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Personalization, privatization, and campaign strategies in newspaper coverage of two Chilean presidential elections, 1989–2009

Abstract

We investigate the evolution of the coverage of political campaigns in Chile, through a content analysis of the issues highlighted in four national newspapers in the 1989 and 2009 campaigns. We seek to determine the increases of two types of personalization and the coverage of the candidates' strategies. We focus on personalization, understood first as "competences" (the coverage of political-personal characteristics of the candidates) which differ from the "privatization" (highlights the private lives of the candidates). Results show an expected increase in the space allocated to privatization and strategies, but no change in the coverage of the political traits of the candidates.

Keywords
Press coverage, elections, campaigns, journalism, Chile, personalization.

1. Introduction

Exogenous social changes have forced the so-called mediatization of politics, defining it as "the media moving toward the center of the social process" and the establishment of a "media-constructed public sphere" (Blumler and Kavanagh, 2009: 211; Strömbäck, 2008) which leads, under other indicators, to the personalization of the political communication (Zeh & Hopmann, 2013). In the analysis of Blumler and Kavanagh, "modernization" produces a greater cultural and social fragmentation, which reinforced by "aestheticization" and "individualization," giving rise to increased personal aspirations of consumption at all levels, advancing hand-in-hand with "secularization", and reducing the status of politics and politicians. In this context, the conduct of individuals is increasingly oriented towards their personal preferences, over and above their membership in collective groups such as social classes, political parties, or ideologies (Caprara, 2007), while ideological divisions lose significance (Giddens, 1998). Other factors, like "economization" and "rationalization," affect the media industry, which has to contend for high ratings in a more competitive environment in order to survive economically (Blumler, 1992).

In this context, the media logic predominates in the process, and "increasingly has come to reflect the commercial logic of the media

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industry (...). One major implication for politics is the 'spectacularization' of political communication formats" (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999: 251). Simplifying, dramatizing and personalizing the representation of political activity by the media would be the means for making it more palatable to a disinterested public and not losing their audience in the fierce competition for the markets (cfr. Holtz-Bacha, Lessinger, and Hetesheimer, 1998). This all leads to McAllister's conclusion that "the personalization of politics will remain a - and perhaps the - central feature of democratic politics in the twenty-first century" (McAllister, 2007: 585).

1.1. *Objectives of the study*

Within this context, we intend to study the impact of personalization and the campaign strategies related to the press coverage of two Chilean presidential campaigns: the first election after Pinochet's authoritarian regime in 1989, and the most recent one, which is taking place at the moment of our research, 20 years later[1], to confirm whether the use of these two topics have increased in terms of the self-presentation of the candidates and the contents of the Chilean press. One special point of our study is to test whether it is fruitful the proposal of Rahat and Sheafer (2007) in order to distinguish between two types of personalization: understood it first as "competences" (the coverage of political-personal characteristics of the candidates) which differ from the "privatization" (highlights the private lives of the candidates).

1.2. *The case of Chile*

In general, the descriptions of the a modern political communication have been based on the development of campaigns and political coverage in the United States, subsequently trying to identify such trends in the rest of the Western European countries. Hence, this trend arises within the context of a presidential system and weak political parties, but its analysis then takes place within a context of parliamentary governments and strong political parties (Moy, Mazzoleni, & Rojas, 2012). Inspired by a tradition in which national elections concern the election to parliament of candidates presented by political parties deeply rooted in the "social and cultural cleavages" that marked the political-ideological conflicts of these countries for over 100 years (Lipset & Rokkan, 1976), it is not surprising that these academics label the new trends in political communication as the "Americanization" of campaigns (Schönbach, 1996). In addition, given the new role taken on by candidates to Prime Minister and by incumbent Prime Ministers within the process of government, one could speak of the "presidentialization" of politics (Mughan, 2000; Poguntke and Webb, 2005).

However, this new manner of political communication, supposedly has a worldwide scope and would affect Latin America (Moy et al., 2012; Aceves González, 2009). As is known, the political systems in this region are characterized by their presidentialism, within a system of political parties, and a general social system of aggregation of interest, which have tended to be weak institutions when compared to political figures (cfr. Linz & Valenzuela, 1994; Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997).

It is within this context that it is interesting to study the case of Chile, a country with a strongly centralized presidential system (Siavelis, 2002), but at the same time one of the few Latin American countries in which there has traditionally been a robust and stable political

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[2] Due to time and resources restrictions, we only analyzed here two elections: the most recent at the time of this research, and the earliest of the studied period, so to capture the most significant changes over time. Some distortions were assumed for the 1989 election, because of the legacy of 17 years of authoritarianism with the subsequent lack of freedom of speech affecting the media.

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party system (Altman, 2008; Huneeus, 2005; Mainwaring & Scully, 1995: Torcal & Mainwaring, 2003) and relatively similar, at least in its overall configuration, to the European model (Coppedge, 2001; Dix, 1989, cited by Luna & Rosenblat, 2012: 119).

Other factors that make it interesting to study the Chilean case is that this country has often been dubbed the "poster child" of the region due to its economic stability and political development (cfr. Siavelis, 2009; Drake and Jaksic, 1999). Contributed to this image an orderly transition orchestrated by a successful center-left coalition —the "Concertación por la Democracia"— which managed to remain in office for 20 years, after winning four presidential elections (Huneeus, 2008). In addition, it was precisely the 2009 election that marked the end of the government of the Concertación. Furthermore, the media system, and especially the written press, has been criticized for its high degree of concentration and the suspicion that it serves interests linked to economic liberalism and moral conservatism (Del Valle, 2004).

