only 7% of women were contacted and interviewed. Besides, although women constituted approximately

37.1% of all professionals and university professors in the United States, they represented only 7% of the information sources within these job groups in those years (McShane, 1995). “Women are significantly underrepresented compared to their labour force availability within each occupational group,” said McShane (1995) then (p. 199). Some years later, Grandy (2014) demonstrated that under-representation of women in Canadian and American business publications remains.

On the contrary, the political press has become more egalitarian since the early 1990s. In effect, several books and articles, especially those based on content analyses of newspaper coverage of campaigns in the more recent past, suggest a reduction in media bias affecting female versus men candidates, at least in the United States (Lavery, 2013). In newspapers and television, overall coverage of female candidates appears less gender biased in recent times than in former times (Jalalzai, 2006; Lavery, 2013). Even more, although specific disparities exist, some differences now actually favor women candidates (Jalalzai, 2006). As more and more women are entering to the political stage, women’s political status has changed since the 1980s as the number of female senators and governors have increased their numbers in recent years, leading to a more gender-balanced media political coverage (Jalalzai, 2006).

Media coverage of women candidates since the 1980s may differ from more recent years because the numbers of women candidates and officeholders have changed. The number of women running for and winning office between the 1980s and 2000 changed substantially. (Jalalzai, 2006, p. 611)

There is no way to know if more favorable press coverage in the United States has led to having more women succeeding as politicians or if having more successful politicians lead to getting higher favorable press coverage. “Most likely, it is a combination of both. As women have become more common as political actors, the media has become accustomed to reporting on them” (Jalalzai, 2006, p. 623). In any case, the American political press, at least, has shown great success in improving the gender-balance between male and female political candidates. This has been accompanied by a greater success of female candidates.

### *The Relationship Between Newswriter’s Gender and the Source’s Gender*

“Source bias” is a universal term. Still, it generally refers to the extent that newswriters systemically seek information from particular groups, resulting in a limited diversity of perspectives and opinions about the news item or event. “It exists when people holding different points of view have limited opportunity to express those views and become part of the news” (McShane, 1995, p. 190). Doing this, “elites gain disproportionate access as information sources through their social, political, and economic power, and, consequently, are better able to shape public perceptions to their liking” (McShane, 1995, p. 191).

Gender could be an essential element leading to newswriters to prefer men instead of women at the time of looking for people talking and giving information to the news media. “Source bias is further evident in the underrepresentation of female sources in most mass media” (McShane, 1995, p. 191). According to this perspective, men control the traditional structures that govern our society and, consequently, have more power than women to gain access as an information source.

Regarding the relationship between newswriter’s gender and source’s gender, there are two points of view. According to some scholars, gender differences between male and female gatekeepers are routinely tackled by an organizational culture embedded in newsrooms that tends to ameliorate subjective viewpoints to guarantee objective coverage (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991; Van Zoonen, 1988; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Liebler and Smith (1997) did not find any difference when counting the number of male and female sources—depending on the gender of the newswriter—in a study tracking gender differences in 159 stories broadcasted on the U.S. TV during the 1990s. Those authors found that both men and women newswriters tended to use more male quotes. Similar results were obtained by Vu et al. (2018), who studied the Vietnamese case, and by Valenzuela and Correa (2009), who analyzed the case of Michelle Bachelet in Chile.

Other scholars have found that female newswriters could make a big difference, ameliorating the maleness frame (Zoch & Turk, 1998) and tending to quote relatively more women than male newswriters do. They state that the gender of the newswriter could be a crucial variable explaining differences in the news coverage of male and female leaders. In this sense, the last GMMP concluded that the more women in the newsroom, the greater women’s representation by the news media (Gallagher, 2015). As the relation source’s gender/reporter’s gender would be statistically significant, then, to narrow the gender gap in the news media contents, the reporter gender gap should also be addressed (Gallagher, 2015).

