

Gender equality in Chilean conservative press (2015)

La equidad de género en la prensa tradicional chilena (2015)

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#### Abstract

This research compares the quotation of women in the Politics, Economics and Science and Technology sections in the most popular and influential Chilean newspaper with their participation in the public sphere. The study uses quantitative content analysis in a random week of El Mercurio during 2015 (N=1,090), and a statistical model analysis designed to normalize the results. Research showed no significant gender discrimination in the way journalists cite female sources. Women's media presence stands in logical proportion to their participation in the activities studied in this research, and no stereotypes were shown in this journalistic routine. According to the Gender Gap Index (2015), Gender discrimination in Chile is high in two of the three activities analyzed: 1) Economic Participation and Opportunities (0,592, 0,00=Inequality, 1,00=Equality) and 2) Political Empowerment (0,230). Evidence indicates that this Chilean gender gap does not result from the usage of published sources related to major activities, but from local values, beliefs and attitudes that affect female participation in the public sphere.

#### Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación es comparar la presencia de la mujer como fuente en las secciones de Política, Economía y Ciencia y Tecnología del diario chileno más influyente con la participación femenina en esas tres actividades de la esfera pública local. Se realizó un análisis de contenido cuantitativo de una muestra de El Mercurio de 2015 (N=1,090), y se diseñó un modelo estadístico que normalizara los datos. El análisis de la muestra seleccionada para este trabajo concluye que no existe una discriminación de género significativa en el uso de fuentes. La citación de mujeres es proporcionada a su participación en las actividades seleccionadas. Sin embargo, de acuerdo al Gap Gender Index de 2015, la inequidad de género en Chile es alta en dos de esas tres áreas: 1) Participación y oportunidades en la actividad económica (0.592, 0.00=Inequidad, 1.00=Equidad) y 2)

Empoderamiento político (0.230). La evidencia demuestra que la brecha de género no proviene de las rutinas profesionales que aplica el periodismo en la selección de fuentes sino de la incidencia de los valores, creencias y actitudes de la cultura local que influyen en las posibilidades de participación de la mujer en la actividad pública.

#### Keywords

Journalism, news, gender stereotypes, sources, public sphere, content analysis, political information

#### Palabras clave

Periodismo, noticias, estereotipos de género, fuentes, esfera pública, análisis de contenido, información política,

#### Introduction

In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Chile's gender discrimination against women included constitutional, legal, and public issues, according to 2010 United Nations Development Programme (PNUD) report. Major challenges were seen in the symbolic representation of what is feminine and masculine according to the local culture, in the ways women and men have access to different power positions, and how they develop labor relationships (PNUD, 2010). That representation appeared in Chilean media surrounded by conservative frames, defined by Goffman (1974) as those "principles of organization which

govern events –at least social ones- and our subjective involvement in them” and as fixed barriers maintained by social beliefs, values and attitudes (Goffman, 1978).

Recent research developed in Chile by Comunidad Mujer, a nonprofit organization focused on gender issues, confirmed what PNUD showed in 2010 and added that in Chile the gender gap begins during the gestation period, when parents learn about the sex of their baby<sup>1</sup>. No matter the education and income levels of the parents, local families typically build a sexist atmosphere for the children: girls will be raised for domestic activities, and boys for professional and risky tasks (Comunidad Mujer, 2016).

For Chileans, the difference between sexes is a moral hierarchy issue: men are assumed to be superior and women depend on them (Comunidad Mujer, 2016, p. 11; PNUD, 2010, p. 28). Women’s lives takes place in the private and domestic sphere, defined by reproduction and parenting. Men typically hold the power positions, and thus are able to develop non-domestic productivity activities. In given contexts, such as family and work relationships, gender still determines what can be expected and what is expected and allowed for a man and a woman. This relationship determines Chilean social structure (PNUD, 28).

In 2006, Michelle Bachelet assumed the presidency in Chile. Some thought this would improve gender equality, but skeptical business owners, assured that if such a thing did happen, it would be a temporary situation. Four years later, PNUD’s report showed that the power balance was not equal between men and women. However, any improvement in this matter had been a daydream. In 2014 Bachelet won a second presidential term and is again developing a strong equality gender campaign, which has included the creation of a Ministry of Gender Equity.