2. Theoretical framework and background

2.1. *The study of personalization in the political coverage of the media*

Regarding the personalization of election campaigns, Rahat and Sheafer (2007)[2], begin by observing that the specialized literature has tended to assume the hypothesis of personalization in the press coverage of political campaigns based on studies and perspectives that are not quantitative but rather "impressionistic". They also note that systematic empirical evidence would not always give results that confirm this hypothesis (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007, p. 69).

Due to this variety of opinions in specialized literature, Rahat and Sheafer (2007: 66-68) proposed developing a theory and some conceptual and methodological tools. To do so, they distinguish between three types of personalization: "institutional"[3], which relates to the formulation of mechanisms and political institutions that emphasize the individual rather than the party[4]. The second type, denominated personalization of political conduct, distinguishes between the behavior of politicians and the electorate. On the one hand, the voters, whose political choices are increasingly based on a set of aspirations related to their personal well-being, determine that behavior, and the agenda of politicians and candidates is oriented to highlighting certain personal attributes that can best meet such aspirations. On the other hand, the behavior of the political leader would then be a synthesis of his beliefs, personality, and predispositions and those of the public and its surrounding environment (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004; Caprara, 2007: 153).

Finally, the media personalization, whose characteristic is media focus on individual politicians, rather than political parties and institutions. Here personalization is thus understood as "a stronger focus on candidates/politicians instead of parties, institutions, or issues" (Adam & Maier, 2010: 216).

With respect to personalization in the media, the authors distinguish between personalization by the media and personalization by the politicians themselves through advertising in the media (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007: 67) which due to changes in the

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[2] See also Van Aelst, Sheafer & Stanyer, 2012.

[3] Adam and Maier (2010) does not consider this first type of personalization, but they definitely do agree with Rahat and Sheafer (2007) on the other two, and also in their observations. However, they ground the classification on Holtz-Bacha et al. (1998).

[4] An example of this type of institutional personalization in the case of Chile is the change in the system for electing mayors in 2004. As of that date, it was separated from the election of the members of the Municipal Council and became a direct election. Another example is the law that established the mechanism of primaries for the 2013 national elections.

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management of political campaigns also aims at highlighting the candidate, his characteristics or attributes as a political leader, at the expense of his party (Holtz-Bacha, 2002). Furthermore, the authors, based on Holtz-Bacha (2004), distinguish a special kind of media personalization: the media "privatization," which consists in highlighting the personal characteristics and the personal lives of the candidates, beyond their political attributes. This distinction is also stressed in Adam and Maier (2010: 216).

The conflicting results regarding whether there is a higher or lower tendency towards personalization also derives from differences in the operationalization of this concepts. In this sense, Van Santen (2012: 41) distinguishes seven ways to operationalize personalization, only four of which refer to media personalization: Focus on top leaders (media attention on politicians instead of parties); Personal narratives (media focus on personal emotions/experiences of individuals politicians); Individual political competence (media attention on individual politicians' political traits and skills); and Privatization (the aforementioned increased media attention on the private life of politicians). Our work focuses exclusively on the latter two forms of personalization, which will be operationalized in accordance with Table 1.

Nevertheless, there is another concept regarding media coverage of politics, which has also been associated with changes in political communication, and which we want to measure here: coverage of campaign' strategies.

2.2. *"Strategic media coverage" and the personalization of politics*

Cappella and Jamieson (1996) summarized the characteristics of strategic media coverage described by Jamieson (1992) in five points: winners and losers as the main concern; language of warfare, games and competition; a story with actors/performers, critics and audience (voters); emphasis on performance, style and perceptions of the candidate; and the significant importance attributed to surveys and the position and evaluation of candidates and their campaigns. Moreover, Patterson (1994) describes a similar situation under the concept "game stories", which frames the campaigns within the context of the strategies and tactics followed by the candidates and their possible successes and failures in the opinion polls, a concept whereby the author broadens his previous definition of "horse race journalism" (Patterson, 1977). De Vreese (2005: 55-56) emphasizes that there is a "close resemblance" between Jamieson and Patterson's concepts. In fact, Cappella and Jamieson also highlight the similarities between their own analyses and those of Patterson.

For Adam and Maier (2010) both the horse race and the strategic game approach are closely related to the concept of personalization. It is easy to foresee that if the press focuses on the strategy employed by the candidates, or their ranking in the opinion polls and how they change their tactics, the presentation of such facts will focus on the candidate's personality and his/her skills instead of their political platform or any ideological discussion. Thus, both phenomena involve a marked focus on the candidates, their appearance, behavior, and their performance. (Adam & Maier, 2010: 216, 218).

In this sense, there are different ways to find media personalization of politics and to operationalize this "stronger focus on candidates/politicians". In our research, we put the attention only on two specific ways to do this: the focus on the personal attributes of the candidate, divided into two aspects: their political attributes (individual competence) and their private live (privatization). This means that other ways through which the media can focus on the candidates during the campaigns will be here included into the operationalization of the concept "campaigns" or "strategies." This decision is partly due to us being interested in analyzing the variation in the coverage of campaign strategies as a separate item. (See Table 1).

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2.3. *The personalization of politics in Chile*

The development of politics in Chile is also part of a growing mediatization process, influenced by the changes that have taken place in the industry since the 1980s, which established the logic of commercial competition (Tironi & Sunkel, 1993; Tironi & Sunkel, 2000). Furthermore, since the return to democracy in 1990, interest in politics and the support of the political party system has waned progressively (CERC, 2011). This phenomenon has been taking place parallel to the development of an ever more deideologized or depoliticized and individualistic consumer society (Silva, 2004), whose roots can be found in the neoliberal social and economic model instituted by the Pinochet authoritarian regime (Halpern, 2002; Tironi & Agüero, 1999).

