

Who has a say in political news? An analysis of sourcing trends in the Chilean quality press

Abstract

Based on journalistic sourcing theory, this article analyses sources used in political news in the Chilean elite press to establish whether there is a tendency to diversify them or a persistent pattern of favouring official and mainstream sources. The Chilean case may serve as a 'laboratory' for observing journalistic sourcing within a context of highly concentrated ownership of the quality press, which is attributed with being a right-wing ideological duopoly. We conducted a quantitative content analysis of political news published in constructed weeks from 2007, 2011 and 2015, years in which the left and centre-right government coalitions alternated. Our three objectives were, first, to determine whether the sourcing practices used by these media outlets follow the typical pattern of using mainly official and mainstream sources; second, if there is significant uniformity in sourcing in the elite press due to the concentration of media ownership and considering the right-wing ideological monopoly attributed to the quality press; and third, whether variations in sourcing occur following a change of government and if there is evidence of a systematic tendency to cite sources from a particular political affiliation