From state-governed to privatization: The democratization of the media an utopia? The contemporary example of media accountability in Chile and Venezuela (2000-2017)

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Abstract

The debate between public and privatized media is well-known in media studies and a field of an experiment by several states and enterprises. As the media is a major actor, if not the major actor in public opinion shaping, it holds a strong power, issued by many academic discussions. However, still without the result for a truly democratic media system, leaving a question for the causation of this. Chile with a highly neoliberal economy and privatized media system, compared with Venezuela, a "pink-tied government" which has experienced a media transformation from privatized towards a public system, seem to be promising case studies in this manner, appearing as two sides of the same coin. In order to contribute to the debate if the democratization of the media is a utopia and evaluate the democratic level of both cases studies a media accountability model will be created, that should be universally applicable.

Key words

Media democratization, accountability mechanisms, privatized and public media, freedom of expression, transparency, watchdog, pluralism, democratic media system, Chile, Venezuela
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Introduction

Corporatism and commercialization of the media has shown that the media is, despite the official discourse of achieving press freedom through liberalizing it, not a real medium of plurality as marginalized voices are rarely represented mainly due to concentrated ownership. It is actually a paradox, as "liberalizing" the media, often led to media conglomerates rather than freedom of press, even though it might be stated as "free" by the official indexes. Hence, old power structures are represented and re-enforced rather than scrutinized. However, "the media as fourth estate" holds high power and a true potential in guaranteeing democracy and civic engagement. The "Al Jazeera effect" (Zingarelli, 2010) is just one illustration of this, emphasizing the importance of an academic investigation in this research.

Over the last decades countries such as Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador have moved from "communication as commodity to a people´s right, passing laws to prevent discrimination of marginalized groups in broadcast content" (Hall, n.d.). The left-wing governments of those countries, the so called pink tied governments, were introducing new regulatory frameworks, raising the question of the efficiency and functionality of those. A distinction can be made between the Western-liberal view and Latin American perspectives, which will be analyzed and help in answering the questions on if a real democratization of the media (that is not state or owner tied), is possible at all, how this could be achieved, as well as what alternatives might be there except state-governed or privatized media. Venezuela under Chávez illustrates an interesting case, as he reshaped the national media’s landscape within the last decade "to prevent the discrimination of marginalized groups in broadcast content" (Hall, n.d.). The reforms, however, are controversially discussed, mostly supported by grassroots, mainstream Human Rights organizations hardly criticize and question the possibility of the media to perform its watchdog function (Hall, n.d.). It is a case per example of the left-wing government movements and policies characterized by the pink tied countries, focusing on redistributive reforms, which have been manifested in the strongest form in Venezuela (Robinson, 2011).

While Chávez has created "a radical anti-neo-liberal bloc", Chile’s political developments led to a "elected progressive bloc" (Robinson, 2011). The latter, refers to the fact that, the "nation-state is still tide to larger institutional networks of global capitalism" (Robinson, 2011). However, concentrated ownership is a characteristic feature of Chile’s media landscape, leading back to the country’s history of dictatorship (1973-1990), despite being a democratic example for the region nowadays. Representing two different cases in their media landscapes, as well as reform policies and economic stances, it is of significance to investi-
gate in both cases as, as it will help answer the research questions already mentioned. Moreover, they seem to be on two opposing ends, Venezuela with a nationalized media "of the public good" and Chile officially stating press freedom, according to the Press Freedom Index (Freedomhouse.org, 2017, Chile). Furthermore, with identifying strength and weaknesses of media policies, government restrictions, corporation strategies and power relations of both countries, it will be clarified whether they could be exemplary for other countries in the world, in democratizing the media or what lessons could be learned from failure.

Moreover, within the following proposed structure and sections the subsequent questions will be answered: How does the public media understand its role in both countries? How is the media used as instrument of politics? How are marginalized voices heard, if at all? How strong is the influence of media conglomerates and oligarchies of the private sector? Following the argument of Canizález´ (2009) negative view on democratization of the media (cited in Kinn 2016), which will be further elaborated on in the literature review, the hypothesis that even though Chile and Venezuela follow different approaches in media democratization under the cloak of pluralistic media coverage, both states still follow an own political agenda, as well as that the real democratization of media still remains an utopia, will either be verified or falsified. The time frame of especially 2000-2017 has been chosen, as both cases will be analysed contemporarily and have been undergoing mayor political changes within this period, Chile from the end of its military dictatorship and re-democratization (1990) and Venezuela from its pink-tied government with populist leader Hugo Chavéz following an agenda of nationalizing, who´s death led in 2013 to a government change and the new president Maduro.

**Objectives**

The overall aim or objective of the thesis presented is, to answer the formulated research questions and to define a tool that helps in doing so. Accountability mechanisms will hence be determined with its parameters, which should be universally applicable and help to identify whether a country has a democratic media system or not. Moreover, to distinguish accountability and responsibility measurements of Chile and Venezuela, and question their efficiency as part of the debate whether regulations can foster, press freedom or if media democratization automatically means pluralistic media coverage. The literature review presented will hence follow the aim to clarify topic relevant concepts, position the thesis within, identify knowledge gaps and lastly justify the definition of accountability with its specific pa-
rameters. The inefficiency of such measurements could explain why media representation fails to be pluralistic or why media does not perform as "watchdog", which will be further explained in the chapter of the theoretical framework. Moreover, it will be investigated whether media regulations such as reforms and ethical codes of conducts helped in achieving press freedom or restricted it and why.

To participate in the media debate if real democratic media coverage is possible at all, the media paradigm of both countries, whether commercialized or public, will be determined. The specific definition of accountability chosen will be further explained and applied within the research and contains the following seven independent variables: Media as its function of watchdog, representing pluralism, providing access to information for the public, the degree of media concentration and ownership, transparency, audience participation, as well as if the ethical code of conduct is followed. While the section of data collection methods within the methodology will provide a clear definition of media accountability and its mechanisms, some of the main objectives of this research is determined and structured by those parameters. In that sense, it is an objective of this thesis to reveal the relations between the media, state, and enterprises of Chile and Venezuela and reveal whether they are strongly tied, or dominated by a duopoly, for example. Moreover, if a broad spectrum of interests is represented in their media systems, including minorities and oppositional voices, fostering a diverse news coverage and hence public opinion, to what extent the ethical code of conduct is respected or even known, journalists can investigate against the dominant power, the public is politically active through internet or demonstrations etc., and whether information about large conglomerates is distributed. Throughout the research, those objectives might amplify or change, while it is very likely that new parameters might be identified.

The uniqueness of this research is thus its academic and empirical contribution, while the accountability mechanisms are an amplified model of Suárez-Villegas et al. (2017). It has, therefore, an academic relevance, but also a social one, as the media is the lens through which the public most often sees the world, confirmed by agenda-setting theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Democratizing the media means democratizing society and provide a platform for the political debate of different voices, especially marginalized or minority ones. The media as an institution does hold the power of opinion shaping, and in a social function could prevent racism, for example (Van Dijk, 1989).

**Methodology**

*Overall approach and rational*
The elaborated hypothesis and presented research questions will be answered by mixed methods and the interplay of extensive academic literature, including primary and secondary sources, journalistic articles and conducted semi-structured interviews. After having articulated occurring problems and a possible knowledge gap, qualitative research is assumed as the most plausible method, also as the study will investigate in the two case studies of Chile and Venezuela which are most likely individual cases that are not numerical graspable, in terms of accountability. Moreover, the use of qualitative research is reasonable, as the questions portrayed are mainly theoretical and sources like media policies, academic literature, laws and ethical codes of conduct have to be considered while comparing those to media experts or professionals of each country and hence individual agents.

As one of the main objectives of this research is to formulate an own definition of accountability and determine its parameters, the red thread of this research will be to identify those and analyze their changes in the contextual background as well as how these influence today’s communication systems in both countries. Moreover, they will be included in the interviews and later on compared to actual findings. To understand the broader context of the research questions formulated and to find possible theoretical approaches to answer them, the essay presented will firstly point out a theoretical framework, addressing major media discussions, followed by the contextual background of the case studies, as well as the actual comparative analysis of both countries including primary sources such as ethical codes of conducts and the semi-structured interviews. The latter will especially be semi-structured, as "the general aim is to encourage people to talk to some length and in their own way" (Drever, 1995, p10), as well as Bernard (1988), points out, when there is only "one chance to interview someone" (cited in Qualres, 2008). The structure of the methodology section itself will follow the example of Marshall and Rossman (2012).

**Site or population selection and sampling strategies**

The target population of this qualitative research will hence be media professionals, students or academic experts of Chile and Venezuela, while the interviews themselves (units of analysis) will be conducted after random sampling. The specific population has been chosen, as it is of importance when doing a comparative analysis of media democratization in contemporary Chile and Venezuela, to investigate whether the changes and reforms were and are made with the intention of democratizing the media or if the latter just illustrates a cloak.

It is hence necessary to conduct interviews of people participating in media reality while comparing their statements to theories, reforms and ethical conducts. As a qualitative
research approach is followed, three people of each country, fulfilling the criteria mentioned will be interviewed, followed by an extensive analysis of those. This method, the selected population as well as the sampling strategies will help identify the discrepancies of this "media reality" portrayed by the interviews and the regulatory. Moreover, it will help fulfilling the objectives that were previously formulated, such as proving the effectiveness of accountability measurements in both countries. The overall number of interviews will be six, three of each country, allowing for an extensive analysis and setting them in a fitting context. As the professions of the interviewees differ, some questions will be adopted to the specific professions. The frequently used liberal definition of press freedom, assuming that no restrictions foster pluralism, will not just be adopted but compared to other approaches.

Data collection methods

As mentioned previously, semi-structured interviews will be conducted, following mixed methods including open and closed questions (See interviews 1-6 in the appendix). However, as the questions are partly open (Qualres, 2008) each interview will most likely develop individually. Moreover, the questions will differ from country to country as both cases have been experiencing different socio-political and economic developments, especially in relation to media, as well as to the profession of the interviewee. Two different types will be used within the interviews: 'Prompts, which are usually open questions, and probes which are rather closed ones' (Drever, 1995, p13). The former can either be formulated generally or in a way to "encourage the respondent to answer" (Drever, 1995, p11). The latter either contains a question that builds upon "a detail that was mentioned by the interviewee before" or that clarifies and reassures on something that was said before (Drever, 1995, p12). The different types of questions are used and distinguished to previously decide on "how much control to exercise" within the interview (Drever, 1995, p12).

The conducted interviews will be compared with the in the objectives identified accountability mechanisms. Accountability of the media is hence fully efficient and indicating a democratic media system, if it can act as watchdog without mere consequences, represents various voices of a broad political spectrum and minorities, provides adequate access to information and thus fosters self-citizenship and is not tied to ownership nor biased towards it. Transparency as a parameter should clarify if there is a variety of media formats owned by the same conglomerate, for example, or truly a diversity of information. The participation of the audience can indicate if, even though the system might not be democratic, there still is an active audience in a dialogue with the country’s communication system. Also, if the later is
allowed by the state at all. As Bertrand points out correctly “the problem of ethics in journalism is not anymore in defining their codes but whether they are respected or not” (cited in Von Krogh, 2007), which is why the responsibility towards them will be a useful measurement. If the analysis determines a media system as democratic, after having considered all these tools, another conclusion should be that “quality news” can be produced (Bertrand cited in Von Krogh, 2007).

The biggest obstacles, according to Bertrand, for producing quality news are the tendency of “today’s journalism to report negative news, towards "infotainment" and "iceberg journalism" which only covers the news "visible"” (cited in Von Krogh, 2007, p29). Freedom of press and expression has consciously not been chosen as variable determining accountability, as from this point of view, it does not equal pluralism and ethical consideration, which the literature review will extensively elaborate on.

The definition and its measurements will hence be applied to the case studies and contextual background, composing a red threat of this investigation. Although Bertrand argues that "media accountability systems include any none-state instruments whose main purpose is to improve the news media service" (cited in Von Krogh, 2007), the definition of media accountability formulated within this research will consider the state as an actor as well, as the parameters identified can be restricted or improved by it.

**Data analysis procedures**

Firstly, the literature review will explain current media discussions and concepts to identify knowledge gaps, select relevant theory for the research presented, that will be combined and compared with the contextual background and actual analysis of the case studies, and position the thesis within. The change of the media systems in Chile and Venezuela during time and in an contemporary context will be analyzed with the help of the accountability mechanisms, while the findings of those outcomes will be compared with the conducted interviews, and, hence, media reality in the third chapter. The appendix lists the units of analysis (See interview 1-6 in the appendix), which are the interviews that have been conducted. The language of the interviews themselves will be Spanish, as it is the dominant language in Chile and Venezuela but personally translated into English when quoted, for the purpose of this thesis. The interviews will be conducted online, via Skype and in e-mail correspondence.