Some other authors reached similar results. Using content analysis, Layton and Shepard (2013) found that in 96 articles by female newswriters published on the front page of *The New York Times*, twice as many men as women were quoted; 214 other stories by male newswriters used four times as many male sources. Freedman and Fico (2005) and S. Rodgers and Thorson (2003) reached similar findings using the same methodology. Analyzing the coverage of male and female candidates in open races for governor in the United States in 2002, Freedman and Fico (2005) found that female newspaper writers quoted female sources more frequently than their male colleagues did. S. Rodgers and Thorson (2003) reached similar conclusions in analyzing three U.S. daily newspapers: female newswriters utilized more female sources (24%) than did males (16%), and these differences were statistically significant. These authors also found that women newswriters tended to stereotype less often than men and utilized female sources for a wider variety of story topics than their male colleagues. In another content analysis of the three big American TV networks’ coverage of the 2000 presidential campaign, Zeldes and Fico (2005) found that female newswriters were more likely than men to utilize and dedicate time to women sources. According to Craft and Wanta (2004), different socialization models acquired in childhood lead men

and women newswriters to develop different reporting approaches, based on divergent values and interests. These diverse gender values and interests would lead men and women newswriters to quote and report differently (S. Rodgers & Thorson, 2003).

Although previous research does not show clear evidence about the relationship between the gender of the newswriter and the gender of the source, we expect it would be possible to find a positive relationship between these variables. Then, we propose the next hypothesis:

**H1:** The gender of the newswriter will be positively related to the gender of the source in a news article in Chile.

### *The Section Editor's Gender*

As it was explained before, gatekeepers include journalists and section editors. So, it is equally necessary to evaluate the influence of editors in promoting the maleness frame (Zoch & Turk, 1998) showed by Chilean press.

Similar to the case of newswriters, studies connecting the gender of the news editor with the newspaper's contents have been inconclusive. On one side, Craft and Wanta (2004) did not find any difference among issues covered by publications with a higher percentage of women at the top of the hierarchy compared to those with a lower rate of women working as news editors. Similarly, Beam and Di Cicco (2010) did not find any significant difference between issues covered by newspapers run initially by men and later by women as a consequence of an editorship reshuffle, concluding that, in general, women and men lead publications with a similar approach. Lavie and Lehman-Wilzig (2003) reached same results in Israel, finding no significant difference in the news values or the news criteria utilized by both male and female editors. According to them, there would not be a basis for "the accepted belief that a future increase in the proportion of female journalists and editors will inevitably lead to changes in the priorities and the content of news itself" (Lavie & Lehman-Wilzig, 2003, p. 17).

On the other hand, some scholars have found that the gender of the news editor could have a bearing on the decision-making style (Everbach, 2006). Craft and Wanta (2004) found differences between men and women editors when measuring the tone of news (positive, negative, or neutral). Newspapers with more female editors published more positive news compared to those with fewer ones, which tended to have a more negative approach. In another study, 15 journalists were interviewed about their editors and found possible gender bias in the editor's behavior (Elmore, 2007). The author also noted a prevailing male culture in newsrooms, which affected decisions such as selecting sources and newsmakers. Finally, based on a survey responded by 341 editors from 209 American newspapers, Sylvie and Huang (2008) found that the editor's gender conditioned his or her decisions. That male editors exhibited a more spontaneous and a more avoidant decision-making style than did female editors.

Nevertheless, gender bias is not only limited to the print news media: it has also been found in academic and fiction publishing. Metz and Harzing (2009) analyzed nearly 10,000 articles in 57 management journals, concluding that the journal editor's gender

was a variable affecting the under-representation of women in the editorial board; male journal editors were less likely to choose female members for the editorial board. Buckley et al. (2014) analyzed the *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* and found gender bias in the reviewer selection process, revealing that male editors tended to select more men reviewers than female ones. Finally, Oggins (2014) analyzed 4,374 pieces of writing from *Best American Anthologies* (published between 1978 and 2012) and found that male editors tended to select more writings from male authors than female ones.

Despite previous inconclusive results, the bias associated with the editor's gender appears as a possibility in different ambits, affecting decision-making style and determining gender's source. Consequently, it is possible to hypothesize that an editor's gender could influence decisions about what sources must be highlighted and featured by newswriters. Therefore, our next hypothesis states that:

**H2:** The gender of the section editor will be positively related to the gender of the source in a news article in Chile.