Hence, the media and especially television have drifted apart from politics, focusing on other topics like sports and crime, as they sensationalize and adopt the human factor as the core of their stories (Porath, Mujica & Maldonado, 2009; Porath, 2007a). Moreover, politicians have had to resort to marketing tools and image consultants, seeking to adapt to public opinion and to the media agendas (Moke, 2006). Dussaillant (2005) already identifies the starting point of this trend in the 1988 plebiscite. According to Huneeus (1998), the first clear expression of personalization of politics occurred during the 1997 parliamentary campaign.

Regarding the extent of personalization in the Chilean press, the facts could contradict the general assumption. The results provided by Dussaillant (2005) for the 1999 election show that the aspects most highlighted by the two reference newspapers and the local TV channels was the ideology of the two main candidates (Lagos and Lavín) and not aspects of their personalities, although the latter acquired greater relevance when analyzing public response.

The follow-up of the 2005 campaign by Porath (2007b) shows that although the attributes and personalities of the four candidates occupied between a fifth and a quarter of the advertising slots on TV, this aspect dropped from nearly 15% to 7% in the press and newscasts between the first and the second half of the last month of the campaign, whereas aspects such as the political support of the candidates reached 17% and the management and strategy of the campaigns rose from close to 35% to 43% in the same period. In the same election, Gutiérrez and López (2005) show that issues such as party identification or ideological stance and circumstantial factors such as the assessment of the economic situation and the Government are determining factors when it comes to the voting preferences of the public, rather than the assessment of the personal capabilities of the candidates.

2.4. *The 1989 presidential election*

Following Augusto Pinochet's defeat in the plebiscite in October 1988, a period of transition was initiated that paved the way for both Presidential and Parliamentary elections. These were held on the 14th December 1989. This day marked the first time that the country had held an election for its head of state since 1970.

The coalition of 16 parties that had opposed general Pinochet managed to find unity under the banner Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (Concert of Parties for Democracy) and they presented a single presidential candidate, Patricio Aylwin, a long-standing Christian Democratic leader who had also been the coalition´s spokesperson during the plebiscite campaign. Given the broad success of the "no" campaign, few doubted that Aylwin would go on to win the election. The Coalition represented a radical departure from the political way of life prior to the military government. For the first time, the largest party of the centre in the past 30 years, the Christian Democrats, joined forces with Chilean

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socialists in a government coalition, thus breaking the traditional Chilean left-wing ideology between the communists and the socialists. It should be noted that the Communist Party actually supported this shift, by not presenting an alternative presidential candidate.

Right-wing parties, which had to a greater or lesser extent supported or participated in the military government, had difficulties in establishing a united candidature; firstly in choosing a single candidate (finally General Pinochet's ex-Treasury minister, the young economist Hernán Büchi, was nominated); and above all in establishing a single list of parliamentary candidates. Aylwin and Büchi were joined by a third candidate, a prominent businessman and banker, Francisco Javier Errázuriz, who, aided by his personal fortune and a populist rhetoric, organized a political party, and tried to show himself as a centrist alternative.

In the end, there were few surprises, and Aylwin succeeded in winning 55.17% of the ballots cast in the first round, with the highest voter turnout in the history of Chilean elections.

2.5. *The 2009 presidential election*

The 2009 presidential election was a historical landmark in Chile: the political right managed to secure the Presidency of the Republic in an electoral process for the first time since 1958. On this occasion, the Coalición por el Cambio (ex-Alianza por Chile) (Coalition for Change - ex Alliance for Chile), a coalition of right-wing parties comprising Renovación Nacional, (with more liberal tendencies), and Union Demócrata Independiente, the more conservative party and whose leaders had held important positions in the military government headed by General Pinochet (1973-1989), managed to agree on a single candidate: Sebastián Piñera, who represented the more centrist wing of the coalition, obtaining 44.1% of votes in the first round.

On the other hand, the Concertación, the incumbent coalition comprising the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, the Partido Radical and Partido por la Democracia, which had been in power for 20 years after 4 successive victories, faced the election in a sorry state. Beyond the wear and tear of exercising power, which was reflected in a series of defections of important leaders, who took up positions to the left or to the right of the government, the incumbent, Michelle Bachelet, failed to transfer her immense popularity to the continuity candidate Eduardo Frei, who obtained 29.6% of the vote. In addition to the above, one of the socialist factions rallied around the alternative candidate Marco Enríquez-Ominami, depriving the official candidate of a large number of votes by winning 20.1% of the ballot. In addition, the candidacy of the former socialist Jorge Arrate, representing the extra-parliamentary left, grouped around the Communist Party, obtained 6.21%. Finally, Piñera won the second round with 51.6% of the vote.

2.6. *The press in Chile*

Although the impact on the public of TV newscasts regarding campaigns is known, the challenge of our study is to determine to what extent personalization has been established in the Chilean public sphere. The decision to study the reference newspapers is therefore justified, because they ought to be the last type of media where this trend appears[5]. The popular, or tabloid style press was included in order to establish a baseline or basis of comparison, considering that, in this case, a greater degree of personalization is expected from the outset. It has also been stated that the reference press is forced to use

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[5] It is important to notice that this work is part of a broader project that will analyzes the personalization in the press since the 1970 election (the last one before the coup d'état). It is impossible, in Chile, to rescue the TV news of those years.