It is the following table that will be considered for further investigation and the analysis procedures mentioned. Once applied to both case studies, it will allow for a direct com-
parison of the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms in both countries. Moreover, it portrays a possibility of highlighting different degrees and nuances of those mechanisms and thus provides a more informative tool of evaluating media systems other than only stating freedom of press as "free", "partly free" and "not free", for example. After the Table 1 will be applied to the case studies, issues or ideas for amplification might occur. On a scale from 0-5, 0 meaning not effective, 5 meaning highly effective the degree of each parameter will be ranked to get a clear picture on the current situation, provide an easier tool of comparison, as well as illustrate the exact nuances.

**Table 1. Analysis of accountability mechanisms after the model of Suárez-Villegas et al.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms concerning media companies, groups or government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree of Media Concentration:</strong> News coverage tied to ownership? Oligarchic structure? Monopoly? Duopoly? Or more distributed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pluralism:</strong> Broad spectrum of interests represented? Minorities? Opposition to government?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience Participation:</strong> Communication as channel to express opinion? Correspondence through web pages, social media or reader’s section?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency:</strong> Information published on corporate or government websites?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to Information:</strong> How many readers? Access to internet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watchdog:</strong> Active as control organ? Detecting human rights abuses or corruption, for example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethical code of conducts:</strong> Respected in news production?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Anticipated ethical issues**

Concerning the conducted interviews, three major ethical issues occur. Firstly, are the original interviews translated from Spanish into English, which illustrates an ethical issue only to the extent, that one should keep in mind, that translation, as well as media and language can never fully represent reality (Barker, 2003). Besides, according to Weerakkody (2008, p160), "a researcher can never be neutral" and will always include his own point of view, even though unconsciously, which might already hold true by selecting the quotes used. The analysis of the interviews is affected by the same kind of bias. Additionally, there is a necessity to abbreviate the names of the interviewees, as especially in the Venezuelan case the participants might be endangered by being exposed within this research.
Another issue, that should be taken into consideration, is that although both case studies have certain features of media democratization in Latin America, they certainly have experienced individual socio-political and economic developments reaching from Venezuela in the context of pink-tied governments, the populist leadership of Hugo Chávez and relatively recent governmental change to Maduro, to Chile which has been ruled under a military dictatorship for decades and re-democratized only in the 1990s. In analyzing both cases comparatively, one should be aware of claiming generalizations.

Moreover, most literature concerning democratization and media is Western-centric, not including Latin American scholars, which is why the research is already limited in perspective, despite its trial to include interviews and consequently voices from people that are directly involved. In doing so, it will be acknowledged that some limitations might occur as a scholar from Europe (Western background) is researching about Latin America, although the findings could contribute to a global discussion, which the democratization of the media certainly is, and suggest improvements.

**Significance of the study**

As has been pointed out already by objectives and the mentioned knowledge gap in the introduction of this thesis, the qualitative research will help to firstly address the question of what a democratized media really means, what versions there have been and contribute to the media debate of press freedom and whether public or commercialized media fulfils these criteria. Moreover, if there might be an alternative to both versions. In order to do so, the debate will be brought into the context of Latin American media democratization and especially the cases of Chile and Venezuela, as they seem to opposing each other: Chile with commercialized media conglomerates and Venezuela with nationalized public media. In identifying strength and weaknesses of both media systems as well as investigating in the reasoning for possible failure or advantages of them, the research presented is of significance in answering the question whether a truly democratic media system is possible at all and hence less power-driven, as well as how this might be achieved.

Additionally, will the formulated definition of media accountability, with its parameters, be of significance in the way that it can be used universally to determine and measure the democratic degree of each media system in the world and thus go beyond a theoretical approach but generate a practical tool. Hence, even though conducting a comparative analysis of the cases Chile and Venezuela, the outcomes of the research questions will hold value for
global concerns, especially when comparing them to a further country from another region. The defined parameters will form a tool for this investigation as well as its structure.

**Expected Outcomes**

The research is promising in illustrating possible advantages and disadvantages of commercialized and public media, even though both versions might proclaim the official aim of a pluralistic media representation. The findings will clarify whether the state, in each country, fails in this goal because of following a political agenda, or media conglomerates hold too much power, for example. The assumption is, that even though press freedom and media as a democratic platform is an officially well-intended approach with international reputation, fully democratized media might be an utopia, as someone will always foster their own power interests.

Furthermore, it is assumed that press freedom is an ambiguous concept that is differently interpreted by various actors. Once applying the accountability mechanisms to the case studies this argument will be illustrated. Difficulties might occur in determining the exact degree on the efficiency scale, also as most of the official indexes, such as Freedom House, Transparency International, Human Rights Watch etc., evaluate from an outside point of view, hardly including micro-factors, such as social pressure or freedom of expression as an ambiguous term, which will be further explained in the literature review.

**Limitations**

As a qualitative approach is used, the research presented is a small-scale one and hence contains a limited amount of interviews. Further research would be necessary over a longer period of time to either verify or falsify the hypothesis and answer the research questions with more certainty. Besides, to assure that the outcomes of the analysis are normal or unusual of a democratic media system, the accountability model should be applied to a third country from another region, holding the reputation and measurement of a well-functioning democracy, which however extents the scope of this thesis and should be done in further research. To further investigate in socialist governments and their trial to communalize the media, the model should be applied to other pink-tied governments such as Ecuador or Argentina, as well, to identify whether the Venezuelan case is unique in its outcomes or not.

A further limitation is that the amount of information accumulated by the interviews, which exceeds the volume of this thesis but encourages for further research.
I. Chapter one: Theoretical debate on different currents on media studies and democracy

1.1 Between responsibility and accountability: A debate on the media’s function in society

Within the last decades and centuries media has been, as much as democracy, in a process of transition and hence a major subject of discussion. Media, being considered as a crucial aspect of democracy, at least according to the Western-liberal account (McQuail, 2012, p.239), does not represent "the end of history" (Fukuyama, 1989) but constantly re-invents itself, while holding the potential for democratizing democracy itself and thus portraying a solution as well as the way to it. The emphasize, however, has to be on "holding the potential", as increasing commercialized media conglomerates and oligarchic ownerships lead to a power concentration that without accountability does not reflect the media’s function as "watchdog" (Schultz, 1999).

The dominant media debate on the topic hence varies from the ideal of the media as "the fourth estate", which according to Felle (2015, p86), describes the media as a further organ of state power as well as its control, likewise judicative, executive and legislative, to media as an institution that within a dominant discourse reproduces underlying power structures (Van Dijk, 1989). While Felle (2015) and Schulz (1999) argue, that in an ideal democracy the media functions as a "watchdog" portraying an organ of control, McQuail picks up the general, in his argumentation, misleading construction of the binary of accountability and freedom of expression (2012, p237). The crux of his discussion is, that freedom is an ambiguous, complex concept, which gains different meanings through interpretation (McQuail, 2012, p237). In fact, he claims, that the very constraints of freedom of expression, and thus media accountability, generate a "real" freedom of expression, as the representation of marginalized voices can be assured which lastly serves the interest of society (p137).

The problem persists however, in the identification of means of accountability (McQuail, 2012, p242) to for example not state-centralize the media and decline its influence as watchdog function. Further, the author makes a distinction between responsibility and accountability, which represents a major idea that will be used within this essay and applied to the case studies of the last section. In basic terms, he equalizes responsibility with a rational approach in formulating effective constrains and regulatory, while accountability should function as the executive control organ that assures that the media accords with those (McQuail, 2012, p241). However, the author clearly distinguishes responsibility and accountability, while this thesis will highlight that both concepts can overlap. The ethical code of
each country, for example, would represent responsibility but at the same time accountability, as it questions law which is placed external to media.

McQuail ascribes four main independent variables that were causing media changes and illustrate the importance of accountability: "Globalization, commercialization, increased scale and abundance of media, as well as increased concentration." (2012, p235). Tambakaki especially focuses on the notion of globalization and identifies it as an individual phenomenon that distinguishes between countries and represents the interdependence of territorial and national features which does not make it applicable as an uniform norm (2009, p3). Hence, the author does not just identify the phenomenon as a source of change for the media but further calls for the creation of an universal form of democratization (Tambakaki, 2009, p3). Globalization depicts an issue in the case of media developments, as according to McQuail, a globalized media is not responsible to any specified public and thus difficult to be held accountable when not serving in public interest (2012, p236).

Sousa and Fidalgo go in line with McQuail in the sense, that they as well describe the dichotomy of "journalistic obligations and press freedom" as a construction that is widely misperceived and subject of an older discussion (2011, p283). Furthermore, ´regulations could rather be seen as a positive tool of increasing journalistic quality´ (Sousa and Fidalgo, 2011, p283). There are mainly two actors arguing from the other side of the same coin of this dichotomy: "The commercial media", which perceives the "invisible hand" of the market as the most natural regulation, and "the social actors" who favour a "state-centred regulation to ensure fundamental values" (Sousa and Fidalgo, 2011, p283). Curran and Seaton as well identify these two actors (free and social market) as the main ones in determining current media debates (2003). The agenda in the social case, is officially to serve "public interest" (Sousa and Fidalgo, 2011, p283), which is questionable in many cases, as this "common good" can be used under the cloak of democracy and pluralism, while pursuing power interests of the elite.

It is especially this argument that Cammaerts and Carpenter are focusing on, dismantling that ´media pluralism itself is "an object of political contestation"´ (2007, p25), following a certain ideology. Moreover, it is, as much as democracy, a fluctuate concept (Cammaerts and Carpenter, 2007, p25), that in its outcomes depend on the executive and interplay of different actors, and not a status quo that represents "the end of history" (Fukuyama, 1989). A democracy, in their view, is a political battleground of power struggles, illustrating that "normative concepts such as media freedom, pluralism, or diversity" are not free of ide-
ology (Cammaerts and Carpenter, 2007, p26). Hall (1973) goes in line with this stance, stating that there is a "double articulation’ that ‘binds the inner discourse of the newspaper to the ideological universe of the society […] Events enter the domain of ideology as soon as they become visible to the news-making process." (cited in Cammaerts and Carpenter, 2007, p152).

While democracy in the modern paradigm claims to enable the public to sovereignty and free choice on the basis of free information flows, Manin argues in contrast that it is "uncertain whether the gap between the governing elites and the ordinary citizens has narrowed or whether the control of voters over their representatives has increased." (2010, p236). Based on this argument he distinguishes between democracies and "today’s representatives" (Manin, 2010, p236). Additionally, the author claims an absurdity or "paradox" that despite the absence of a democratic evaluation, "the relationship between representatives and those they represent is today perceived as democratic" (Manin, 2010, p236). Contemporary democracies are hence representative governments that ‘have democratic features but oligarchic ones as well’ (Manin, 2010, p237), which will be further emphasized on in the following subsection.

Rubenstein acknowledges the persistence of oligarchic structures and social inequalities in today’s democracies, highlighting the need for a "surrogate" form of accountability, as the "standard model of accountability" cannot serve as a tool of control, if the actors of control do not have the power to hold "the power holders" accountable (2007, p616-617). If the actors of control are the audience, one could assume, in economic terms, that demand determines supply, thus media responds and reports in favour of public opinion. In an ideal democracy the media, as well as the audience would hold enough power to be a mean of accountability functioning as watchdog. However, considering agenda-setting theory (McComb and Shaw, 1972), which will be further explained in the following sub-section, the media can strongly influence public opinion by the frequency of reporting certain news, while ignoring others and framing them. If 90% of national newspapers is owned by the same family, as in the Chilean case (Mellado and Rafter, 2016, p533), the question raises if the audience as actor of control can truly be a mean of accountability. The case of populism and the pink-tied movements is hence interesting in scrutinizing, as a nationalization of media and public media is portrayed in following public demands and pluralism, but does it? Especially the case study of Venezuela will bring light the darkness concerning this matter.
If the common perception of democracy does not equal the actual contemporary governments claiming to be democracies and the idealistic image of the media is an organ serving democracies and controlling power elites, but is failing to do so, one can question the concept of freedom of press as well. The following subsection will hence focus on the academic debate of this presented problem, as well as on how media ownership influences the democratic function of the media.