### *A Persistent Gender Bias*

Most research, previously described, analyzed gender bias based on cross-sectional studies, which consider one period of time (Harp et al., 2014; Matud et al., 2011; Y. Rodgers & Zhang, 2006; Sánchez-Aranda et al., 2003; Valenzuela & Correa, 2009; Van Zoonen, 1988). A likely critique faced by this kind of research is that it shows only a moment in time, when special or temporary situations could be explaining the results (Aaker et al., 2012), in our case: the gender bias.

In contrast, there are longitudinal studies (Gallagher, 2005, 2010, 2015), which are focused on showing isolated statistics and comparing them over time. However, even though they show stable statistics about a low representation of women in diverse aspects, no study evaluates possible antecedents of the gender bias and their effects, or tests if these effects are persistent between periods. Therefore, there is no statistically significant evidence about a permanent gender bias over time and its causes, which helps to have stronger conclusions. We propose that, independently of the contingency, in our case, a particular presidential campaign with only two women competing without male candidates, the gender bias is persistent and similar to that occurring in a political "everyday life" situation. In concordance, two more hypotheses are proposed:

**H3:** There is a persistent gender bias between these periods, being the effect of the gender of the newswriter equal and permanent independently of the moment.

**H4:** There is a persistent gender bias between these periods, being the effect of the gender of the section editor equal and permanent independently of the moment.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of both female newswriters and female section editors as disseminators of female sources, looking for understanding the

influence of the gatekeeper's gender on the source's gender and evaluating the presence of a possible gender bias persistent between periods. To do this, we conducted two quantitative content analyses based on the guidelines described by Krippendorff (2013).

### *Sampling and Variables*

The four Chilean newspapers with higher readership and nation-wide circulation were analyzed: *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, *La Cuarta*, and *Las Últimas Noticias* (Valida, 2014, 2016). To compare the years 2013 and 2015, we considered the same interval of days from December 1 to December 12. In 2013, that period was declared by law the official Presidential campaign for the second and definitive round, and in 2015, there was not an unusual situation. In this sense, analyzing those periods, allow us to compare unique versus normal conditions and evaluate whether or not there is any change in gender bias. As stated in Riffe et al.'s (2005) content analysis book (p. 46), probability sampling was not appropriate for this research because our focus was "on a particularly critical event during a time" for which sampling could "miss key parts of coverage."

Based on previous research (Sánchez-Aranda et al., 2003; Valenzuela & Correa, 2009), we developed a coding protocol, being our unit of analysis, the individual news article defined as any piece of information different to advertising. Also, our report focused on national, political, and business newspaper sections, which are the priority sections in Chilean newspapers, representing at least 65% of news articles in Chilean press (Dides, 2010) and contain a picture of a nation and society (Gans, 1979b). According to this criterion, news articles were coded indicating gender information, generating two variables: gender of the source and gender of the newswriter in the byline. The source was coded 1 if at least one woman appeared in the article, and 0 if just men appeared on it. The newswriter looking as the author of the article was coded 1 if at least one woman appeared in the byline, and 0 if just men appeared on it. Finally, the information about the gender of the section editor was obtained directly from newspapers and coded 1 if the editor was woman, 0 if a man.

As control variables, we developed two additional codes. First, the moment of the week, the article was published was coded 1 if weekend, 0 otherwise. Second, the format of the newspaper (tabloid vs. broadsheet) was coded 1 if broadsheet, 0 tabloid. Tabloids are focused on sensationalism, sex, and sports, and are commonly more gender biased than broadsheet ones (Godoy-Pressland, 2014; Harris & Clayton, 2002). As a result, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* were categorized as broadsheet newspapers, and *La Cuarta* and *Las Últimas Noticias* were coded as tabloids. All these control variables were included to isolate possible effects associated with them.