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personalization and simplification of the representation of the political debate, due to the commercial competition from TV and the need to maintain large audiences (Patterson, 1994) a process depicted as 'tabloidization' (Esser, 1999; Gripsrud, 2000). Another reason for choosing the press is that in Chile the reference media are the ones that have shown greater capacity for setting the agenda of public discussion by the elites and TV (Dussaillant, 2005).

As reference press, we analyzed *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, which are recognized in Chile as the reference and registry media, and the major platforms for public debate (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2013). In addition, as tabloid style, we took *Las Últimas Noticias* y *La Cuarta*.

El Mercurio is the main reference newspaper of the chain owned by the Edwards Group (a traditional family company in this line of business), which also owns *Las Últimas Noticias* (LUN), of a popular bent, and since 2002 very much focused on the private lives of the so-called "celebrities" or show business personalities[6]. It is important to emphasize this change in the editorial line of LUN, because it allowed him to move from being a newspaper with a regular readership rate to be an editorial success and one of the most read newspapers in the country. This group also owns a low-circulation evening paper, which has a very significant impact on the Santiago elite, as well as an ample chain of regional media that give it the highest participation in the advertising market of the written press. *El Mercurio* has often been characterized as the disseminator of the economic-political thought of the Chilean right (Soto, 2003; Sunkel, 1986).

La Tercera is the main newspaper of the COPESA group (*Consorcio Periodístico Sociedad Anónima* - Journalistic Consortium Limited Company) belonging to the banker Alvaro Saieh, which also owns another popular newspaper that we will analyze here: *La Cuarta*, which was the most read newspaper in the country for many years. COPESA also owns a free commuter newspaper, which is distributed in the Santiago subway from Monday to Friday, and a magazine that analyzes current national events, as well as other publications.

The four selected newspapers are the only ones in Chile with real national scope and their circulation is the highest in the country; there is no any other newspaper that competes with them[7]. Both groups completely dominate the Chilean daily newspaper market.

This concentration of the press is viewed with suspicion in Chile. Sunkel and Geoffroy (2001), argue that this "ideological monopoly" prevailing in the country's press has its origins in the ideological uniformity of the owners of the media, who adhere to the neoliberal economic model and conservative values, and also because this coincides with the ideas and values of the main advertisers. Many other studies also point out these biases and homogeneity in the Chilean press and have introduced the concepts of duopoly or oligopoly to describe the situation (Mönckeberg, 2009; Krohne, 2002; Del Valle, 2004).

3. Methodology

Our sample consists of 28 editions of each of the four media analyzed, in both years, selected using the "constructed week" method, recommended for these cases (Riffe, Aust, & Lacy, 1993). These four weeks cover the period between May and the Election Day in the second week of December. We look for every item of informative or editorial material referring to the campaign or individual candidates (including signed columns and letters to the editor). 966 items were selected for 2009 and 574 for the election of 1989. Following

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[6] The standard definition of "celebrity" according to Epstein (2005) is a "person who is well known for being well known".

[7] During the first half of 2009 the total circulation of the four selected newspapers reached an average of 554,162 daily units, whereas the other four newspapers measured totaled 268,389, according to Valida (2009).

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Dalton, Becc, Huckfeldt, and Koetzle (1998) in order to determine our recording or observation unit, each item was divided into units denominated "narratives": different stories within an press article, basically involving the actions of the specific candidate (actor) referring or related to a particular topic (Dalton et al., 1998: 466). A total of 2,166 narratives were coded in the case of 2009, and 2,103 for 1989. This involved analyzing a total extension (length) of 5,228 paragraphs for 1989 and 4,507 for 2009. All analyzes were carried out by weighting the observation units (narratives) by their length in paragraphs to reflect the impact of the issue on the respective agenda (salience).

In the context of our conceptual definitions, we built a coding scheme for the content analysis, which aims to enlighten the use of different aspects of press coverage of campaigns as a subject or item on the agenda. Within this scheme, we wanted to examine three aspects in particular. On the one hand, the coverage of the campaign's strategies; on the other hand, the difference between two kinds of personalization as a topic of the agenda —namely, the focus on personal-political attributes of the candidates ("individual competence"), and the "privatization", as the emphasis on their private lives.

Table 1. Codex of the variable 'Topic'

1. General Politic discussion topics	Policy and institutional reforms; internal life of political parties and coalitions; political role of the media.
2. Controversial campaign's topics	Controversial themes and discussion between campaigns (transparency and conflicts of interest; dirty campaign, allegations of corruption; electoral intervention of the government; current president's role in the campaign)
3. Ideologies, values and judgments	Rating historical processes; discussion of the role of the state; historic role of party/coalition; moral discussion of sexual/reproductive; ideologies; meaning of democracy; human rights; role of church/religion in politics.
4. General Information about the campaign	Campaigning/proselytizing; anecdotal events or facts; puns; information on the electoral process.
5. Strategies (Elements of the campaign's strategies as Topics)	Horse Race (Analysis and forecasts of the positions and the advantages/disadvantages of the candidates according to polls).
	Debates (Information and evaluation of all kinds of forums and public debates on the medias; discussions on rules of television debates).
	Strategic aspects of the campaigns (On strategies and modalities for the conduct of campaigns; campaign staff; financing; evaluation of advertising).
6. Political Supports	Political support of the candidature; groups giving their support to a candidate; discussion on the best candidate or candidates; the candidate selection process.
7. Public Policies and government's programs	Economics/finance; business; labor market and trade unions; unemployment; transportation and public works; energy and environment; Health; education; housing; economic inequality; Foreign policy/international relations; Justice and police; Defense; special policies for social segments; cultural property.
8. Individual competence (Personal-Political Attributes of the candidates)	Competence (skill, aptitude, suitability for the office or political post).
	Integrity (righteous person, probably, faultless performance of their duties).
	Confidence (firm hope in the person of the candidate).
	Charisma (special capacity to attract or fascinate).
	Ideology, values and beliefs of the candidate.
9. Privatization (Candidates' Private Life)	Family; appearance and wardrobe; biography; heritage; personality aspects; business aspects (non-political).