1.2 Press freedom= Freedom of press? A debate between freedom of expression and ownership concentration

When speaking of press freedom the concepts of democratization, human rights and citizenship are inevitable. Tambakaki distinguishes between human rights and citizenship to that extent, that according to Delanty (2000), the former is an "ethical and legal concept of the individual" while the latter a "political and legal understanding of the individual" (cited in Tambakaki, 2009, p8). Human rights are hence universally applicable while citizenship differs from country to country and is hence bound to territory (Tambakaki, 2009, p8). As already pointed out in the previous section, democratization although perceived as universal concept, like citizenship, varies and depends on territory and nation, which is why in the era of globalization, they are not universal applicable norms and only certain citizens have certain rights (Tambakaki, 2009, p8). The same holds true in her argumentation for the media and its changes (Tambakaki, 2009, p8), the paradox is consequently that press freedom, although being an universal human right, differs territorial and is only for citizens of a nation.

This argument accords with Anderson (1991) and Agamben (1996), who acknowledge that the creation and dichotomy of citizens and non-citizens determine what it means to be a citizen of a certain nation and justify the rights they hold. Agamben (1996) refers to Aristotle’s explanation of two different meanings for life: Zoe, "the biological fact of life" and Bios, which is "qualified life" (cited in Edkins and Vaughan-Williams, 2009, p21). Citizens are entitled to Bios, why non-citizens only live a life of Zoe, which equals a bare or animal life. The voice of non-citizens, such as refugees, can thus not be heard and they are not entitled to freedom of expression, as Spivak (1988) points out as well when asking the question "Can the subaltern speak?". Despite an exclusion of Bios, people with a life of Zoe remain a link with citizens, in the sense that they are defined by this absence of rights and being different to them (Edkins and Vaughan-Williams, 2009, p22). It is hence the construction of an "abnormal" other that determines the identity of and creates an "in-group". The same process and power structure underlies as Edward Said (1979) describes in "Orientalism", in the di-
chotomy of an irrational "them", which creates an rational "us", while the latter is entitled to different rights within the same nation state.

The notion of this artificial construction of concepts that grant people certain rights can be referred to, according to Anderson (1991), the creation of nation states as "imagined communities". He argues that, as one does not know of every member of the nation a centrifugation of people, determining the ones outside territorial boarders, as well as minorities that live within the nation but do not hold the same values or traditions, helps defining who is part of it and strengthen its credibility (Anderson, 1991, p7). Moreover, once a boarder has been drawn, ‘a nation state is limited, which is why means of exclusion have to be found’ (Anderson, 1991, p7).

In terms of media, it is this aspect of creating rights and excluding the ones not holding them, while exclusion is a tool of justification for the power-holders, that empower the voice of only the "in-group" (Van Dijk, 1989, p201). The media illustrates an institution that serves in re-enforcing the discourse of the ruling elite and its power structures (Van Dijk, 1989). The media theories on agenda-setting (McComb and Shaw, 1972, p176) and the spiral of silence (Potter, 2012, p75) support this claim. As marginalized voices are silenced and do not have a space for letting their voices be heard, they also "refrain from expressing their believes", which is followed by more silence and the absence of their issue in mainstream media (Potter, 2012, p75). Gramsci explains this procedure by the passiveness of the dominated group and its silent consent of being dominated until a struggle of power relations occurs (cited in Barker, 2003). As it is hence only the voice of the dominant or "in-group" that is represented in media, the political agenda is also mainly influenced by them. Agenda-setting theory claims that the frequency of published media is crucial in determining the audience’s perception on what news draw attention (McComb and Shaw, 1972, p176).

A solution to "the danger" of distinguishing human rights and citizenship, according to Tambakaki would be ‘the re-invention of a citizenship that is universally applicable instead of being tied to nations’ (2009, p13). However, freedom of expression as much as plurality can be interpreted in different ways and contain a variety of contrasting views. McQuail (2004) emphasizes on this complexity. The libertarian view for example grants the media rights with almost no limits, but "no obligations either" and encourages it to function as watchdog while questioning the dominant (McQuail, 2004, p250-251). The commercial one in contrast argues that the open market itself is the best regulation and rejects external ones (McQuail, 2004, p250-251). Further accounts of views on freedom of expression and its
evaluation is the "real possibility of access to means of communication in public", as well as the "freedom to express personal belief of truth without constraint" (McQuail, 2004, p250-251). Additionally, the author claims that 'the media is never as free as the individual, as the former holds more power which it can be hold accountable for (McQuail, 2004, p251).

While McQuail lists the different views of press freedom, Cammaerts and Carpanter follow a more critical approach, stating that, according to Graham (2000), 'freedom of speech is used as a cloak of morality for political interests that remain unquestioned because of its "mythological status"' (cited in Cammaerts and Carpanter, 2007, p25). Or as Jacoby (1999) points it out "(..) pluralism is dressed up as multiculturalism, becoming opium of disillusioned intellectuals, an ideology of an era without ideology." (cited in Cammaerts and Carpanter, 2007, p25). However, McQuail justifies the usage of regulations in the media with utilitarianism and its containing harm principle (2004, p240) that illustrate an equation for ethical actions that causes happiness for the highest amount of people with the simple restriction of one’s liberty of action in not harming others (Mill, 1869). McQuail applies this principle to the media and argues that press freedom should be restricted, as 'reports hold the risk of harming people in transforming their authors into targets, invade privacy of the individual or target and marginalize a whole group' (2004, p240). This view contrasts with Western liberalism claiming for media as a medium of democracy and plurality, as well as a freedom of press that represents a platform for everyone, which Curran refers to as the "liberal narrative" (2012, p5).

The "liberal narrative" is inevitable when looking into the debate of ownership concentration. It can be referred to as the "positive view", according to Canizález (2009), assuming that democratization enables watchdog journalism and "press freedom to be fully acted out" (cited in Kinn, 2016). Canizález (2009) argues, that the negative view in contrast, follows the assumption that 'high media concentration limits pluralism, as well as the interactions of government and media' (cited in Kinn, 2016). The former view correlates with Baker’s (2006) statement that democratization is presumed to 'distribute monopolistic communication powers within the public sphere' (cited in Kinn, 2016).

Hughes and Lawson (2005) rather accord with the negative view in the case of Latin America, stating that the "high oligarchic media ownership, as well as a lack of rule of law" limits pluralistic news reporting (cited in Kinn, 2016). The economic liberal model, pointed out by Guerrero (2014), highlights the occurrence of 'media privatization and the emergence of media conglomerates' (cited in Kinn, 2016), while the political economy opinion rises
awareness on "the danger to democracy" but in the case of restrictions on "consumer choice" as well (Downing, 2011, p141).

The "Chicago School’s traditional antitrust framework" acknowledges ‘the existence of high media ownership concentration but sees the internet as an liberating element to it’ (Downing, 2011, p141). Further, it does not perceive it as "a threat to the functioning of democracy, nor consumer choice" (Downing, 2011, p141). In Venezuela, however, in 2007 a media shift took place that led to the control of the internet, which has been used as a political tool in favour of the Venezuelan state (Puyosa, 2015, p501). Hence, the Chicago’s School approach can already be rejected when it comes to applying the theoretical framework to the case studies, which will be further elaborated on in the last chapter, as in the Venezuelan case, democracy is clearly threatened and not a "liberating force".

The "Democracy-strangulation hypothesis" in contrast, investigates whether high media concentration limits the information flow and the influence it has on citizens (Downing, 2011, p141). A further model, dominant in the U.S. sphere is Herman and Chomsky’s (1988) propaganda model, which identifies "five filters that cleanse US media of potentially toxic contents regarding US imperial operations" (cited in Downing, 2011, p152). The named filters are "the media’s size, profit orientation, ownership, advertising as financial base, dominant news sources, flak and anti-communism" (Downing, 2011, p152).

The power and influence by the media is further explained by the "CNN and Al Jazeera effect" (Zingarelli, 2016). Both media formats have such an influence on society, politics and opinion shaping that academia speaks of them as special effects (Zingarelli, 2010, p3). Moreover, they are directly determining how society "comprehends the past as well as current events" (Zingarelli, 2010, p110). While CNN often portrays from a Western perspective, Al Jazeera illustrates the counter narrative, challenging its framing (Zingarelli, 2010, p107) and highlighting once more how media coverage is never truly objective.

The different currents identified in the academic debate on media concentration and ownership, as well as its influences on the public and democratization or vice versa, will be used as tools to investigate on the underlying media structures in the case study of Venezuela and Chile. However, one has to be aware that media studies seem to be dominated by Western literature which is why the actual outcomes of the applied theories will most likely differ. The essay will hence, although with awareness of the different approaches within the debate, follow the assumption formulated by Hughes and Lawson, that democratization of the media
in the Latin American context faces high oligarchic structures which leads to a possible affirmation of the negative view mentioned in this chapter.

1.3 The democratization of media in Latin America and its policies

Democratization in Latin America is a distinctive process, due to its combination of colonial rooted history, independence wars and nationalization, as well as international interference, especially from its neighbour the U.S. The latter for its enforcement of neo-liberalism in the region in the 1980s by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the counter movement of leftist forces, as well as re-democratization after long lasting dictatorships, as in the Chilean and Argentinean case, for example. Media is a representative of each of this times, reporting mostly in the favour of state interest or serving oligarchic elites (Protzel, 2005, p102). Hall (n.d.) as well as Protzel (2005) argue that there is a high media concentration by only a few families that hold the power of media conglomerates. The wars of independence (ended by 1824) led to the need of creating nation states, which Anderson used in his example of "imagined communities" (cited in Protzel, 2005, p102). A common identity had to be created that binds citizens together and helps distinguishing them from "outsiders" (Anderson, 1991). Within this state-forming processes, power struggles took place with the media as its servant (Protzel, 2005, p101). Liberal democracy has been the role model that together with "patrimonialism" (Protzel 2005, p102) and persistence of paternalism from colonial times formed a differentiated political landscape throughout Latin America. According to Protzel until today "the roles of politician, the caudillo and the journalist remains a permanent trait of Latin American policy cultures", while 'the press is defending its status quo' (2005, p103). This latter argument is very present in the Chilean media, portraying a polarized country that tries to unify its nation through maintaining its status quo made visible in the response to the 2011`s student protests (Cabalín, 2014).

The notion of colonialism is an important one in understanding the wider context of the region, as well as further academic currents. Santos (2014) elaborated on two different approaches, "the Eurocentric critical thinking" one, perceiving "political independence as end of colonialism", assuming that a "racial democracy" has been established proofed by hybridity and mestizaje, contrasting with the second one, which acknowledges "that an anti-capitalist struggle has to be fought together with anti-colonialism" (p26). Further, the latter claims that colonialism is on-going, "a way of life, a form of unequal conviviality that is often shared by those who benefit from it and those who suffer its consequences" (Santos, 2014).
The second view can be assigned to post-colonial studies and will be considered in this essay, arguing that imperialism is ongoing and significant in processes such as democratization. Phillipson accords with this view, stating that there are three types of colonization: Of "the body, territory and mind" (2009, p209). While colonial forces have left physically and Latin American countries reached their political independence, the state of territory colonization has passed, but one can still speak of a colonization of the mind, which according to Phillipson (2009, p209) is the "internalizing of values of the dominant power". Furthermore, he emphasizes on a constructed "dichotomy between the dominated and the dominant", as U.K. and U.S. slogans were "the land of the free", as well as "free trade" on the cost of the dominated in form of economic exploitation and not granting civil rights, for example (2009, p209). Petras and Veltmeyer (2011, p404) also emphasize on the importance of persisting influences by colonization, claiming that "neoliberalism, globalization and development are by-products of imperialist exploitation that destroyed class base of resistance and transformation".

Mauersberger (2016, p2) equals media power with political one, which is highlighted in the Latin American context by "mass media concentrated in few hands and closely linked to specific political sectors". This power is the most "influential in silencing others" (Mauersberger, 2016, p2). The author focuses on the cases of Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile, arguing that it was especially "the active civil society" demanding media reforms due to "discrepancies between a concentrated, commercial and often conservative mass, and political positions of centre-left governments and social demands for participatory democracy" (Mauersberger, 2016, p261-263). Moreover, he assigns the media as an actor within the struggle of "different conceptions of democracy", representing status-quo and "established power structures questioned by a self-confident civil society" (p273). Democratization of the media itself can be achieved by legally restricting media conglomerates, while there is a "fine line between democratizing communication and silencing oppositional voices" (Mauersberger, 2016, p273).