According to a recent Global Gender Gap Report, Chile is ranked number 73 out of 145 countries, and the Gender Gap score is 0.698 (0.00= inequality; 1.00=equality). In 2010, Chile ranked number 48, and in 2006, number 78 (Global Gender Gap Report, 2015). Recent local research reveals that the gender gap grows when people meet the age of majority, and it never reduces. Local culture maintains women in secondary positions (Bravo, 2016).

Subjectivities and realities about the meaning of gender also come from media content. According to the UN report, sexism has been ambivalent in Chilean media. Traditional female stereotypes of submission and dependency have coexisted with contents that represent

a different woman, one who chooses how and where she wants to take part of the public sphere (PNUD, 2010, p. 87).

Since the incorporation of women into the workplace, conciliation of work and family has been a topic for advertising (SERNAC, 2003). Local publicity has been spreading the image of women as sex objects (Uribe et al., 2007) since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A quantitative analysis undertaken in 2014 by a private organization concluded that local advertising is still promoting women who are extremely thin (89%), white and blonde (41%), and who have lives mostly in the private sphere (64%) (Argel, 2014). In 1980 local magazines showed a woman who sought eternal youth, wanted to stay always young, white, thin and tiny and be the mother, wife or daughter of a prominent man (Santa Cruz & Erazo, 1980). 92% of the content included in that sample did not refer to women as decision makers in anything related to income, politics, or social issues (PNUD, 85).

In coverage of women related to news content, the available data reveals similarities with advertising. Hard news reports, as defined by Tuchman (1973), are especially relevant because they are “the area of the media in which our culture most insistently demands a veridical reproduction and decries distortion” (Tuchman, 1979).

“Research indicates that women have historically been both underrepresented and misrepresented in media coverage” (Armstrong, p. 139). Women are less frequently quoted than men, and “studies that explored gender diversity of sources have consistently found concentrations of males” (Freedman & Fico, p. 259), but there that research did not show evidence about the gender gap in Chilean newspapers, particularly in relation to source selection.

The selection of sources is one of the most difficult journalistic tasks, as sources are chosen to represent viewpoints and opinions, and they can influence social reality (Armstrong, p. 141). Freedman & Fico (2005) referred to Schudson’s (1978) assessment to point out the importance of this matter: “News making begins with sources”: thus, news sourcing is the defining moment for hard news professionals (Freedman & Fico, p. 258). And Niemi & Pitkänen (2016) define choosing sources as one of the major framing decisions when they say that those having a voice in public may have access to both actual and symbolic power. This study aims to show that the Chilean gender gap is not visible in the usage of news sources and does not affect women’s media presence, which, according to journalistic

routines, correlates with their participation in the public sphere although women's presence in other content media is biased against them.

## 2. Materials and methods

The main research objective of this project aims to measure gender inequality by comparing how many times women and men are quoted in El Mercurio with their real participation in the public sphere. For media presence we considered gender quotation in a sample of news published in Politics, Economics and Business, and Science and Technology sections of El Mercurio during 2015. Participation was defined by the number of women who actually work in Politics, Economics and Science and Technology in Chile.

The study included four specific objectives: 1) Analyze women's participation in Politics, Economics and Business, and Science and Technology local activities; 2) Quantify the presence of men and women in hard-news stories of a random sample of El Mercurio published during 2015; 3) Quantify how many times women and men were quoted in the Politics, Economics and Business and Science and Technology sections; and 4) Measure media bias comparing women and men's presence in the media with their participation in the three activities mentioned.

Gender data available in the National Institute of Statistics (INE) and documents published by Chilean Senate were used to understand the first objective: women's participation in the three areas chosen for the research. The PNUD's report, the Labor Direction's (DGT) survey about women's and men's employment (ENCLA, 2011), Pizarro and Guerra's (2010) research about female participation in Chile's most important companies, and the Comunidad Mujer (YEAR) report added relevant information to the analysis of female participation in these productive sectors.