Source: Authors

Topics were classified into categories, based on the Marini and Roncarolo (1997: 249-251) study of the Italian campaign in 1996, and on the Porath (2007) study of the 2005 Chilean presidential campaign, which were extended for the analysis of personalization on the basis of the five categories and their multiple sub-themes proposed by Miller, Wattenberg, and

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Malanchuk (1986) (see Table 1). The subject matter classification codebook was divided into 9 broad categories of topics, which in turn were divided into 3 to 8 subcategories, depending on each case, which in turn could be further subdivided. Up to three treated topics were classified for each narrative, therefor we handle this variable as a multi-response-groups.

Also according to Dalton et al. (1998: 479) the origin of the narrative was identified, determining which actor provided the incentive for the story to be published, distinguishing between the political actors (through events, press conferences or statements and press releases) or the same media (interviews, editorials, articles of analysis, interpretations or assessments of the campaign by journalists, which cannot be attributed to any source).

A reliability test performed for variable "Topics" as multi response groups, recoded in 9 categories and on 8.6% of the cases by 2009 database, showed an agreement index of .83 and a Scott's Pi of .80, coefficients, which accord to the literature would be acceptable in most situations (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracker, 2002: 600; Neuendorf, 2002: 145).

4. Findings

Table 2 below compares the campaign coverage by the Chilean daily press in 1989 and 2009, taking the complete material from the four newspapers. The findings show that only the amount of space given to two of the nine categories failed to show any real variation, in percentage terms, between the two elections: candidates' political attributes, referred to here as individual competence, which occupied almost 9% of the total space devoted to this subject during both campaigns; and the coverage of subjects relating to ideologies, values and judgments, which fell by only 2% and it is not significant (p = .28).

Table 2. Total campaign coverage by year

TOPICS

Multi-response groups		1989	2009	*difference*	*z*	*p (*)*
General political discussion topics	n	877	449			
	% col	16.8%	10.0%	-6.8%	3.58	.000
Controversial campaign topics	n	1,209	801			
	% col	23.1%	17.8%	-5.4%	2.92	.004
Ideologies, values and judgments	n	885	671			
	% col	16.9%	14.9%	-2.0%	1.07	.280
General Information about the campaign	n	1,528	944			
	% col	29.2%	20.9%	-8.3%	4.71	.000
Elements of the campaign's strategies	n	1,263	2,001			
	% col	24.2%	44.4%	20.2%	12.33	.000
Political Support	n	1,511	723			
	% col	28.9%	16.0%	-12.9%	7.24	.000
Public Policies and government programs	n	1,728	924			
	% col	33.1%	20.5%	-12.6%	6.84	.000
Individual competence (personal-political Candidates' Attributes)	n	446	406			
	% col	8.5%	9.0%	.5%	.26	.795
Privatization (Candidates' private lives)	n	315	799			
	% col	6.0%	17.7%	11.7%	6.16	.000
N (paragraphs)		5,228	4,507			

'N' corresponds to the extension of the narratives measured in paragraphs (weighting variable).
Note: % calculated over the total of paragraphs (N)   ** z tests* calculated by STATS v.2

The same table also reveals that by 2009 the printed media show significantly less interest in covering subjects such as the candidates' public policies and programs (-12.6), political support for candidacies (-12.9), and general information about the campaigning itself (-8.3). To a lesser extent, there was also a decline in the level of attention paid to covering controversial issues raised by candidates during the campaign (especially targeted

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towards attacking their opponents) (-5.4) and general discussion topics related to politics and polity (-6.8).

By contrast, the newspapers' interest increased solely in topics entailing strategic framing (coverage of campaign strategies, "horse-race" polls, or debates), and, above all, in covering aspects of candidates' private lives or privatization. The space devoted to the latter almost tripled, reaching nearly 18% in 2009.

Taking into account the amount of space devoted to the candidates' personal traits, whether in their capacity as political leaders (competence), or in their personal life (privatization), media coverage of this particular aspect was relatively low in the 1989 campaign when compared with at least five other subject areas that received a considerably higher proportion of coverage: information regarding public policies; discussion of political support; and general information about the campaign (predominantly concerning candidates' campaign activities). Yet, in the 2009 election, both topics taken together accounted for a much higher level of coverage, ranking second in importance on the media agenda, surpassed only by the interest in campaign strategies. Broadly speaking, this confirms the trend towards increased 'spectacularization' of political campaign coverage, whereby political reporting increasingly resembles the kind of reporting more generally associated with sports events, shows, or entertainment in general.

4.1. *Trends toward personalization-competence and privatization during the campaigns*

The accent on candidates' traits by the Chilean print media during of the progress of the campaigns reveals two different patterns in the two campaigns (Table 3). During the 1989 campaign, if personalization-competence and privatization aspects are taken together, at the beginning the level of focus was relatively high, with each aspect generating a similar level of coverage. This period coincides with the date on which both coalitions defined their candidacies, and most significantly, when the right-wing candidate, Hernán Büchi, first withdrew, then resubmitted, his nomination (between May and June 1989, our first constructed week). Thus, accentuation of these topics can be understood logically as an attempt to weigh up the best candidates from both coalitions[8].