In all four cases, it was the "civil society demanding reforms on the cost of the large media conglomerates, while especially in Brazil and Chile not much has changed" (Mauersberger, 2016, p262-263). In the Chilean case, the only reform in communication took place in 2010, the so called "community radio law", which, however, did not change much, as community radios are still strongly restricted, "facing prison sentences if transmitting without proper licenses" (Mauersberger, 2016, p262). Brazil experienced a reform in public broadcasting in 2007, with the same outcomes (Mauersberger, 2016, p262).
Considering the pink-tied developments, that will be further explained in the following contextual chapter, mass media had been used for "collective identifiers", especially in the Venezuelan case according to Ortiz, fostering populism (Protzel, 2005). Democratization of the media in the region promises a "freedom of expression", within the academic debate portrayed, it will hence be investigated whether this freedom is granted only for some voices while others are silenced or one can really speak of a democratic media representation, especially in Chile and Venezuela. Moreover, the role of the media will be identified within different socio-political contexts and history, which will assumingly, considering the academic discussion of this sub-section, shift dependent on power structures.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, media likewise history is fluid and always in a process of change. As the academic debate and theoretical approaches have shown, a democratization of the media does not necessarily mean a guaranteed freedom of speech for everyone, nor pluralism. Considering past and current events, a pendulum change seems to have taken place between either public, nationalized broadcasting or high concentrated ownership and commercialized media conglomerates. It is hence a misconception that democratizing the media equals pluralistic news coverage in practice. The democratization of media should rather be seen as an aim than an easy transition, always being challenged, as likewise democracy there is no "end state" of it. Further, there is an ongoing debate and different views on how restrictive media regulations should be or whether they should exist at all. Democratizing media, hence, has a double meaning, illustrating a goal as well as the way towards it as the same time, ideally a solution.

The Chilean and Venezuelan comparative case study will identify the contemporary position of the media as well as whether there has been a shift in its role. After having portrayed the academic discussion on the topic and evaluated it to some extent, possible roles would be as a watchdog, representing pluralism, state-, oligarchic-, or media conglomerates’ interest.

The thesis presented will follow the approach that accountability and media regulations are not contrary to freedom of expression but necessary for democratic news reporting, also to not violate human rights or ethics by endangering others. This approach accords with McQuail’s as well as the harm principle. Nevertheless, means of accountability have to be identified and proved to be functioning which will be done in the case studies, which is why the ethical conducts of each country as well as their reform policies, will be introduced and compared to news reporting and interviews. It can be assumed that accountability and responsibility will either overlap or both lack in power. In that manner, it will be identified which
actors in both countries are "power holders" or "actors of control". Moreover, the thesis can be placed within the discussion of Hall, Gramsci, Cammaerts and Carpenter, as well as Manin, arguing that democracies are rather representative governments that still hold oligarchic features, being strongly influenced by economic pressures. Press freedom does hence not automatically mean freedom of press, as it does not exclude the silencing of dominated voices. In that sense, the concepts of democracy, human rights and citizenship are strongly tied and consequently illustrate a privilege that only counts for citizens, meanwhile representing a criteria of exclusion in Anderson’s (1991) concept of nation states as imagined communities.

However, as questions of theory have been elaborated on, once applying them to the actual case studies, the outcomes will most likely differ. Even though having assigned some theories that seem fitting to the approach of the thesis, they might change during the following chapters. Also, as most of them are Western- oriented, while Western liberalism will be rejected to that extent, that media as a platform for each voice would be an ideal case but seems less likely, especially when considering the negative view mentioned in this section, as well as the "democracy-strangulation hypothesis". Democratization processes in Latin America have shown that oligarchic structures have been remaining throughout time, explaining today’s persistence of high media concentration in the region. Media has been treated as a force of maintaining old power structures, as well as mean in increasing power. Demands of reforms and a democratization of the media has mainly come from the civil society illustrating the actors of control but remaining the question whether they actually hold the power to do so.

In Venezuela, the mass media has been used for fostering populism, having promised a "communalized media" for the people, but following a model of controlling communications since 2007. Chile as a highly polarized country, in contrast, has been trying to maintain is status quo. The following sections will clarify the reason for it as well as further developments and key actors within. Moreover, the thesis will investigate whether there are new approaches in assigning weaknesses and strengths of the already mentioned theories. To do so, the two case studies of "democratized media" in Chile and Venezuela will be scrutinized and compared, while a contextual background has to be presented first.

II. Chapter two: Contextual background on media reforms and socio-political developments in Chile and Venezuela (1970s-2000)

2.1 Economic and political pendulum changes: Between public and privatized media
The time frame of 1970s-1990s has been significant in determining today’s economic and political spheres of Chile and Venezuela as well as corresponding media developments, which is why it has been selected for further investigation. The most influential transitions in the Chilean case took place when the government changed from the world’s first democratically elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, to a military dictatorship by a coup d'état of General Augusto Pinochet in 1973, which should last for two decades. The following re-democratization of the 1990s, triggered by the plebiscitary vote stating a "no" to Pinochet’s re-election, however, did not abandon reforms and laws from the military rule, which are shaping Chilean politics, economics, and the media until today (Castillo, 2006). Especially so, as the rewritten constitution of 1980 is still in place (Castillo, 2006).

It is not possible to understand the three fields in contemporary Chile, without presenting the past of its "pendulum changes". The latter is a characteristic term for many Latin American countries and developments, as the region has experienced many changes from one extreme to another in different fields (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2016). The regime change from Allende to Pinochet to a re-democratization, is just one example of it, while Venezuela reforms are another. Specific historical "benchmarks" of the latter, at that time, was the peak of its oil industry, enforced neo-liberalism by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1980s, its response to it (manifested in its participation as a "pink-tied" government), movement towards populism and the election of President Hugo Chavéz in 1998, which resulted in the nationalization of the oil industry. In both cases, however, the fields of politics, economics, law, and media are indistinguishable and correlate, following the agenda of each government.

International interference from the U.S. has been a further factor. During "the Reagan period" (1981-1989), media has been an instrument for fostering U.S. interests in Latin America under the pretence of "restoring democracy", "fulfilling the social purpose in accord with the prevailing conception of democracy" (Chomsky, 2003, p34), while actually the aim of an enforcement of neo-liberalism and hence moving from the nationalization of resources towards privatization predominated (Walton, 2004). The implementation of neo-liberalism itself was an interplay between the Structural Adjustment Program, the IMF, and the World Bank, known as the "Washington Consensus" in the 1980s that caused "different outcomes in the region" (Walton, 2004).

The neo-liberal reforms triggered by "global capitalism" mainly benefitted foreign institutions and "local elites" (Robinson, 2011), leading to exclusion as a criteria of unifica-
tion for the "radicalized and intellectuals that joined forces with emergence of rural or urban workers", which led to the rise of populism (Protzel, 2005). This development caused polarization in the country between the two parties and fostered "control and censorship" (Protzel, 2005). Opposing neo-liberalism and its reforms became a major feature in elections, giving rise to the "pink-tied governments", including Venezuela, that were and are "nominally left governments" with an agenda of "populist and redistribution policies" (Robinson, 2011). Robinson further argues, that although Latin America has gained its political independence from colonization in the 19th century, through globalisation and the spread of neo-liberalism, an economic dependence of the imperial powers remains, which corresponds to Phillipson`s statement of an ongoing colonization, despite not in a territorial sense (2009, p209).

Venezuela has been a special case due to its economy being directly tied to its oil resources that made the country highly dependent on import of commodity goods and international oil prices, which describes the origins of today’s crisis, but was already recognizable in the "recession of the early 80s" (Salazar- Carillo, 1986, p257). The oil boom of the 1970s and 80s caused a devaluation of the Bolívar up to 200%, due to a high amount of export and "low value of the currency" (Salazar- Carillo, 1986, p257). The dilemma occurred due to a "deindustrialization despite an increase in national income", which explains why even though when Chavéz nationalized and focused on the "internal market", the latter was not as competitive as its international competitors, especially with regards to "consumer goods" (Salazar- Carillo, 1986, p261).

The aim of the Chavéz administration (1998-2013) was hence, as characteristic of the pink-tied governments, to oppose the neo-liberal doctrine in any terms, or as Robinson (2011) phrases it, "to organize a radical anti-neo-liberal bloc". His approach towards the media was affected in the way, that the "liberal norm of press freedom" was rejected and a "community media" created, "aligned with and supported by the Venezuelan state" (Schiller, 2013, p540). The subject of this aim and of Chavez’ "Bolivarian Revolution", which describes his "political project with socialist goals named after 19th-century liberator Simón Bolívar", became the new media and "community television" Catia Tve (Schiller, 2013, p540). This approach strongly contrasted with the previous realm of oligarchic media structures that tried to maintain power rather than furthering the democratization of these structures (Protzel, 2005, p109). The media conglomerate "Grupo Cisneros" exemplifies this by constituting a "family controlled oligopoly" (Protzel, 2005, p108).
However, even though portrayed and implemented as a media platform for the voices of the community and less fortunate of the country, Catia (the name of a poor neighbourhood in Caracas) was financially dependent on Chavez and the state - a fact that challenged and continues to challenge press freedom (Schiller, 2013, p540-543). Likewise, when Chávez nationalized the country’s oil resources and production, ”Petróleo de Venezuela”, he did not guarantee redistribution of wealth, but guided the economy as well as the media towards centralization and power concentration of the state instead (Galeano, 2009, p365). In sum, with the election of Chávez and rise of populism, a significant change occurred. The media landscape and economy previously characterized by privatization and neo-liberalism, became public nationalized. It is within this environment of a polarized country that its first journalistic codes of ethics were formulated in 1976 (Salazar, n.d.).

During the same time, a similar type of polarization developed in Chile, most vivid illustrated by the demise of socialism and the Unidad Popular to Pinochet’s military dictatorship in 1973. The military regime was supported mostly by the actors interested in staying in power and not in nationalizing their profits and property, such as "business and landowning elites", but also media formats and newspapers, seeking to expand their power, with El Mercurio leading the way (Silva, 1992, p77). There were two main reasons for this support: The fear of undesirable economic consequences and policy outcomes from socialism that was greater than fear of Pinochet’s agenda as well as the formation and "alliance of a pragmatic neo-liberal coalition" ruling in their favour (Silva, 1992, p78). It further explains why none of these parties were interested in ending the dictatorship and their strong influence as well as "conservative bias" of many institutions such as law and media, which is according to Love- man (1991) still noticeable today (cited in Silva, 1992, p78). The opposition formed by "Christian Democrats and the reformed left" - Alianza Democrática (AD) - gave silent consent to this "conservative economic compact" in the 1990s to foster democratization processes (Silva, 1992, p79). In sum, as Galeano (2009, p367) formulates it, "the terror of Pinochet and economic freedom of the small privileged groups, are two sides of the same coin".

Castillo (2009) has analysed the significance of this period for political communication in Chile, as well as the transformation of a media "that, despite its deficiencies, gave space to a wide range of ideas and opinions and was a vibrant place for public debate" (p88) into a privatized one that to this day benefits the political elite. As characteristic for totalitarian or non-democratic regimes, according to Neuman et al. (1991), media has been used to legitimize Pinochet’s dictatorship and to manipulate his citizens (cited in Castillo, 2009, p81-88). He was highly aware of these interdependencies and therefore only allowed for pro-
government media formats, targeting and shutting down especially left-wing media (p68-80). The newspapers flourishing during his dictatorship were El Mercurio and La Tercera, which are still the country’s "most profitable and well-established news organizations"- something that illustrates "an almost unchallenged ideological media duopoly" (Castillo, 2009, p92).

The major transition from a welfare state to an "ultra-liberal free market model" enforced by ‘The Chicago Boys, which were students from Chicago University implementing right-wing economic ideas’, affected the media in the way that "the communication system" was privatized (Castillo, 2009, p72-82), which had a far-reaching impact. When the ‘financial crisis occurred in the 1980s, La Tercera was affected as well and built up debt up to US$19 million’ (Castillo,2009, p66). However, it was able to survive due to its privatization and purchase by a group of economists supporting the regime, which in turn was granted silence about human rights violations and guaranteed pro-government news coverage (66-91). Almost the same development took place in El Mercurio.

The interdependency and historical developments of the political and economic pendulum changes and their meaning for the media in Venezuela and Chile have been pointed out by this sub-section. It became clear that in both cases, the countries’ contemporary communication systems are linked to and strongly influenced by their past. As the question of accountability with its parameters is the focus of this research, in order to identify whether a country truly has a democratic media system, it is helpful to further investigate how these systems emerged and were subsequently affected during the period mentioned.