The news articles were coded by four independent coders, who reviewed the print versions of every newspaper. All coders were business students at a private university in Santiago, Chile, and were unfamiliar with the topic and hypotheses of the study. Precise instructions on how to code every item were specified in the coding protocol developed by authors. The coders were trained by the researchers about the coding protocol (categories and associated codes) in a 2-hour session. Two coders were assigned to code the editions of *El Mercurio* and *La Cuarta*, and the other two coded

**Table 1.** Gender of the Source in Years: 2013 and 2015.

Year/source's gender	Male	%	Female	%	Total
2013	732	73	270	27	1,002
2015	579	71	234	29	813

Note. Number of articles per year with information about the gender of the source.  $\chi^2 [1] = 0.7545$ ,  $p > .05$ .

**Table 2.** Gender of the Newswriter in Years: 2013 and 2015.

Year/newswriter's gender	Male	%	Female	%	Total
2013	376	52	341	48	717
2015	297	5	288	49	585

Note. Number of articles per year with information about the gender of the newswriter.  $\chi^2 [1] = 0.36$ ,  $p > .05$ .

*La Tercera* and *Las Últimas Noticias*. Each coder worked separately and coded both assigned newspapers. In case they had doubts, coders were instructed to ask the researchers, and not talking among themselves to assure independence. Consequently, every news article was independently coded twice by different coders. Inter-coder reliability was computed using Cohen's Kappa and ranged from 0.87 for the variable source's gender to 1 for variables weekend and newspaper format, indicating high reliability in all cases (Banerjee et al., 1999; Neuendorf, 2011).

All news articles were found in the print versions of the four newspapers mentioned above, and the sample was composed by 1,528 items from 2013 and 1,117 from 2015, an average of 127 articles per day in 2013 and 93 in 2015. The difference in the number of items between these 2 years is explained by the numbers of weekends, where print editions of Chilean newspapers are bigger compared to those of weekdays, and the sample includes two weekends in 2013 and only one in 2015. Then, excluding those articles without data, there always were more men than women quoted in newspapers in both years (Table 1). In fact, in 2013, 73% of news articles included male sources, and only 27% contained at least one woman ( $\chi^2 [1] = 213.02$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In 2015, 71% of news articles included male sources, and only 29% at least one woman ( $\chi^2 [1] = 146.4$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Although news articles decreased from 2013 to 2015, the ratio between male sources versus female sources stayed almost equal ( $\chi^2 [1] = 0.7545$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Regarding the gender of the newswriter, excluding those articles without data, the number of articles signed by male newswriters versus female ones is almost similar in both years (Table 2). In 2013, 52% of news articles were signed by male newswriters, and 48% considered at least one woman as newswriter ( $\chi^2 [1] = 1.71$ ,  $p > .05$ ). In 2015, 51% of news articles were signed by male newswriters, and 49% considered at least one

**Table 3.** Relationship Between the Gender of the Source and the Gender of the Newswriter.

Newswriter's gender	Source's gender				Total
	Male	%	Female	%	
Male	433	74	151	26	584
Female	368	66	187	34	555

Note. Just 1,139 news articles had data about gender of both, newswriter, and source.  $\chi^2 [1] = 8.37$ ,  $p < .01$ .

**Table 4.** Relationship Between the Gender of the Source and the Gender of the Section Editor.

Section editor's gender	Source's gender				Total
	Male	%	Female	%	
Male	1,122	72	432	28	1,554
Female	189	72	72	28	261

Note. Just 1,815 news articles had data about gender of both, section editor and source.  $\chi^2 [1] = 0.005$ ,  $p > .05$ .

woman ( $\chi^2 [1] = 0.14$ ,  $p > .05$ ). In addition, the ratio men/women newswriters remained similar between 2013 and 2015 ( $\chi^2 [1] = 0.36$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Finally, just two newspaper exhibited female section editors, representing 8% of the number of section editors in the period analyzed. In 2013, *La Tercera* had a female editor in its business section, and in 2015, *El Mercurio* had one in its national section. Tabloids did not show female editors for the period and sections analyzed.

## Results

Previously to test our hypotheses, we performed a series of cross-tabulations to explore the relationship among our variables of interest. First, we explored the relationship between the gender of the source and the gender of the newswriter. As Table 3 shows, both male and female newswriters quote female sources fewer than male sources. However, female newswriters tend to quote female sources more frequently than male newswriters, 34% versus 26% ( $\chi^2 [1] = 8.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ). As a consequence, it is possible to state that there is a relationship between these variables.