Table 3. Evolution of print media agenda during the campaigns

TOPICS Multi-response groups	constructed	weeks 1989			constructed	weeks 2009		
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
General political discussion topics	18.3%	15.9%	15.5%	18.2%	16.3%	9.5%	9.1%	6.9%
Controversial campaign topics	19.0%	19.8%	24.0%	26.8%	16.0%	18.5%	18.5%	17.7%
Ideologies, values and judgments	6.0%	16.5%	21.5%	16.9%	14.1%	9.9%	18.7%	15.4%
General Information about the campaign	13.9%	34.1%	29.0%	31.5%	13.9%	20.9%	18.4%	27.9%
Campaigns strategies (as topics)	21.8%	23.7%	27.9%	21.6%	52.9%	29.8%	50.2%	43.9%
Political support	56.0%	38.1%	20.3%	19.2%	17.1%	20.1%	15.6%	12.8%
Public policies and government's programs	3.9%	33.9%	40.8%	35.9%	18.8%	31.3%	26.8%	8.3%
Individual competence (personal-political candidates' attributes)	15.6%	7.2%	4.7%	10.8%	7.7%	11.5%	7.9%	9.2%
Privatization (candidates' private lives)	15.3%	4.6%	5.1%	4.5%	13.4%	16.8%	13.6%	24.9%
N (paragraphs)	633	1.358	1.653	1.584	907	974	1.250	1.377

Note: % calculate over the total of paragraphs (N)

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[8] The first constructed week also coincides with the formation of the coalitions, and the progress that was made in defining the terms of the electoral pacts in view of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. This illustrates why candidates' political support became the most prevalent issue at that time (occupying 56% of the allocated space).

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Throughout the rest of the campaign, coverage of both topics progressed in varying ways: privatization aspects fell to near 5% of the total space, and remained at this level for the duration of the campaign. References to candidates' political attributes also tended to slide during the intermediate period, but recovered during the final stages of the campaign (the last 6 weeks prior to the election), at least managing to retain a modest 10.8%.

By contrast, portrayal of personalization-competence and privatization during the 2009 campaign revealed a different pattern. From the beginning of the campaign, the greatest emphasis was placed on candidates' private lives (13.4% compared to 7.7% in the first constructed week) and both displayed an increase during the second constructed week (between July and August). This coincided with the stage of the campaign at which candidates were due to register their candidacy with the Servicio Electoral (Electoral Service). Thus, it makes sense that commentators would be more concerned with discussing the candidates' political attributes (the amount of space devoted to candidates' political support also increased). Nevertheless, candidates' private lives figured more prominently than their political attributes during the 2009 campaign. For the rest of the campaign, the amount of space devoted to political attributes -competence- remained relatively low (with the amount of space ranging between 8% and 9%), whereas the focus on privatization increased markedly in the final stages of the campaign: one in every four paragraphs covered aspects of candidates' private lives. Candidates' private lives became the third most salient topic during this period, following strategic aspects and general information about the campaigning itself, though the former achieved greater prominence than the other topics under discussion.

In short, by collapsing information into constructed weeks, it can be shown that the increased focus on privatization during the 2009 campaign did not coincide with any specific moment of the campaign, as appears to have been the case in 1989; but that it was a salient issue throughout the campaign, and indeed became more accentuated in the final stages.

4.2. *Similarities and differences between the media*

The two Chilean reference newspapers, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, display patterns of variation that are very much alike: both began with very similar agendas in 1989 (the widest gap of 6 points occurs with the issue of public policies, which always tends to be the most salient issue in *El Mercurio*; see Table 4), and the changes that occurred between the two elections brought them even closer together by 2009. Both newspapers showed a significant rise in the coverage of topics relating to candidate strategy, and also, in part, of candidates' private lives, whilst there was a marked decline in the space allocated to each of the other topics. The amount of space allocated to privatization reached 12% in both newspapers in 2009, but the rate of increase is much higher for *El Mercurio*, where it rose from 3.8% to 12%.

Nevertheless, despite this change, privatization failed to figure prominently on the agenda of the Chilean reference newspapers, where it continued to rank the lowest. Even when the amount space devoted to candidates' traits is considered two-dimensionally (i.e. by combining individual competence and privatization) the person of the candidates as topic figures more prominently. This is especially true in the case of *La Tercera*, in which it ranks a clear second. Ultimately the feature that most distinguishes Chilean reference newspapers is the importance they have attached to covering candidates' campaign strategy. By 2009, this topic occupies at least 45% of paragraphs covering the presidential campaign in this type of media.