2.2 Development of the accountability parameters in the historical context

The political and economic pendulum changes and corresponding media effects in Venezuela and Chile have explained the media’s transformation from public to private, and vice versa. At the same time, it has been illustrated that both versions can highly restrict democratic news coverage. It is quite obvious that in a military dictatorship the media system is not democratic, however, the Chilean case is interesting to investigate, as it illustrates per example the consolidation of accountability mechanisms during the transition from a totalitarian regime to a democratic one. More so, a "liberalization of the media" took place, which determines Chile’s media landscape until today, although "re-democratized". Applying the previously formulated mechanisms of accountability to the case, the following results can be found.
After considering the previous sub-section one can state that there was a high degree of media concentration during the time of 1973-1990, as the duopoly (El Mercurio and La Tercera) was directly tied to the "propaganda apparatus" (Castillo, 2009, p80) and the two newspapers only persisted because of their pro-governmental status. This media structure of an oligarchic duopoly even remained in place during re-democratization processes (1990-2000) and does so today, as the financial strength gained during the dictatorship leaves them unchallenged and ownership by the same family continues, which will be further analysed in the third chapter. Respecting an ethical code of conduct was of little interest, except to uphold international reputation, while a watchdog function of the media was likewise turned off or silenced, as in exchange for financial governmental aid, both main newspapers remained quiet over human rights abuses and the disappearance of citizens such as left-wing supporters. The same was true for newspapers other than those supporting the regime, which were all shut down by Pinochet. Needless to say, there was hence neither a broad spectrum of opinions represented nor strong audience participation in terms of an opposition, as implemented "defamation laws", such as the "law of suspicion", allowed for capturing people without any judicial trial (Mauersberger, 2016, p34).

Some of these features remained during the re-democratization period, also due to the persistence of the 1980 constitution, which hampers reforms until today. As Castillo has stated, 'the military regime has not just destroyed the mainly democratic media system of Chile, that was a platform for public debate’, but also fostered a long-lasting oligarchic structure, as a "non-elected elite took over the media” and the persisting constitution challenged any attempts of democratization (2009, p80). Nevertheless, alternative media promoted democratic education by distributing free newsletters and encouraging the public to be politically active again during the 1990s-2000s (Castillo, 2009, p104). The parameters of information access, audience participation and pluralism have hence improved. Despite the latter, however, the main obstacles resulting from the 1980 constitution remain, as politics and law are continue to be interwoven. The "anti-terrorism law", as well as the "law on suspicion" allowed for human right abuses, for instance persecution without judicial trial, something also representative of today’s situation (Human Right Watch, 2017). The media is consequently restricted in its watchdog function.

It is hence of significance to look into contemporary Chile (2000-2017), to find out whether re-democratization has progressed, reforms have been executed and accountability measures characteristic of a democratic media system have improved. According to Silva (1992, p103): "It is an open question whether Chilean business elites would remain commit-
ted to democracy if they were faced with changes in their circumstances". The ´two first democratic administrations of Patricio Aylwin (1990-1996) and Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1996-2002)´ are exemplifying this statement (Castillo, 2009, p114).

In Venezuela, the media system was facing different challenges likewise characterized by historical upheavals. As has been argued when introducing the theoretical framework, media in Latin America has traditionally been owned by "wealthy families and large media conglomerates" (Hall, n.d.), which results from the persistence of colonial structure of paternalism (Protzel, 2005, p102). Venezuela had been no exception with its family-owned media conglomerate Grupo Cisneros. However, while Petra´s and Veltmeyer´s argument, stating that "neoliberalism, globalization, and development are by-products of imperialist exploitation that destroyed class base of resistance and transformation" (2011, p404) holds true for the Chilean case, in Venezuela it triggered an anti-imperialist counter movement that expanded to the media. Mass media has become an instrument of social movement and even focal point of Chávez´ election campaign, promising to further a community media that represents pluralistic voices. The most significant changes concerning media accountability are hence marked by Hugo Chávez´ election in 1998 until his death in 2013, as this period has altered the media today as well as resulted in the great change to the Maduro administration (2013). Any analysis of Venezuela´s media system must thus take these historical origins into account. This will be further elaborated on in the following section that treats the time period 2000-2017.

It can, however, be stated that at the point of the transition from the 20th to the 21st century and Chávez´ first years in power, audience participation was higher than before, as typical for populism, there was access to information. The establishment and support of the television channel Catia Tve, ought to be a channel fulfilling these two parameters and pluralism, serves as an example. Chávez referred extensively to the in 1976 formulated ethical code of conduct, especially to Article 57 and 58, which were criticizing ´the role of private media companies that became politicized´ (Salazar, n.d.). Even though he advertised otherwise, media concentration remained high, as the media was manipulated by Chávez to concentrate state power (Galeano, 2009, p365). The community television Catia Tve was for example state funded, which challenged press freedom, while licenses of other TV formats were simply not extended (Schiller, 2013). It follows that although pluralism was nurtured in the beginning of his administration, it soon shrunk.
Overall, it can be argued that during the time period mentioned, Venezuela had a partially democratic media system, as some accountability measures like audience participation, which was extraordinarily high and can operate in non-democratic societies were functioning. Nevertheless, the mechanisms of watchdog and transparency remain unclear, amongst others due to the absence of extending media licenses such as RCTV as well as a persisting high degree of media concentration. To apply the mechanisms with more certainty to media in the Chávez era as well as its contemporary context under Maduro, and hence to determine whether Venezuelan media is democratic or not, it is important to analyse the developments of the period 2000-2017.

Conclusion

To conclude, as has been illustrated by this chapter, the historical past of Chile and Venezuela set the tone for their current political, economic and media landscape. The enforcement of neo-liberalism in the 1980s and 1990s was a far-reaching moment and led to a polarization of society in both cases. In Venezuela, the response was anti-imperialistic, which drove the country towards populism and mass mobilization for a "21st-century socialism". This was contrasting with the previous oligarchic structures and elites, most drastically highlighted by Hugo Chávez election and nationalization of the oil industry as well as the media. The Venezuelan media system can be regarded as partly democratic at the beginning of the Chávez administration, as mechanisms such as access to information, audience participation and the respect of the ethical code of conduct were to a certain level fulfilled. The media thus shifted from being privatized to being public.

In Chile, an opposite media shift took place, initiated by the country’s most dramatic historical event, the military coup of Augusto Pinochet in 1973. As representative of media in dictatorships, almost none of the accountability measures were in effect. Later on, the re-democratization process (starting in the 1990s) was restricted by the 1980 constitution, which hardly allowed for any media reforms and fostered economic clientelism and oligarchic structures. The predominance of the duopoly of the country’s two main newspapers, La Tercera and El Mercurio, was born during the dictatorship and further upheld power within this structure, confirming Castillo’s statement that "(..) the market economy system has many limitations when it comes to the media" (2009, p115). Chile’s media system, according to the applied accountability mechanisms, was hence not free when transforming from public to privatized under the dictatorship, while partly democratic during the re-democratization process, still lacking significant reforms.
From the starting point of two partly democratic media systems, one public (Venezuela), one privatized (Chile), by the end of the 20ths century, it will be rewarding to now focus on contemporary developments (2000-2017) and analyse if changes have occurred in the media systems of both countries and if so, why.


3.1 The media systems of Chile and Venezuela and the determination of the effectiveness of their accountability mechanisms

To get an overview and more comprehensive understanding of media transitions in contemporary Chile and Venezuela as well as their democratic degree, it is helpful to apply the introduced accountability mechanisms. This section will also make use of sub-sections, as this allows for a direct comparison of both countries. The findings will then be compared to the conducted interviews to reveal whether they accord with each other or if there are discrepancies and if so, why. The seven accountability mechanisms identified, will not only respond to the question of effects on media landscape and democracy, but further help explain and structure the influences on the media in both countries during the last 17 years.

By the end of the 20th century both countries were partly free democracies, while the World Press Freedom Index states relatively "free" in the Chilean case (RSF, 2017) and "not free" in the Venezuelan (RSF,2016) nowadays, leaving the question for the causation of this, especially as the beginning of the Chávez administration was promising in communication terms, as he was fostering "broadcasting licenses for a large number of grass roots and popular actors" (Fuente Bautista and Gil-Egui, 2011, p267). Venezuela was undergoing a major change when Nicolás Maduro Moros, a supporter of Chávez and the Bolivarian socialist party became president in 2013 after his death. The election returns of 50,66% illustrates the polarization of the country in that matter, while the country experiences a severe crisis in food and medical supply (Spiegel.de, 2013). It will hence be investigated how the media transformed from this intention of creating a pluralistic media system towards a "not free one", while in the Chilean status of "free" press will be compared to accountability mechanisms.

Degree of media concentration

In the Chilean case, the consisting high level of media concentration is one of the biggest challenges for its media system to be fully democratic. According to Castillo (2009, p235) the "highly monopolised media power block is a central channel of power for Chilean conserva-
tive forces". While Fazio (1997) emphasizes that different media formats, such as television, newspapers and radio are owned by five major economic groups (cited in Castillo, 2009, p116). The media conglomerate Copesa illustrates this notion, representing 90% of Chilean newspapers, La Tercera and El Mercurio amongst them, which is owned by the same family that benefitted from the dictatorship and is supporting the political right (Mellado and Rafter, 2014, p533). The consequence is the predominance of a media duopoly in Chile, even though its Press Freedom Index states "free" (RSF, 2017), which already indicates that press freedom does not consider pluralism and media concentration to an high extent.

In Venezuela, although Chavéz promised a pluralistic-, democratized media system, and Maduro claimed to further govern in his mind, according to Salazar (n.d). "there has been a recent trend towards the purchase of media by business people related to the government which has multiplied the instances of censorship and created an editorial atmosphere in which self- censorship thrives". Meanwhile, to achieve concentrated media and state power, the licenses of many media formats are not extended, such as the popular TV channel RCTV (Puyosa, 2015), which leads to a monopolistic media structure. The National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL) is a major actor in this happenings (RSF; 2017, Venezuela).

**Pluralism**

The degree of pluralism in Chile has certainly been improved, in comparison to its totalitarian past. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, alternative media played a key role in democratization processes, educating the public and leading it back towards media as a channel for political debate. However, the political and economic clientelism, the persistence of an economic right- wing and conservative news bias, as well as the absence of reforms and still effective defamation laws still restricts this pluralism. Moreover, as the free market has gained such an intrinsic value, aimed to be protected, "citizens are treated as consumers" instead of fostering a democratic media´s purpose to inform citizens (Castillo, 2009, p116-229). In that sense, there is a "lack of alternative independent media", by which "poorer parts of society are excluded" (Castillo, 2009, p229-236), as well as ethnic minorities like the Mapuche. The latter is Chile´s largest indigenous group and mostly framed in a narrative of violence by the mainstream media (Emol.com, 2005), instead of generating a platform for their voice or covering objectively about their land struggles.
In Venezuela, as the parameter media concentration has shown, the work of CONATEL is decreasing the diversity of its media landscape, closing down and blocking "websites and radio stations such as Hit 90.7 FM, Studio 92.1 and Punto Fijo Stereo 90.3", as well as "Vivo Play, VPI (Venezolanos por la Información) and Capitolio TV" (RSF, 2017, Venezuela). Other 'independent or oppositional media outlets are censored' (RSF, 2017, Venezuela), while in recent developments only three newspaper "maintained quality in the name of the audience: El Diario de Caracas, el nacional and ultimas noticias" (Salazar, n.d.). Only the latter is still operating today (Salazar, n.d.). The recent media developments are in strong contrast to the media democratization and community media of the early Chávez administration. Instead Maduro now declared after the economic crisis in 2016 a "media war" (RSF, 2017, Venezuela). The recent developments are a drastic change to the firstly proclaimed communication strategy of Chávez, exemplified by the in 2004 implemented "Ley Resorte", which was ought to "prohibit outlets from content that contains hatred, intolerance, racism etc." (Hall, n.d.).

**Audience Participation**

In Chile, the biggest newspapers La Tercera and El Mercurio do have opinion sections, while it is not clear to what extent they are filtered before being published. Social media and the internet are freely used as expression of opinion and rather a public platform than newspapers, as the Mapuche case illustrates. In the latter, it are more social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and Youtube that allow for distributing their voice directly, than the national newspapers, which follow the "nation’s economic interest" over indigenous land rights (Newbold, 2004). Active participation, however, is high, as there is a strong resistance by the Mapuche for example or regular demonstrations demanding reforms in education and communication. Among them "the march for communication" that took place in Valparaíso in 2015 that united journalists, students and community radio (LOGIN Noticias, 2015).