We also analyzed the relationship between the gender of the source and the gender of the section editor. As Table 4 shows, both male and female section editors are related to quote female sources fewer than male ones, and the ratios of male/female sources associated to both male and female section editors are similar ( $\chi^2 [1] = 0.005$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Being a female newspaper section editor does not affect the proportions of male and female sources used by newswriters.

**Table 5.** Relationship Between the Gender of the Source and the Newspaper's Format.

Newspaper's format	Source's gender				Total
	Male	%	Female	%	
Tabloid	250	66	126	34	376
Broadsheet	1,061	74	378	26	1,439

Note. Just 1,815 news articles had data about gender of the source.  $\chi^2 [1] = 7.79, p < .01$ .

**Table 6.** Relationship Between the Gender of the Source and the Newspaper Section.

Newspaper section	Source's gender				Total
	Male	%	Female	%	
National	618	54	313	46	931
Political	225	51	83	49	308
Business	468	48	108	52	576

Note. Just 1,815 news articles had data about gender of the source.  $\chi^2 [1] = 39.35, p < .01$ .

The relationship between the gender of the source and the newspaper's format was also considered (Table 5). According to this, tabloids tend to quote more female sources than that of broadsheets. In fact, female sources represent 34% in tabloids versus 26% in broadsheets ( $\chi^2 [1] = 7.79, p < .01$ ). Therefore, it is possible to assert that there is a relationship between these variables.

The relationship between the gender of the source and the newspaper section was also analyzed (Table 6). There are differences among sections regarding the frequency of quoting female sources ( $\chi^2 [1] = 39.35, p < .01$ ). All sections quote male sources more frequently than female ones, but in national female sources represent 34%, in political one 27%, and business one just 19%. According to this, it is possible to state that there is a relationship between these variables.

Subsequently, to analyze hypotheses **H1** (the gender of the newswriter will be positively related to the gender of the source in a news article in Chile) and **H2** (the gender of the section editor will be positively associated with the gender of the source in a news article in Chile), two logistic regression analyses were performed. In both regressions, the dependent variable was the source's gender, and the independent ones were the newswriter's gender and the section editor's gender. As control variables, we used the newspaper format (tabloid or broadsheet), and weekend. This methodology allows us to understand the effect of each independent variable on dependent one but in the presence of other independent variables (not isolated as in cross-tabulations). The results are reported in Table 7.

Therefore, the evidence confirms hypothesis **H1**, which declares that the gender of the newswriter will be positively related to the gender of the source in a news article in Chile. As Table 2 shows, there is a positive, statistically significant relationship

**Table 7.** Logistic Regressions for Years 2013 and 2015.

Variables/year	2013			2015		
	Dep. variable: source (1 if female, 0 otherwise)			Dep. variable: source (1 if female, 0 otherwise)		
	Coefficient	Standard error	Odds ratio	Coefficient	Standard error	Odds ratio
Newswriter's gender	0.38*	0.18	1.46	0.46*	0.19	1.59
Editor's gender	-0.91*	0.38	0.4	0.55*	0.24	1.72
Newspaper format	-0.28	0.23	0.76	-0.38	0.23	0.68
Weekend	0.1	0.2	1.11	-0.09	0.2	0.21
Constant	-0.82***	0.22	0.44	-0.86***	0.21	0.42
	LR $\chi^2$ (4, N:619) = 13.69, $p < .01$ Pseudo- $R^2$ (MacFadden) = 1.84%			LR $\chi^2$ (4, N:619) = 10.63, $p < .05$ Pseudo- $R^2$ (MacFadden) = 1.66%		

Note. LR = logistic regression.  
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

between the newswriter's gender and the likelihood of quoting female sources in both years. However, in the case of hypothesis **H2**, which states that the gender of the section editor will be positively related to the gender of the source in a news article in Chile, appears mixed results. In 2015, there is a positive, statistically significant relationship between the editor's gender and the likelihood of quoting female sources, supporting the hypothesis **H2**. Nonetheless, in 2013, the association is significant, but negative, not supporting the hypothesis **H2**.