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Table 4. Topics on the agenda by newspaper, according to campaign year

TOPICS Multi-response groups	*El Mercurio*		*La Tercera*		LUN		*La Cuarta*	
	1989	**2009**	**1989**	**2009**	**1989**	**2009**	**1989**	**2009**
General political discussion topics	17,4	10,4	16,4	11,8	17,7	5,0	12,1	5,5
Controversial campaign topics	21,8	17,5	21,3	20,9	26,2	12,7	25,6	10,7
Ideologies, values and judgments	18,0	16,0	14,6	17,4	18,0	5,5	14,7	9,8
General Information about the campaign	28,6	19,2	28,6	17,1	29,8	37,7	32,6	25,1
Campaigns strategies	22,3	44,6	26,7	48,6	25,7	43,0	6,0	22,1
Political Support	31,1	18,6	26,8	16,5	29,4	8,4	22,3	9,8
Public Policies and government's programs	36,8	23,9	30,5	19,5	27,8	11,3	36,3	19,4
Individual competence (personal-political Candidates' Attributes)	7,6	6,4	9,3	11,3	10,7	12,7	4,9	6,8
Privatization (Candidates' private lives)	3,8	12,0	8,4	12,9	6,7	43,1	8,3	38,6
N (paragraphs)	2.246	1.980	1.234	1.698	1.299	522	450	307

Note: % calculate over the total of paragraphs (N)

The tabloid newspaper LUN (*Las Últimas Noticias*) paints a very different picture. In 1989, LUN's agenda was similar to *La Tercera*'s, and therefore lightly similar to *El Mercurio*'s. During this period, however, LUN's agenda became very different, as can be seen in 2009 when the space allocated to political discussion, ideology, political support, and even candidates' public policies and programs, fell well below that of the reference newspapers. Although the amount of space allocated to the discussion of strategies increased, as it did in *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, what is remarkable about LUN is the sharp increase in the coverage of candidates' private lives, which reached 43%. With regard to *La Cuarta* (the other Chilean tabloid newspaper), this newspaper already had a different agenda to the other three newspapers during the campaign in 1989. By 2009, it had set itself even farther apart, not only from the reference newspapers, but also from LUN.

As can be seen from Table 4, the two reference newspapers tended to have very similar agendas in both campaign years, and both evolved along similar lines. Conversely, the two tabloid newspapers analyzed show a different pattern of evolution. By 2009, each presented a distinct agenda.

Nevertheless, the tabloid press also displayed a very similar pattern with regard to the importance it gave to covering candidates' traits: between 1989 and 2009 there was a very slight increase for space devoted to candidates' political attributes (personalization-competence), but a sharp increase in the space devoted to privatization aspects. In both cases, the latter figured more prominently and reached the most salience in this type of newspaper.

In short, the tabloid press had a greater tendency to focus on the privatization aspects of candidates, especially following the marked change in LUN's editorial line. Both events were to be expected within the framework of this analysis. However, the reference newspapers appeared to follow a similar trend, though still at a lower level of salience, since candidates' attributes (including those relating to their private lives) have acquired comparatively more space over time. Hence, Chilean reference newspapers would have become part of a general trend towards 'tabloidization' of the serious press, as has already been observed in some western democracies.

4.3. *Agenda by political actors and by the media*

In accordance with our theoretical framework, we distinguish below between narratives initiated by political actors (the candidates and his teams), narratives initiated by the media

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itself, and narratives whose newsworthiness originated from other types of actor, or were ambiguous events. Making this distinction (Table 5), it can be seen that the agenda of the media initiative and the agenda of the candidates and/or their campaign spokespersons, displayed different profiles in both elections.

Moreover, the changes that occurred between the elections of 1989 and 2009 accentuate these differences. For instance, during the 1989 campaign, public policies and program proposals (electoral platforms) accounted for 39.4% of space in statements made by the candidates, making it the most salient topic. This topic retained the same level of prominence in candidacy agendas in 2009. In contrast, it ranked fifth on the media agenda in 1989, accounting for 15.8% of space: In 2009, it fell to the 7th place, when it only accounted for 11.9%.

Regarding the importance assigned to candidates' traits in each agenda, it can be observed that in 1989 the print media already placed greater emphasis on candidates' attributes (personalization-competence or privatization) than on information emanating from the campaigns themselves (according to the data gathered from the press). This heightened interest was more apparent in terms of candidates' private lives (accounting for 11.2% of press space, but only 4.5% of candidate agendas). 20 years later, the print media continued to display a greater level of interest in privatization issues than the candidates, allocating it with 19.8% of space, and placing it in the third place on the agenda.

Table 5. Topics on the agenda according to initiative, by campaign year

TOPICS	Campaign/candidates' initiatives			Media Initiatives			Others		
Multi-response groups	**1989**	**2009**		**1989**	**2009**		**1989**	**2009**	
General political discussion topics	16.9	6.8	**	12.3	11.3		24.5	11.4	**
Controversial campaign topics	25.7	23.3		19.6	14.9		17.2	17.3	
Ideologies, values and judgments	17.4	15.4		12.8	15.5		22.3	11.8	*
General Information about the campaign	31.3	22.9	**	33.1	22.3	***	12.2	12.3	
Campaigns strategies	20.2	32.3	***	28.1	51.8	***	35.7	41.3	
Political Support	29.3	9.5	***	29.1	18.8	***	26.9	18.6	
Public Policies and government's programs	39.4	35.2		15.8	11.9		34.6	22.9	**
Individual competence (personal-political Candidates' Attributes)	7.9	8.8		11.3	9.2		6.2	8.9	
Privatization (Candidates' private lives)	4.5	14.5	**	11.2	19.8	**	3.6	16.7	**
N (paragraphs)	3283	1337		1264	2466		682	705	

Note: % calculate over the total of paragraphs (N)
Statistical significant variation: ***, p<.001; **, p<.01; *, p<.05

In any case, it is worth noting that attributes of private lives also increased considerably in candidates' public rhetoric in 2009, exceeding other topics such as candidates' political attributes, the discussion of political support, and general issues of political discussion, whilst remaining on an equal footing with ideological discussion. In other words, though both sets of actors (newspapers and campaigns, journalists and politicians) have different agendas, both have a tendency to place greater emphasis on privatization aspects of the campaigns.