In Venezuela audience participation is very high firstly fostered by the populist movements, characteristic for the pink-tied governments, and recently by counter movements (Fuente Bautista and Gil-Egui, 2011, p267) and protests against the Maduro government. Since April of this year 40 people have been killed during protests (RSF, 2017) still not stopping the audience to actively "participate", while "journalists were placed at the heart of political confrontation" (Salazar, n.d.). Or as sociologist Marycler Stelling has formulated it: "In Venezuela the battle’s are being fought on two fronts, through the ballot box and through the media" (Salazar n.d.).
Transparency

According to Transparency International’s corruption index, Chile is performing relatively well, ranking 24/176 and scoring 66/100 which indicates ‘the perceived level of public sector corruption’, while 0 states highly corrupt and 100 clean (Transparency.org, 2017, Chile). The Law on Transparency of Public Functions and Access to Information, which was implemented in 2008, is one reason for this improvement (Freedomhouse.org, 2016, Chile). Nevertheless, "Chile continues to suffer from corruption of the military dictatorship" (RSF, 2017). Additionally, as 90% of national newspapers is owned by same family, the same opinion is spread but with different formats. It is of course possible to investigate in la Copesa and inform oneself about the conglomerate’s ownership of newspapers but media itself fails in the function of informing people and encouraging a public debate.

Venezuela, in strong contrast, ranked 166/176 and scored 17/100 in its Transparency International Index (Transparency.org, 2017, Venezuela). According to Salazar (n.d.) "the notions of transparency and good governance are barely recognised”. As Maduro’s government is transforming into an authoritarian one and "paramilitary groups have stepped up efforts to silence the media and suppress free speech and the freedom to inform" (RSF, 2017, Venezuela), media does not act after ethical premises or "good governance" (Salazar, n.d.).

Access to information

Chile has experienced a significant progress in this parameter, especially concerning internet use (RSF, 2017, Chile), as its Internet Penetration Rate of 64.3% indicates (Freedomhouse.org, 2017, Chile). The Law on Transparency of Public Functions and Access to Information tremendously contributed to this development (Freedomhouse.org, 2016, Chile).

In Venezuela, the internet has been highly restricted, performing only 60/100 in its Internet Freedom Index, while 100 states not free (Freedomhouse.org, 2016, Venezuela). The Internet Penetration Rate is 62%, not significantly lower than the Chilean one, however, political content is blocked and although social media access is open, bloggers are frequently arrested (Freedomhouse.org, 2016, Venezuela). Emmanuel Colombié, the head of the Latin American bureau of Reporters Without Borders declares that the "harassment of journalists is in the process of destroying the freedom to inform in Venezuela" (cited in RSF, 2017). In consequence, there is limited access to objective information now in Venezuela (RSF, 2017). These recent developments contrast highly with the in 2000 reformed media law, "to guarantee access to communication as human right" (Hall, n.d.).
Watchdog

The watchdog position of Chilean media has been challenged, as the previously mentioned "law on suspicion", as well as "anti-terrorist law" are still effective while promised communication reforms have barely been introduced. Moreover, are human rights violation not necessarily persecuted, also due to the ongoing democratization process, which creates an atmosphere of fear to truly report investigative and restricts the media in performing as watchdog (Castillo, 2009, p116). News are framed confirmative as they are ought to foster a positive narrative of the democratization, not provoking any conflicts in an already polarized society (Castillo, 2009, p229). A further judicial example of this portrays Art (19) of the 1980s constitution, legalizing "judicial penalties that criticise government performance or armed forces (Castillo, 2009, p255). The recent analysis of Reporters Without Borders confirms this image, emphasizing on ´the execution of arbitrary defamation laws, used to penalize journalists that were investigating in corruption cases associated with president Bachelet´ (RSF, 2017).

The parameter of watchdog in Venezuela is almost abrogated completely as, according to Reporters Without Borders (2017), "Members of the police, Bolivarian National Guard, Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN) and pro-government paramilitary groups have repeatedly targeted, insulted or arbitrarily arrested reporters covering opposition demonstrations, and have seized and destroyed their equipment". The media has been acknowledged as a power instrument by the government, which is exemplifies by the enforced "communication hegemony" (Salazar, n.d.) and abandonment of foreign journalists (RSF, 2017, Venezuela). The remaining media is hence uncritical and pro-governmental, which is further fostered by the 2016´s economic crisis, as "a flow of official advertising becomes a top priority for media managers (Salazar, n.d.).

Ethical code of conduct

Even though the Chilean code of conduct (Código de Ética Colegio de Periodistas de Chile, 2017) has been formulated and persists, "journalism is still embedded in an authoritarian culture" (Castillo, 2009, 231). The freedom of expression is even guaranteed by Art. 19 (12) of the constitution but abrogated by the laws implemented during the military dictatorship.

In the Venezuelan ethical code of conducts, Art. (2) states that journalists are allowed to act in favour of investigative practices, effectiveness and to supporting freedom of expression and right to information (Código de Ética del Periodista Venezolano, 2013). However, in
2001 the Supreme Court ruled that "(..) the media does not have the right to reply, neither those who habitually exercise journalism (..)" (Salazar, n.d.). Within the time period of 2007-2009 CONATEI had closed down "32 private radio and TV channels" supporting the opposition (Hall, n.d.), among them RCTV. It is hence as Salzar (n.d.) claims: "Although a code of ethics exists in Venezuela and serves as major reverence point for any talk of media- self-regulation, this does not figure in daily working environment of journalists".

All seven parameters, relevant to evaluate the effectiveness of the crystallized accountability of media systems, have been scrutinized and applied to the cases of contemporary Chile and Venezuela. The structure that has been followed, allows for a direct comparison, which should be revealing in determining why Venezuela’s media system has been evaluated as non-democratic while the Chilean press is "partly-free" but its Press Freedom Index states "free" (RSF, 2017). However, this thesis argues, that press freedom does not equal a democratic media system, nor does it mean that a high number of accountability mechanisms are in effect. Even though the Chilean press freedom status has been stated as "free", reasoned with the absence of violations against journalists, this does equal a well functioning democratic media system, as has been illustrated by this analysis. This absence of violations against journalists can be explained, for example, by the lack of the media to act as watchdog, or a restricted mechanism of pluralism prohibited by strict laws and human right abuses, which leads to an affirmative journalist culture without critic (Kinn, 2016).

To come to a final conclusion of the media systems in Chile and Venezuela and to evaluate the effectiveness of their accountability mechanisms, it is helpful to first compare the findings with real media practitioners from the countries themselves, which will be done in the next section.

3.2 Comparison, analysis and discrepancy of practising media experts

To compare the extensive findings with experiences and people from the region in the field of media, and to make a final evaluation of the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms and hence the degree of democracy inherent in the Chilean and Venezuelan media system, six interviews\(^2\) in total have been conducted.

\(^2\) The language used within the interviews has been Spanish, while it is personally translated into English when quoted within this research
In the Chilean case, historian and political scientist MR\(^3\), journalist, writer and professor at the "Universidad de Chile" VO, as well as international affairs analyst CS, have been interviewed. It has been striking, that in all interviews, media concentration has been identified as biggest challenge towards a democratic and pluralistic media system in Chile (See interview 1-3 in the appendix). As MQ states: "(..) often they position news or debates representative for the power blocs that have gained a major presence in media." (MQ interviewed on 10th June 2017), or as CS has pointed out: "Freedom of expression is real but control of the media exists (..)". Every time the private stations become more concentrated, those who are cooperating with political groups, which are manipulating the public agenda in their interest. This is what happened during the student movements of 2011 as well, where the issue has been ignored" (CS interviewed on 27th May 2017). VO agrees with it, stating that "(..) communication means are conditioned by the groups in power in Chile (..)." (VO interviewed on 9th June 2017).

Moreover, he identifies a further restriction to freedom of expression, which is not grasped by official indexes and reflects the historical developments, still effecting Chile’s political climate of today, described in the previous chapter. It is the notion of a polarized society in which an economic right-wing and conservative bias dominates, that has not been condemned or reformed during its re-democratization processes and is supported by the laws that has been formulated during its dictatorship (1980). The media is framing in the favour of those elites, who are interested in maintaining their status quo and hence encourage freedom of expression only in a certain way. VO articulates this in emphasizing that "(..) the freedom of expression of everyday life is further conditioned by the "opinion of the other". Many times we do not have the freedom to say what we want, for the fear of the social consequences (..)" (VO interviewed on 9th June 2017). Additionally, all three Chilean interviewees are aware of the development and power monopoly of La Copesa, as well as of its support during the dictatorship (See interview 1-3 in the appendix), which speaks at least for a certain level of transparency but also the high level of media concentration and the willingness of this group, as well as the media (especially El Mercurio and La Tercera), to maintain its status quo against "revolutionary ideas" (MQ interviewed on 10th June 2017).

The issue of pluralism has as well been named by all three interviewees as restricting factor and MQ describes it as follows: "(..) I can act out my profession without restriction, but that is not enough. To inform sufficiently I research at the university but this is only covered

\(^3\)The names of the interviewees have been modified for their personal protection and thus only abbreviations are used
by alternative media, not by the mainstream, which is why a restricted view arrives in the population. (..)The alternative media is hence the most credible, as they still have a social role and give voices to people who are not represented by mainstream media” (MQ interviewed on 10th June 2017). The Mapuche case illustrates an example of this, in which the mainstream media is always trying to frame their land struggles as a violent act (MQ interviewed on 10th June 2017). CS goes in line with this statement, acknowledging as well that it is rather independent media that reports diversity and different voices in Chile than mainstream one (CS interviewed on 27th May 2017), while VO highlights the importance of art in expressing different opinions rather than media, which counts for the Mapuche case as well (VO interviewed on 9th June 2017). Further, CS specifies that: "Audiences are not fully represented on media, which becomes clear when it comes to different ways of speaking about some issues. There is a trend to use the same editorial line aligned to the current system. Dissident opinions do not really have a space or at least not in the major media". (CS interviewed on 27th May 2017).

The parameters of access to information and audience participation, however, seem to be evaluated as quite positive, with the consideration of restricted diversity in news´ coverage by mainstream media. All three interviewees have named the internet as most important factor in enabling those two parameters and hence a democratized communication. VO claims in that matter that: "(..)things have already been improved through social media, one of the most positive things that came out of the internet, is the possibility for people to communicate and organize topics to discuss (..)", which allows for political participation as well (VO interviewed on 9th June 2017). MQ agrees that to some extent social media has accomplished social pressure effecting the monopolized power groups, even though by far not sufficiently (MQ interviewed on 10th June 2017). The Mapuche case has been an example of social media working as communication channel for public debate, while the public is aware of the necessity to direct this social pressure towards the concentrated groups and not society (MQ interviewed on 10th June 2017), which speaks for a certain level of transparency. However, CS perceives the latter as insufficient, as "(..) conglomerates have different ways to extend their influence by possessing lots of different enterprises, which can serve their main political interests. (..)" (CS interviewed on 27th May 2017). VO adds to this debate of transparency, that each time the government changes, the public channel TVN, for example, changes its guidelines and executive directors (VO interviewed on 10th June 2017).

Concerning the criteria of ethical code of conducts and watchdog, there is no strong consent among the interviewees, explicable by the normative character of both (Código de
Ética Colegio de Periodistas de Chile, 2015) and the absence of laws directly affecting a violation of those, for example. The legal paradox in Chile is, that there have not been any cases, where high media concentration, unilateral news coverage, or the absence of pluralism or investigative journalism were punished legally, but instead investigative journalists who were revealing corruption cases associated with president Bachelet, victims of arbitrary defamation laws (Human Rights Watch, 2017, Chile). All three interviewees did hence not feel restricted by any ethical conditions, only VO by empathy (VO interviewed on 9th June 2017), while the ethical code of conducts did not come to mind for the above reasons. The maintenance of the defamation laws and high media concentration compose the major obstacle towards the media in its function as watchdog and accountability mechanism. MQ addresses this issue with emphasizing that even though the high media concentration and media advertisements funded by the state in media (90%) is decreasing, nothing will change because the state does not want any other media to rise or to maintain, it wants to uphold the status quo, which is why the media as watchdog is not a wanted attribute (MQ interviewed on 10th June 2017). CS explains that: "The economic group which controls Copesa has had a key role in Chilean history but also in recent times, going in line with the interests of the Chilean right and defends with all means the neoliberal model (..)." (CS interviewed on 27th May 2017).