To answer hypotheses **H3** and **H4**, the coefficients of both regressions were compared. Regarding hypothesis **H3**, which states that there is a persistent gender bias between these periods, being the effect of the gender of the newswriter equal and permanent, independently of the moment, the results show that the coefficients associated to newswriter's gender in 2013 and 2015 are equal ( $\chi^2[1] = 0.1$ ;  $p = .75$ ), so, the bias does not depend on the moment. Therefore, the evidence supports hypothesis **H3**. Considering hypothesis **H4**, which states that there is a persistent gender bias between these periods, being the effect of the gender of the section editor equal and permanent, independently of the moment, results do not support the hypothesis. In fact, the coefficients associated to editor's gender in 2013 and 2015 are not equal ( $\chi^2 [1] = 10.45$ ;  $p = .012$ ). Consequently, the contingency could have an impact on this relationship.

## Discussion

Our research exposes the gender bias, in favor of men, as an unquestionable and permanent fact observed in the leading Chilean newspapers. Specifically, all publications appear to quote fewer female sources than male ones. This situation is replicated in each newspaper section analyzed. Considering demographical proportions, the share of female sources in the national section is low, just representing 34%, in contrast to

50% at the population level. In the case of the political section, it is also low. Based on the Chilean law, at least 40% of people actively participating in politics are women (Serval, 2018). But in newspapers, women only represent 27% of all sources. Finally, in the business section, the participation rate is worse. As there are more university graduate women than men in Chile, it is unfair that the share of female sources in the business section is just 19%. All these data are a mirror of how difficult it is for women to advance in Chilean society.

Our results also suggest a strong relationship between the gender of the newswriter and the gender of the source. When the newswriter is woman, the likelihood of quoting female sources increases and vice versa, being a persistent relationship through time. Also, the gender of the section editor also has an impact on the likelihood of quoting female sources, but this one depends on the situation faced by the newspaper. In fact, in neutral conditions, as nonelectoral environment, female section editors tended to quote more female sources. On the other hand, in particular circumstances, as an election with two female candidates, female section editors tended to cite more male sources. This result suggests that Chilean section editors show a gender-biased behavior, but they change their behavior according to the specific circumstances. Female newswriters were more likely to use female sources, a tendency that was boosted if the newswriter had a female section editor.

Therefore, in a context with a low participation of women in Chilean newsrooms (Gallagher, 2010, 2015; IWMMF, 2011; Mellado, 2012; Mellado et al., 2010), especially in the higher rank positions, our results show that this gender-biased behavior leads to a permanent underrepresentation of women, in favor of men, in Chilean press.

According to some authors, the news media distort the reality because they do not offer an accurate accounting of women's actual social contribution, nor an accurate representation of women's status in contemporary life (Tuchman, 1979). If women occupy little space at the top of political and corporate organizations, the news media shrink it further (Sánchez-Aranda et al., 2003). As former authors have suggested, more equitable representation of women by the news media will be reached whether more women are incorporated into newsrooms as journalists and section editors (Gallagher, 2015; Peiser, 2000; S. Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Zeldes & Fico, 2005). In this sense, our study confirms that the more women in the newsrooms as newswriters or section editors, the more women appearing as sources. Hence, augmenting the number of female sources in the newspapers seems as an urgent task in Chile, to try to balance the social status obtained by women compared to that obtained by men. In effect, one of the three main functions of the press is giving social status (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1974) and we are confirming that, for the case of Chile, mostly men are obtaining social status by mainstream newspapers. Status is decisively formed by how people are portrayed by the media, as sources or newsmakers, through words, phrases, locations, and approaches (Armstrong, 2004). Due to that, when the press feature mainly men, giving them a leading voice, the media recognize men as personalities with authority, competence, knowledge, fame, and/or power, and by this way, the media reinforce their authority, competence, knowledge, fame, and/or power, and this cycle tends to replicate itself, to the benefit of men (Tuchman, 1978).