A similar situation occurs with the discussion of strategic aspects of the campaign: it is not only the press that assigns a greater importance to this topic nowadays (the amount of space has risen from 28.1% to 51.8%; i.e. it has gone from third to first place in the press agenda). The analysis of the public agenda of the political actors also reveals a similar trend:

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the amount of space allocated to strategic aspects has risen from 20.2% to 32.3%, thus improving its ranking from fifth to second on this agenda.

5. General discussion

First, our findings support Rahat and Shaefer (2007) in their suggestion that a distinction should be made between personalization and privatization. Making this distinction allows us to disprove the idea that Chile followed a trend toward greater personalization -in the sense of a greater focus on the political competences of the candidates- in the coverage of political campaigns (at least in the print media) in the 20 years after the first election that followed the restitution of democracy. Nevertheless, greater emphasis has clearly been placed on topics relating to candidates' private lives.

But, if both aspects are considered together (whereby competence and privatization reflect the role played by the candidates' traits in public discussion), then this topic rose from ranking lowest on the agenda in 1989 (14.5%), to ranking second in 2009 (26.7%) (See table 2).

It should be noted that, nowadays, what clearly ranks first on the agenda of topics discussed in the press, are the topics relating to the campaign' strategies, which now hold 44.4% of the space covering the presidential campaign. Therefore, as mentioned in our theoretical framework, if we consider that this topic entails, to some extent, accentuating the personal behavior and abilities of candidates, rather than making an abstract analysis of the campaigns, we can conclude that campaign coverage in Chile tends to be highly personalized, in the broadest sense of the term: stressing behavior, characteristics and skills of the campaigning politicians rather than ideas, values represented, political issues, government programs or public policy proposals.

In this sense, the analysis of media coverage of election campaigns in Chile should offer some new distinctions. Thus, our coding scheme includes under the category "strategies" three related but distinguishable aspects: the horse race, the discussion on the strategies of each candidate, and the subject of debates and candidate appearances in the media. Obviously, the latter sub-category has a significant degree of personalization in the broad sense of its definition (stronger focus on candidates instead of other topics). In addition, the category General Campaign Information could also include a further distinction between general campaign activities and those that focus on highlighting the specific activities of the candidates. These aspects should be analyzed in more detail in future research.

Nevertheless, two further considerations should be added to this conclusion: the impact of statements arising from the same political campaigns regarding privatization and the role played by the tabloid press in this process.

As we have just seen, the information regarding candidates' private lives that was published by the print media in 1989, according to the agenda set by the candidates themselves, was less than 5%, whilst, during the same year, the agenda set by the print media was allocated 11% of space in covering the same topic. In other words, 20 years ago, the print media had already been paying particular attention to candidates' private lives, and, with the exception of *El Mercurio*, the topic received a similar level of attention in the other three newspapers analyzed. Although there is not enough evidence in this research to draw such a definitive conclusion, this may justify the assertion that the trend towards privatization among politicians has emerged as a response to media behavior (as has been discussed here in the theoretical framework) as a way of adjusting to the new logic of 'mediatization'.

In comparing the behavior of reference newspapers with that of the tabloid press, we may be confident of the following assertion: although the former cannot buck the trend towards including more and more aspects of candidates' private lives in their coverage of

campaigns, it is the popular press that accentuates this most in terms of overall coverage. This is by and large due to the shift in LUN's editorial line, which began at the start of the decade (2000s), and, as previously noted, has proved to be a successful business initiative by its holding group.

This also confirms our initial point: the references newspapers are where one would least expect to find much coverage of candidates' personality traits. Thus, it is particularly significant that this type of media is following a similar trend.

Thus, building on these results, we could propose that the process of mediatization of the Chilean public sphere has followed the path of the ideal type described in the literature. The prevailing logic is that of the media, instead of the logic of the political realm (Strömbäck, 2008), and in the news industry has adopted a business model and commercial logic (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). Such reflection stems from the impact of the changes in the Chilean press —first in the popular press with *Las Últimas Noticias*, later on throughout the whole media system. While tabloids rely heavily on the human interest of news —which in politics gibes way to coverage focused on personalization— in the Chilean case there is an additional dimension. *Las Últimas Noticias'* ability to "farandulizar", to transform into showbiz all kind of topics during the first decade of the 21st century, the ensuing records in readership numbers, and becoming a hot topic in both the water cooler conversations and television talk shows, decidedly marked the entire Chilean press. This is reflected in the fact, already mentioned, that by 2009 the serious press also tends to give more importance to the private lives of candidates, in a process of tabloidization.

On the other hand, issues related to private life (i.e., privatization of the campaign) also show up more prominently in the agenda of politicians during the 2009 campaign. This could be a sign that political actors have adapted themselves to the prevailing logic in the press and they have adopted it, perhaps as an attempt to ensure positive coverage of their campaigns. Such "farandulización" o spectacularization of politics during the 2009 campaign can be illustrated by a public rally by the Eduardo Frei campaign in front of the government palace. This politician –who when running for president in 1994 had been portrayed as a serious and thoughtful engineer, able to apply technical solutions to bring the country to a higher level of economic development– showed up on the stage dancing with a group of scantly dressed female dancers.

If Huneeus (1999) complained in the late 20th century about Chilean politicians being guided by the logic of marketing and surveys when running their campaigns, in 2009 there are signs that presidential candidates –and politics in general– are following the logic of media, and that in the media industry what prevails is a business and commercial logic.

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