Study of the second specific objective used content analysis because this methodology "presents gender researchers with a set of useful tools for comparing messages generated by males and females and for studying messages containing information about sex and gender roles" (Neuendorf (2011: 276). Following the checklist suggested by Neuendorf (p. 286) analysis units defined hard news (N=1,090) published in a random week of El Mercurio published during 2015<sup>2</sup>.

Independent variables included the newspaper sections proposed by the newspaper: Front page, International, Culture, Science and Technology, Economics and Business, National, Entertainment and Sports) and two journalistic genres: news and feature texts. The dependent variables were gender quotation as primary source and the coverage of gender issues in hard news topics (neutral or related to men or women).

The content analysis included the usage of male and female sources in Politics, Economics and Business, and Science and Technology, so message data for the three topics chosen for the research were combined with gender quotation, the dependent variable. The sample included number of total sources, number of male sources, number of female sources, unidentified sources, job and the gender of the first source quoted in the text.

Finally, a statistical model was established in order to compare gender quotation with women’s and men’s participation in the three activities.

3. Analysis and results

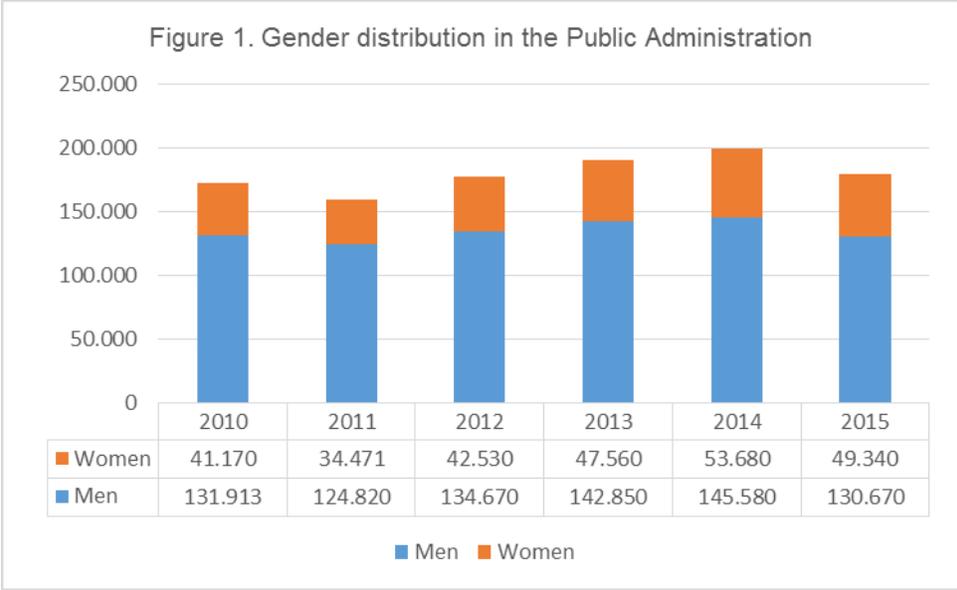
3.1. Women’s participation in Politics, Economic and Business, and Science and Technology activities

The Chilean government is presided over by Michelle Bachelet, who won the Presidential election in 2013. Her opponent was Evelyn Matthei, a woman who served as Minister of Labor and Social Security under the Government of Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014). This election was the first time that two women were opposing candidates at the polls, a highly unusual situation in Chile’s political history.

In Chile, women were allowed to vote in 1949, after twenty years of debate (Stuven, 2013). They have been part of the electoral roll since 1952, when they represented the 32.2% of the votes. This number increased until 1970. Currently, women equal almost half of the electorate, as can be seen in Table 1:

<b>Table 1. Women's participation in Chilean electoral roll</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Women %</b>
1952	954,131	32.3
1958	1,235,552	35.1
1964	2,512,147	44.1
1970	2,923,294	48.4
Source: Chilean Senate (2013)		

Between 2010 and 2015, women’s average participation in leadership positions in the Public Administration has been 24.79%. And, during these past five years, gender distribution in the Public Administration has been one woman per three men as seen in figure 1:



Source: INE, Chile, 2016

Bachelet leads a coalition formed by seven parties, and two are presided over by women. Her cabinet is composed by 23 members, with 34.7% women in the Ministries of Education, Justice, Labor, Health, Housing, Mining, Sports and Genre<sup>4</sup>. There are 32 undersecretaries, and 12 of them are women<sup>5</sup> (37.5%). Actually, women’s participation in the Parliament is quite low, 15.3%: 15.7% in the Senate and 15.2% in the Chamber of Deputies. Twenty-one members compose the Supreme Court, 23.8% are women. Chilean women’s participation in the Executive, the Parliament, and the Supreme Court is shown in Table 2:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
President	1	0	1
Ministries	8	15	23
Undersecretaries	12	21	33
Supreme Court Member	5	16	21
Government coalition pa	2	5	7
Senate	6	32	38
Chamber of Deputies	18	100	118
Total (u)	52	189	241
Total (%)	21,58%	78,42%	100%

Source: Chilean Government website, 2016

According to the Chilean Statistics Office (INE), in 2013 there were 3,701 women and 26,349 chief executive officers employed in middle and big size companies:

<b>Size Company</b>	<b>Women</b>		<b>Men</b>	
	<b>U</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>%</b>
Middle	2,974	14.62	17,369	85.38
Big	727	7.49	8,98	92.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,701</b>	<b>12.32</b>	<b>26,349</b>	<b>87.68</b>

Source: INE, 2013

Typically, today, Chilean women working in major companies are in their forties, have university education high level education degree; most of them are married, and they have an average of 3 children (Pizarro & Guerra, 2010).

Chilean men declare that there is no discrimination against women and that they have full access to board positions, but hard data shows that this statement is false, Gender discrimination is politically incorrect (Pizarro & Guerra, p. 40), and Chilean women carry out traditional roles because local culture impose that women should not delegate in their partners domestic issues (PNUD, p. 16).

According to Chilean's Statistics office (INE) in 2013 there were 7,838 women and 11,112 men working in I+D activities:

<b>Table 4. Participation: Women and men in I+D activities</b>		
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Higher education	4,376	6,682
Business	2,054	2,889
Public Service	489	627
Private Institutions	919	914
<b>Total (u)</b>	<b>7,838</b>	<b>11,112</b>
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>41.36</b>	<b>58.64</b>

Source: INE, 2013

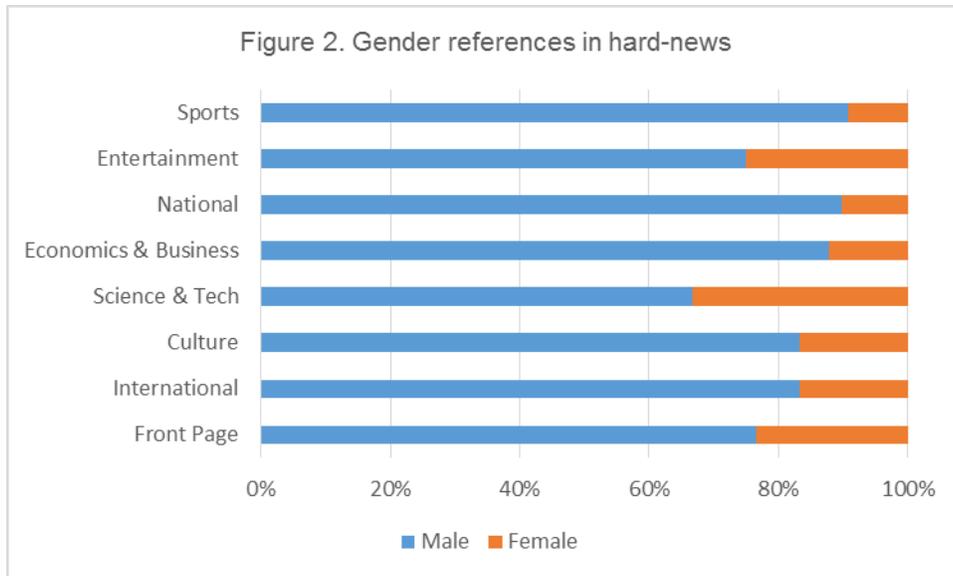
Studies developed in 2015 by Chile's National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) revealed that there is a gender gap in the grants awarded for graduate programs (-5,0) (Conicyt, 2015).