This way of acting by the media is especially unfair to women. Women's presence in the news media as sources has been extensively regarded as unjust and minimized, leading to a female social contribution actively undermined and undervalued (Catalyst, 2005, 2007; J. Davis, 1982; Freedman et al., 2007; Gallagher, 2005, 2010; Greenwald, 1990; Harp et al., 2014; Mitsu, 2013; Sánchez-Aranda et al., 2003; Valenzuela & Correa, 2009; Van Zoonen, 1988; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996; Zeldes & Fico, 2005). According to this, Chilean newspapers do not assume the social responsibility of promoting higher gender equality, exposing a fair and objective representation of real contributions that Chilean women make every day. They are hiding and ignoring women, undervaluing their real economic, social, and political participation, even during times when women are high-profile subjects of the political and economic events, as in 2013, during the presidential campaign. In this sense, we confirm that the supposed "objective" journalism is heavily gendered, supporting male as a norm (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross, 1996).

Based on former ideas, some scholars consider that without a more significant female share in the news media, there will not be a proper female representation in any other sector (Women's Media Center, 2014). As the media help to construct the identity of a society, it is imperative to prevent any distortion of reality. In that sense, the media can reinforce or remove stereotypes and paradigms, changing in one way or another the collective imaginary of a society (Gaonkar, 2002). As our research shows, the inclusion of more women in the media could help to make more fair and proportional their representation, moving from a masculine society to a more equal one. However, only augmenting the number of female newswriters and editors could not be enough. According to the gendered-mediation thesis, merely having more women in the newsrooms is not going to change by itself a gender imbalance rooted in the habits, practices, and minds of most journalists (Ross, 2002; Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross, 1996). Hence, it is also absolutely necessary to change the masculine newsroom's culture that hides women (Ross, 2002; Van Zoonen, 1988). As both male and female newswriters recognize that the media under-represent and misrepresent women, some advocacy work in favor of female news protagonists and sources is needed:

Equality advocates should design training sessions to help journalists better understand the value of incorporating women's voices in ways that accurately represent their authority, power, and knowledge. Journalism schools might consider gender courses to explain how differences in women and men's social roles can affect women's opportunities to succeed outside of the home. (Vu et al., 2018, p. 18)

Now, this advocacy work seems more urgent than ever, as novel forms of sexual discrimination affect women in political and business beats as unexpected consequences of the #MeToo movement. For instance, some American politicians have rejected being accompanied by female reporters who wanted to shadow local candidates after the arousal of the #MeToo movement (Gambino & Bryant, 2019). Similar cautions have proliferated in Wall Street, affecting female executives now excluded from business dinners, trips, and meetings (Tan & Porzecanski, 2018). If we consider that this stronger

engagement between male journalists and male sources is increasing with the new ways of informing and communicating, the result is alarming. In effect, as some authors have observed, new social media as Twitter have amplified gender biases suffered traditionally by women, connecting male journalists almost exclusively with male sources, decreasing the digital contact between genders (Usher et al., 2018). As news sources have limited time to engage with reporters, male sources might mostly be looking for increased visibility thanks to male peers.

Most research has its limitations, and this case is not an exception. First, this research only considers newspapers, and it is necessary to include the content analysis of other media outlets, as TV channels and radio stations. Second, it is required to explore why gender alone does not equate to more female representation by the media. Thus, more research is needed to understand stereotype functioning in journalists and section editors' minds to change newsroom's culture. Third, the unexpected behavior associated with section editors could be a factor to diminish or prolong gender bias, so more research is needed to understand the causes of this phenomenon deeply. Fourth, this research only focuses on the relationship between gender of the source and the gender of both section editors and newswriters, but not on the way female sources are represented in contrast to male ones. It would also be plausible to and fascinating to examine how women are quoted in the media compared to men by both male and female journalists, regarding topics, context, evaluation, and so on.

Finally, it has also to be recognized the limitations of the content analysis as research method because it does not measure actual effects. However, some leading scholars have validated content analysis as an illuminating research tool to examine the potential impact of gender stereotypes released by the media, and how to deal with them (Collins, 2011; Matud et al., 2011; Neuendorf et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2011).

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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