After having analyzed and compared theoretical findings of accountability mechanisms in the Chilean media system with interviews of people concerned, the following evaluation can be made.

**Table 2. Accountability mechanisms in the Chilean media system**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation: 0= Not effective, 5= Highly effective</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Degree of media concentration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pluralism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Participation</td>
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(Clipart- Library, n.d.)
To be able to compare the Chilean evaluation with the Venezuelan one, the same procedure has to be followed with the Venezuelan interviewees, which consist of journalist and professor at Complutense University of Madrid, VR, Venezuelan journalist IL and BA modern languages student CZ at the "Universidad de Los Andes". The beginning of the Chávez administration promised a democratized media for the people and as the contextual chapter has illustrated, there was a real chance to do so, but the socialist aim seems to have clashed with power interests of the government, or was a farce from the very beginning.

All three interviewees agree that freedom of expression is practically none existent, independent from being public or privatized (See interview 4-6 in the appendix). The following statement of IL illustrates this strongly: "(..) During my career, I was witnessing many direct attacks towards fundamental Human Rights (..)." (IL interviewed on 7th June 2017). When the death of Chávez has been announced in March 2013, I remember that minister of communications, Ernesto Villegas, called and threatened the executive director of the channel I was working for during that time (..), transmitting that if the "Chavista people" would feel threatened, the government could not guarantee our physical integrity (..). I know of various colleagues, who have been let go off after asking uncomfortable questions to government officials of the "Bolivarianos" (..). Further, I have been witnessing how CONATEL is shutting down media formats based on political criteria and in an illegal way (..). Since I have been working as a journalist nearly 50 radio stations were closed down (..). (IL interviewed on 7th June 2017).
It is important to highlight at this point, that when the evaluation of accountability mechanisms in the Venezuelan media system is made later on, it will be spoken of mainstream media and state influence, not individual efforts such as by journalists like IL. It is clear, that the latter has high ethical standards in acting out his profession, endangering his life for reporting quality news, and acting as what he himself describes as "social communicator" (IL interviewed on 7th June 2017).

Consequently, investigative journalism is barely possible in the country. VR describes the situation as follows: "(..) Venezuelan politicians have transformed into jailers of the Venezuelan people. (..) Political changes have only been for the worse." (VR interviewed on 26th May 2017). According to her and CZ, the only way to improve the situation would be to establish an state-independent instance and exchange it with CONATEL (See interview 5 and 6 in the appendix). Pluralism does not exist, as 90% of the media is owned by the state and according to VR: "(..) private and public media is bought by black money, no one knows who are the owners, and they have changed the editorial line in favour of the government (..)." (VR interviewed on 26th May 2017).

The internet and social media is perceived as medium of information and alternative to all of them, however, the internet access is already restricted by the state and political content blogged. IL refers to these development as part of the "hegemony of communications" and exemplifies what VR has pointed out: "(..) Globovisión had been an independent channel for many years, but in 2013 it was sold to a Venezuelan company linked to the Chavist government. No independent media exists anymore (..)."(IL interviewed on 7th June 2017). VR indicates another paradox: "The marginalized groups, which count more than 80% of the population, are not represented by one medium. (..)" (VR interviewed on 26th May 2017). Concerning pluralism, IL further adds that an oppositional voice is shown in TV for example, but only with less time to talk than their counter-parts and in a negative frame, which he describes as "the matrix of negative opinion" (IL interviewed on 7th June 2017). In relation to media as watchdog he talks about personal experience, highlighting the high control of media by the state. It was in 2015 that he was reporting about food shortages and threatened by the national police to be persecuted for crimes of communicational terrorism and fostering a media war against the Bolivarian Revolution. Moreover, they threatened him to bring him to the Bolivarian Intelligence Service of the country (SEBIN), (IL interviewed on 7th June 2017).

Furthermore, IL and CZ agree that in the beginning of the Chávez term the proclaimed democratization of the media for the people might have had a socialist ideal but it
has not been achieved at all and only led to the power concentration of the government (See interview 4 and 6 in the appendix), while VR doubts even the intention to have democratized the media (VR interviewed on 26th May 2017). Considering the findings of the interviews as well as the previous analysis the following evaluation can be made:

Table 3. Accountability mechanisms in the Venezuelan media system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability Mechanisms</th>
<th>Degree of media concentration</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Audience Participation</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Access to Information</th>
<th>Ethical Code of Conduct</th>
<th>Watchdog</th>
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Following the two tables on accountability of the media systems in both cases, the Chilean media system can be considered as partly democratic, facing a significant challenge through high media concentration and the seemingly impossibility of implementing legal reforms, while the Venezuelan system is clearly undemocratic and serves oppressive interests of authoritarian elites. For future research it might thus be interesting to include an additional
parameter to measure accountability of media systems of interest, namely the degree of legal restriction or flexibility. This parameter would grasp how the democratic feature of media is restricted by laws counterproductive in their function to inform and encourage public debate, as well as how "easy" it is to introduce and implement reforms.

A further observation has been made: Five out of six interviewees did not clearly understand the question of whether they think freedom of expression is a concept of the Occident, indicating multiple reasons. All Venezuelans stated that it is a universal concept that the country had lost during its transition from democracy to authoritarianism, while two Chileans did not understand the question at all, indicating that it is not really absent in their country. The interviewees’ level of education could have played a role here, as Sanchez has studied International Studies, which questions hegemonic paradigms. In this manner, he has stated that ´freedom of expression definitely describes an ideal by the West that does not exist in reality, as there are always groups who are financing directly or indirectly mediums of communication´ (Interview 2).

Also, according to Gramsci, values and norms of the dominant group are often promoted by institutions such as the media and adopted unconsciously by the dominated group (cited in Barker, 2003). The latter is a further explanation for why official indexes, such as those by Freedom House consider freedom of expression to be "free" in Chile, (Freedom-house.org, 2017, Chile). They measure general parameters, but fail to include unofficial restrictions, such as social pressure in a polarized society. The evaluated models of accountability hence suggest that a more nuanced approach to the traditional and widely used Freedom House statuses of "free", "partly-free" and "not free" could be useful. Nonetheless, this study is obviously dependent on official measures as well, which is why a methodology of mixed methods should be utilized in future research on the topic.

Conclusion

The two case studies of Chile and Venezuela have been interesting to compare as they both met the "road junction of neoliberalism", where each one of them took a different path, affecting their media systems as well. Chile, with the reputation as one of the most democratic and well-performing countries in Latin America, took the forceful road towards neoliberalism in the 1980s, supported by the U.S. and enforced by a period of military dictatorship under Pinochet, which led to the high media concentration and mainly privatized media of today. Venezuela in contrast, took the road away from neoliberalism, following an anti-imperialist
agenda and socialist ideal under Chávez that promised a public-, communitarian media, but ended in a communication model of propaganda, that seems to have only become worse under Maduro. Considering official indexes such as Freedom House, Chile is stated as "free" and Venezuela as "not free", concluding that their media systems could seemingly not be further away from each other. However, the applied accountability mechanisms have shown that different aspects or nuances of this "freedom" is overlooked by the official indexes. The thesis argues that, after having conducted an extensive research and analysis on the matter, today’s media system is semi-democratic due to aftermaths of the dictatorship that even its redemocratization processes starting in the 1990s did not overcome yet.

In both countries an extremely high media concentration has been detected in which light the discussion of private or public media becomes irrelevant because the line of ownership gets blurred, even for the public and journalists, and it becomes unclear "who owns what", as the conducted interviews have shown. Even privatized media is often state owned or acting in favor of it, while vice versa the state supports their maintenance and shuts down alternative media, as has been seen in the case of CONATEL in Venezuela and with the Chilean conglomerate Copesa.

It becomes evident that it is a false perception to assume that the liberalization of the media, in a neo-liberalist sense, necessarily leads to a pluralistic media system, as illustrated by the Chilean case where it rather fostered a high degree of media concentration in contrast to Chile’s pre-dictatorial public and pluralistic media landscape. The study has shown, that there is a difference between official freedom of expression, such as not being harmed violently when expressing one’s opinion, and an unofficial one in which Chileans, for example, are restricted by social pressure to express their opinion fully also due to the polarization of the country or the government agenda to maintain status quo. Furthermore, the persisting defamation laws restrict journalists in their watchdog position, so they do not act it out in the first place and hence there might be less violations against them, as no "power holder" is provoked. The applied accountability mechanisms have helped identify this notions in between "black and white" measurements. Nonetheless, a further parameter, the degree of media restrictiveness by law would be revealing in further research. A way to democratize the media in Chile would be improve this last parameter, allowing for reforms and the abandonment of the defamation laws that originate in the dictatorship.

In Venezuela a reversed media transition took place, from privatized to public, still leading towards media concentration as well and Maduro’s declared "war on media". Chávez
addressed a common problem that is well-known by academic debates, "the discrimination of marginalized groups in broadcasting content" (Hall, n.d.). Nevertheless, as the study has shown, only the interest of power groups were fostered, as well as media concentration, which only worsened with the governmental change to Maduro. The question remains whether there was ever a real socialist intention or it only served as a "cloak" to mobilize the masses, as characteristic for populism (Hall, n.d.). However, further research is necessary to find out whether Venezuela’s development of the media was an individual faith, or if its failure to provide a pluralistic-, democratic media system actually serving the public, is characteristic for other pink-tied governments as well. In a further research project one could hence take the proposed accountability model and apply it with the amplified parameter "legal restriction" to the cases of Ecuador and Argentina, for example, as well as to a third country from outside the region, with a democratic reputation to evaluate the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms of a democratic country, as well as to assure that the model is universally applicable.

In both case studies, public and private media under no matter what cloak were promoting power interests of the dominant power group, verifying the hypothesis that both different approaches towards media democratization were following an own political agenda, while the democratization of the media, at least in the two countries, remains an utopia. However, as inefficient accountability mechanisms have been identified, so have efficient ones as well. Despite restrictive state policies, laws and oppressive governments, supported by mainstream media, audience participation is immensely high, especially in Venezuela indicating a high political participation and public debate of counter voices. The effectiveness of this mechanism is hence not necessarily tied to democratic media systems.

But what could be done to actually democratize the media? If the media is a "fourth estate", it should be treated like other division of powers- as an independent instance, neither privatized nor public, as much as a parliament or court should not be tied to enterprises or the government, nor the court be dictated by a ruling president. Although the conducted research is not solving this debate, it proposes a starting point for an unique measurement that can help and detect efficiencies and inefficiencies of accountability systems universally and hence assist in democratizing the media.


Appendix

The interviews of the Chilean participants:

Interview 1

VO, interviewed on the 9th June 2017

1. Cúal es su profesión?

Soy periodista, escritor y profesor en la Universidad de Chile, Universidad Andrés Bello y Universidad Santo Tomás.

2. Qué opinas de la libertad de expresión en relación con su país?

Pienso que en cuanto a los medios de comunicación está condicionada a los grupos de poder que están tras estos medios, los que pautean lo que se puede hablar y lo que no se puede hablar. Por otra parte, en la sociedad chilena la libertad de expresión en el día a día está condicionada a “la opinión del otro”. Muchas veces no tenemos la libertad para decir lo que pensamos, por miedo a las consecuencias sociales que puedan tener nuestras ideas.

3. Tiene alguna idea de mejora?

En cuanto a los medios de comunicación, las leyes deberían privilegiar la autonomía de estos, cosa difícil en América Latina y el mundo, dado cómo se mueven las cosas respecto a los poderes económicos y políticos. En cuanto a las personas, las cosas ya están mejorando a través de las redes sociales, en lo que quizás es lo más valioso que tiene la revolución dada por Internet entre tantas cosas negativas: las personas pueden organizarse comunicacionalmente para instalar temas en la contingencia. Por último, las mejoras deben venir desde la educación infantil formal y familiar.

4. Siente usted que puede actuar su profesión sin restricciones?

Sí, puedo realizar mi oficio sin problemas, pero con la certeza de que algunas opiniones pueden jugarme en contra, cosa que no frena mis intenciones de propiciar un sentido crítico en mis estudiantes y lectores.

5. Que opinas sobre el debate de los medios públicos, quizás cerca del estado, y los medios comercilizados más cerca a los conglomerados? Eres consciente de este debate?
Claro, es una realidad en Chile y en muchos otros países. Como lo esbozo antes, pienso que es un problema, la prensa debiera ser libre y autónoma para informar, pero obviamente esto no está pasando en la actualidad.