### 3.2. Gender distribution in hard news stories, El Mercurio, 2015

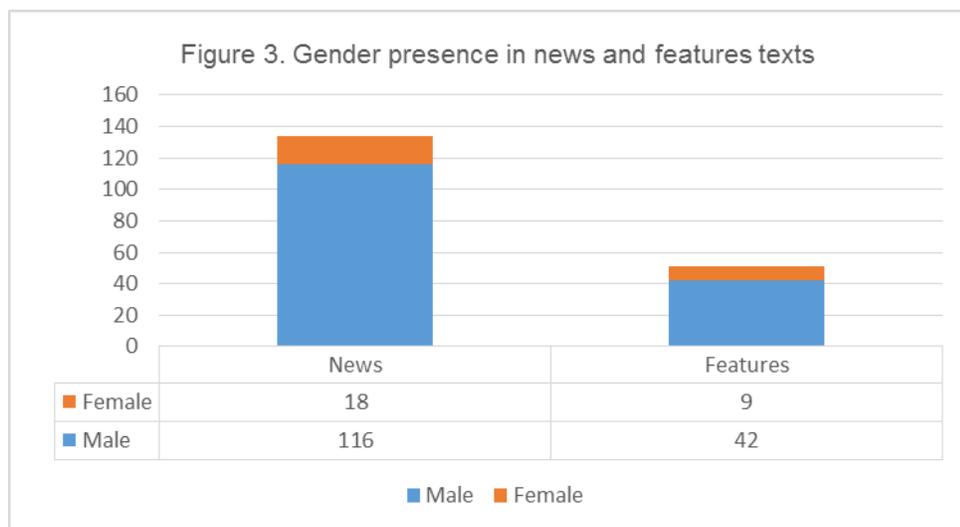
Considering the usage of sources and news topics, women's presence in the whole sample analyzed (N=1,090) was 6%, i.e., the content referred clearly to women or because journalists cited female sources. The smallest gender gap occurred in the Science and Technology (33.33%) section, and the largest appeared in the Sports pages (9.30%).

In descending order, women's presence in the rest of the content published by El Mercurio followed women's media depiction as defined by Tuchman (1979). The feminine portray showed by the newspaper refers to a woman who stays outside the public sphere and has little possibilities to become a social model (Tuchman, p. 528).

In the sample analyzed for this research, women's presence was always lower than men's: 25% in Entertainment, 23.4% in the Front Page, 16.67% in Culture and in International, 12.12% in Economics & Business, 10.14% in National as seen in figure 2:



Women’s presence was also lower, no matter which journalistic genre was used: hard-news texts, like news and features, and in interviews, editorials and columns. Figure 3 shows gender distribution in news and features:



### 3.3. The usage of female sources in Politics, Economics and Business and Science and Technology hard-news

Although the research analyzed 1,090 units, the focus was gender quotation in the news texts. The general sample of news published in every section included 299 text items, out of 501 sources. The quotation according to genre can be seen in the Table 5.

<b>Table 5. Women and men quoted as news sources</b>			
<b>Number of sources (u)</b>	<b>Not identified (u)</b>	<b>Female sources (u)</b>	<b>Male sources (u)</b>
501	120	64	317
<b>Presence %</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>63%</b>

### 3.3.1 Women's presence in Politics hard news

The sample included 120 news texts, and Table 6 shows the distribution of sources in those texts:

<b>Table 6. Presence: Women and men quoted in Politics news texts</b>			
<b>Number of news coded (u)</b>	<b>No sources (u)</b>	<b>Female sources (u)</b>	<b>Male sources (u)</b>
120	17	21	82
<b>Presence %</b>		<b>20,40%</b>	<b>79.6%</b>

### 3.3.2 Women's presence in Economics and Business news

The sample of economic and business news chosen for this research included 73 pieces of text. Table 7 shows the distribution of sources according to genre:

<b>Table 7. Presence: Women and men quoted in Economic and Productivity news</b>			
<b>Number of sources (u)</b>	<b>No sources (u)</b>	<b>Female sources (u)</b>	<b>Male sources (u)</b>
230	0	24	206
<b>Presence (5)</b>		<b>10.4%</b>	<b>89.6%</b>

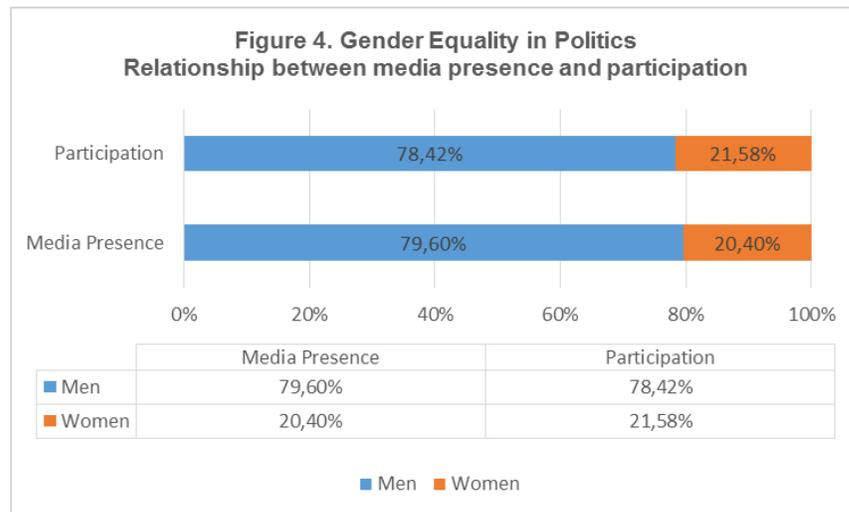
### 3.3.2. Women's presence in Science and Technology news

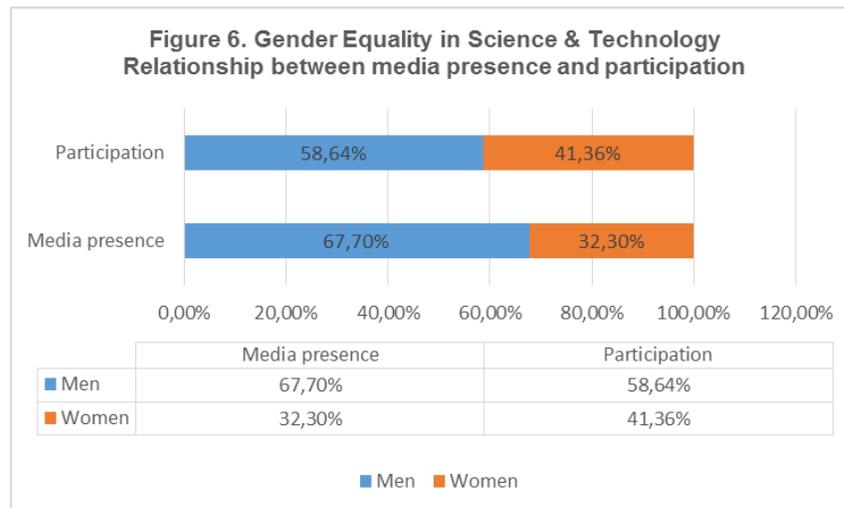
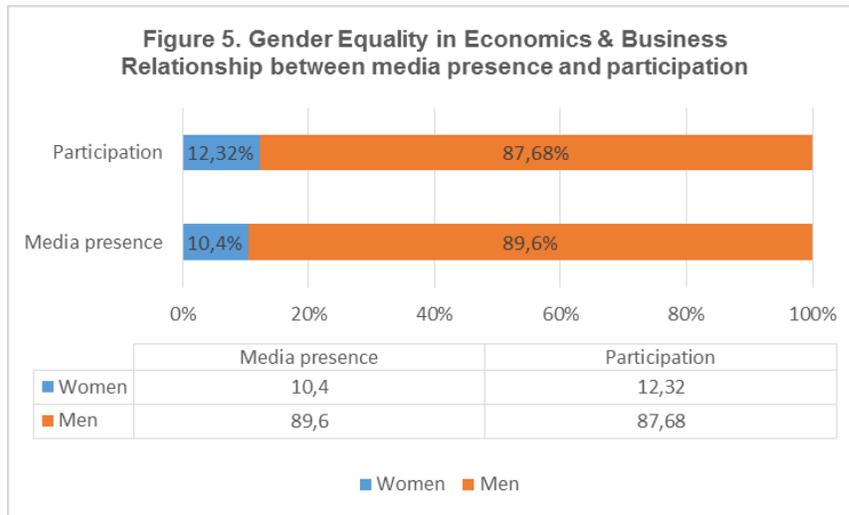
The sample of science and technology news chosen for this research included 14 pieces of text; the distribution by gender is shown in Table 8:

<b>Table 8. Presence: Women and men quoted in Science and Technology news</b>			
Number of sources (u)	No sources (u)	Female sources (u)	Male sources (u)
31	0	10	21
Presence %	0	32.3%	67.7%

### 3.4. The relationship between media presence and participation in the public sphere

Women’s newspaper presence always appears to be lower than for men, and much research shows that women are underrepresented in the press (Armstrong, 2004; Freedman & Fico, 2005, and Niemi & Pitkänen, 2016). The statistical model designed for this study compared women’s media presence with actual participation in Politics, Economics and Business and Science and Technology sections. The relationships between actual participation and the presence in the newspaper are shown in Figures 4, 5 and 6:





#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis carried out in this project demonstrates that gender inequality does not come from the usage of sources in hard news. The gap between women's media presence and their participation in Politics, Economics and Business and Science and Technology activities is statistically insignificant, which confirms the hypothesis of this work. In Chile, the gender gap does not result from the usage of published sources related to major activities, but from local values, beliefs and attitudes that affect female participation in the public sphere. The newspaper in turn reflects this gender gap by not reporting equally about men and women.

As it can be seen in Figure 4, the difference between women's participation in Politics and their presence in the newspaper as a source is 1.18. In Economics and Business the difference is 1.92 (Figure 5). The biggest difference occurs in Science and Technology, 9.02 (Figure 6). Thus, the relationship between women's presence in the news media and her participation in society, especially in politics and economics areas, is quite equal. The most relevant journalistic routine does not appear to affect gender inequality.

Women are quoted by the press because of their participation in the public sphere, and it is important to note that their news-media presence has increased 2.6 since 2005. The fact that Chile has a woman as a President has not affected the number of female quotations in the Politics section of the most influential newspaper in Chile, and this lack of coverage is questionable and a matter for further research.

On the other hand, and according to the previous research cited in the study and the Gender Gap Index data, a general high level of gender discrimination is found in female participation in the public sphere. However, this lower coverage does not seem to be a matter of media presence but to a system of values that should be explored in a second stage of this research project.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> The research developed by Comunidad Mujer title is *Genre, Education and Work (Género, Educación y Trabajo)* and was published in April, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> The sample of the content analysis included the newspapers published on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, August 11<sup>th</sup>, February 18<sup>th</sup>, January 8<sup>th</sup>, July 17<sup>th</sup>, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The Government coalition is called *Nueva Mayoría* and it is composed by *Partido Socialista*, *Partido por la Democracia*, *Partido Sociodemócrata*, *Democracia Cristiana*, *Movimiento Amplio social* and *Izquierda Ciudadana*. *Partido Socialista* and *Democracia Cristiana* are presided by women (Senator Isabel Allende and Senator Carolina Goic), May, 9<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>4</sup> The women who take part of Bachelet's cabinet when this paper is written are Adriana Delpiano (Education), Javiera Blanco (Justice and Human Rights), Ximena Rincón (Labor and Social Security), Carmen Castillo (Health), Paulina Saball (House and Urbanism), Aurora Williams (Mining), Natalia Riffo (Sports), Claudia Pascual (Genre), June, 7<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Paulina Vodanovic, Patricia Silva, Natalia Piergentili, Javiera Montes, Heidi Berner, Valentina Quiroga, Isabel Díaz, Julia Urquieta, Ana Alarcón, Jimena Jara, Nicole Sáez and Bernardita Pérez have a position between the undersecretaries in May, 9<sup>th</sup> 2016.

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