6. Hay alguna restricción ética de actuar tu profesión?

Claro, las que me impongo de acuerdo a la forma que tengo de ver el mundo, que en cuanto al periodismo está muy asociada al concepto de la “empatía”, que pienso debiera desarrollar todo comunicador.

7. Has experimentado algunos cambios en respecto a los medios relacionados con cambios del gobierno, económico o en la política?

En Chile por cada gobierno que pasa van cambiando los lineamientos de los medios de comunicación. Esto se puede ver claramente en el canal estatal, TVN. Cambian los ejecutivos de los directorios y con eso algunas decisiones, que no tengo claro si logran afectar lo que está a la vista de la gente común y corriente.

8. Cual es, en su opinión, la fuente más confiable de noticias?

La fuente más confiable es aquella que se arma una persona con fragmentos de distintos medios, grandes e independientes. No creo que haya un medio periodístico que me entregue la confiabilidad al 100%.

9. Hay diversidad y grupos externos representados en los medios de comunicación? Sus voces? Por ejemplo de los Mapuches?

No creo que haya una diversidad, pero sí hay voces a las que uno puede recurrir para informarse sobre estos problemas. Es importante destacar el rol que juegan las artes en esto, que muchas veces toman mayor relevancia que los medios para invitar a la reflexión del público. En cuanto al tema mapuche, el cine, la fotografía y la literatura han hecho un gran aporte para posicionar el problema en la sociedad chilena.

10. Hay cambios notables del gobierno de Bachelet y lo de antes? Tambien en las reformas de los medios, normas, centrada de comunidad? Libertad de expresión?

El más radical en términos de medios de comunicación es el anuncio de Bachelet de la creación de un canal de TV cultural, del que todavía no hay nada concreto.
11. Piensas que libertad de expresión es un concepto del Occidente?

No sé.

12. Usted esta consiente de la estructura oligárquica de los medios en Chile, por ejemplo que 90% de las noticias nacionales (el mercurio y copesa) son de la misma familia? Porque es así? Porque no hay más reformas?

Sí, estoy consciente. Pienso que esto es así por el poder económico, social y político que tienen estos medios en Chile. No hay que olvidar que está absolutamente confirmado que El Mercurio fue cómplice del golpe de estado de 1973, creando informaciones falsas para ocultar las violaciones a los derechos humanos llevadas a cabo por el régimen de Pinochet durante 17 años. Hace poco murió el director del diario en esa época, Agustín Edwards, sin ser juzgado por este delito.

13. En 2015 habían demonstraciones por el derecho a la comunicación. Usted es conciente de este desarrollo y puede sentirse una diferencia?

Sinceramente no siento la diferencia.

14. Algo más que sepas y quieras decir sobre los medios y la situación de comunicación en Chile?

Pienso que todo lo que podría decir ya está escrito en las respuestas arriba.

Interview 2

CS, interviewed on the 27th May 2017

1. Cúal es su profesión?

Analista en asuntos internacionales

2. Qué opinas de la libertad de expresión en relación con su país?

Es real pero hay un tema con el control de los medios

3. Tiene alguna idea de mejora?

Evitar el monopolio de grupos políticos en los medios

4. Siente usted que puede actuar su profesión sin restricciones?
Sí

5. Que opinas sobre el debate de los medios públicos, quizás cerca del estado, y los medios comercializados más cerca a los conglomerados? Eres consciente de este debate?

Opino que cada vez existe más cercanía por parte de las estaciones privadas, las cuales son cooptadas por grupos políticos que manipulan la agenda pública a su interés. Ha pasado con el movimiento estudiantil del año 2011 donde el tema se ignoró durante meses.

6. Hay alguna restricción ética de actuar tu profesión?

No.

7. Has experimentado algunos cambios en respecto a los medios relacionados con cambios del gobierno, económico o en la política?

Históricamente los medios han buscado la defensa de un modelo económico neoliberal en Chile

8. Cual es, en su opinión, la fuente más confiable de noticias?

Internet

9. Hay diversidad y grupos externos representados en los medios de comunicación? Sus voces? Por ejemplo de los Mapuches?

Muy pocos. Comúnmente, en medios independientes se puede encontrar esa información.

10. Hay cambios notables del gobierno de Bachelet y lo de antes? También en las reformas de los medios, normas, centrada de comunidad? Libertad de expresión?

Desconozco su actuar en cuanto a los medios. Pero en la realidad todo parece igual

11. Piensas que libertad de expresión es un concepto del Occidente?

Claramente. Es un ideal que está bastante lejos de existir en la realidad mientras existan grupos que financien directa o indirectamente a los medios de comunicación.

12. Usted esta consiente de la estructura oligárquica de los medios en Chile, por ejemplo que 90% de las noticias nacionales (el mercurio y copesa) son de la misma familia? Porque es así? Porque no hay más reformas?
Sí lo estoy. El grupo económico que controla copesa ha tenido un rol clave en la historia chilena en el último tiempo, estando alineado con los intereses de la derecha chilena y defendiendo a ultranza el modelo neoliberal. Bastaría con averiguar acerca de la manipulación de la información durante la dictadura militar, ocultando o mintiendo sobre la situación política del país. Es así porque hay carencia en una legislación ad hoc y los gobiernos de oposición pregonan el mismo sistema económico por tanto convergen sustancialmente en temas de fondo (o al menos durante los gobiernos de la concertación).

13. **En 2015 habían demostraciones por el derecho a la comunicación. Usted es conciente de este desarrollo y puede sentirse una diferencia?**

Sé que ha pasado pero no he visto una diferencia real.

14. **Algo más que sepas y quieras decir sobre los medios y la situación de comunicación en Chile?**

Creo que los MCM juegan un papel fundamental y más ahora que Chile se aproxima a elecciones presidenciales. Es por esto que debiese haber libertad de expresión y asegurar que los medios no hagan campaña por grupos económicos particulares.

15. **Crees que hay suficiente transparencia por los conglomerados de medios de comunicación y el estado?**

No hay suficiente transparencia puesto que los conglomerados tienen diferentes maneras de extender su influencia por poseer un montón de diferentes empresas que pueden servir el interés principal de sus ideas políticas. Mismo con las pensiones, educación, salud, etcetera.

16. **Existe mucha participación de la audiencia de los chilenos que pueden expresar su opinión a través de los medios de comunicación?**

Audiences are not fully represented on media and that is clear when it comes to the different ways of speaking about some issues. There is a trend to use the same editorial line aligned to the current system. Dissident opinions do not really have a space in this fashion or at least not in big medias.

**Interview 3**

**MQ, interviewed on the 10th of June 2017**

1. **Cúal es su profesión?**

Soy historiador de profesión y Dr © en Ciencia Política

2. **Qué opinas de la libertad de expresión en relación con su país?**
Creo que hay libertad, pero faltan espacios comunicantes donde tengan cabida distintas miradas de procesos políticos. Como en Chile tenemos concentración de medios, muchas veces se posicionan noticias o debates que representan a los bloques de poder que han tenido mayor presencia mediática.

3. Tiene alguna idea de mejora?

Lo cierto es que en la medida que surjan mayores medios de comunicación, mayores son las probabilidades de que otras ideas lleguen a un mayor porcentaje de la población. Claro, el problema radica que ese tipo de medios tienen la gran barrera del avisaje, que como expliqué anteriormente, la concentración de medios acapara gran parte de la publicidad. Quizás el aporte del Estado sea clave para que abunden más medios circulando en el país.

4. Siente usted que puede actuar su profesión sin restricciones?

De alguna manera, sí, pero creo que es insuficiente. Si bien yo logré presencia en medios producto de mis temas investigados en la Universidad, normalmente mi forma de analizar las cosas circula en medios alternativos y no en medios masivos. Eso dificulta que esta forma de interpretar las cosas vea restringida su llegada en la población.

5. Que opinas sobre el debate de los medios públicos, quizás cerca del estado, y los medios comercializados más cerca a los conglomerados? Eres consciente de este debate?

Claro, y pienso que es así. Ahora, el Estado no impone totalmente su mirada, pero tampoco alienta a que lleguen otras en los medios. En razón a los comercializados, también tienen posición política y a veces es claramente expuesta en editoriales y en la propia prensa.

5. Hay alguna restricción ética de actuar tu profesión?

Que yo vea, no.

6. Has experimentado algunos cambios en respecto a los medios relacionados con cambios del gobierno, económico o en la política?

Sí, es notorio ese cambio. En la medida de cambian los gobiernos que son contrarios a la línea editorial de los principales medios, aparecen opiniones y reportajes que buscan erosionar la credibilidad y durante el gobierno de Bachelet ha sido claro este fenómeno

8. Cúal es, en su opinión, la fuente más confiable de noticias?
Creo que son los medios independientes, esos que han forjado su credibilidad e imagen en base e un periodismo de investigación. Ahí creo que radio Bío Bío, el Mostrador, radio Universidad de Chile, El periodista, Radio Villa Francia, han hecho eso y golpeado con temas que contrastan con los grandes medios.

9. Hay diversidad y grupos externos representados en los medios de comunicación? Sus voces? Por ejemplo de los Mapuches?

Cuesta, por eso creo que los medios alternativos mencionados anteriormente si tienen un rol social que intenta darle cabida a otras voces que, muchas veces, son silenciadas en los grandes medios

10. Hay cambios notables del gobierno de Bachelet y lo de antes? También en las reformas de los medios, normas, centrada de comunidad? Libertad de expresión?

La verdad, que siento que no es mucho el avance. El centro de la fuerza política del nuevo gobierno de Bachelet ha estado en educación, en lo tributario y en lo valórico. Por tanto, ahí puso el foco y lo otro no ha tenido la prioridad en este sentido

11. Piensas que libertad de expresión es un concepto del Occidente?

No entiendo esta idea.

12. Piensas que las reformas de los medios de Chavéz eran ideas socialistas? Fueron exitosas?

Creo que si, pero chocaron con los intereses de los grupos de poder local que vieron como estos intereses se debilitaban. Por ende, en términos de democratizar los medios, fue una oportunidad para Venezuela de que otras ideas tuvieran espacio medial.

13. Usted esta consiente de la estructura oligárquica de los medios en Chile, por ejemplo que 90% de las noticias nacionales (el mercurio y copesa) son de la misma familia? Por que es así? Porque no hay más reformas?

Esta idea se arrastra desde la dictadura. Tanto La Tercera como El Mercurio, en los años ochenta vivieron una severa crisis económica y fueron rescatados por la dictadura. Por ende, el compromiso con el régimen se mantuvo por mucho tiempo, sobre todo para el mercurio que fue un actor relevante contra el gobierno de Allende y por cierto, con instigar para que cayera su gobierno. Entonces, al darse esta relación, tras el retorno de la democracia ambos medios continuaron en esta relación, y siempre ha tomado una posición política contraria a ideas “revolucionarias”
14. En 2015 habían demostraciones por el derecho a la comunicación. Usted es conciente de este desarrollo y puede sentirse una diferencia?

Este ha estado presente mucho con las demandas mapuche. Es decir, el tratamiento de la información de la prensa siempre ha buscado criminalizar la protesta y este tipo de demandas. La presión social (sobre todo en redes sociales) de alguna manera ha logrado desacreditar ese tipo de periodismo más cercanos a los grupos de poder que a la sociedad. Pero falta mucho para que dichas ideas tengan cabida en los dos bloques de medios más importante de Chile. Importante mencionar que están creándose medios vinculados a empresarios y eso da cuenta que hay un sector de la sociedad que necesita incidir en la opinión pública para impedir alterar las actuales condiciones políticas, que le son favorables.

15. Algo más que sepas y quieras decir sobre los medios y la situación de comunicación en Chile?

Que tanto en mercurio como la tercera, concentran un 90% del avisoaje del Estado. Quizás el porcentaje haya cambiado, pero al margen de eso, ese dato revela que al Estado no le interesa darle crecimiento a otros medios y eso limita no solo el surgimiento, sino que también su mantenimiento en el tiempo.

The interviews of the Venezuelan participants:

Interview 4

IL interviewed on the 7th June 2017

1. ¿Cuál es tu profesión?

Soy periodista y ejerzo mi profesión desde el año 2003. Trabajé durante dos años y medio en Venevisión, el canal de entretenimiento con mayor audiencia en mi país. Allí fui productor de la sección internacional del noticiario; también laboré por siete años en Globovisión, que durante mucho tiempo fue el único canal de información en Venezuela; llegué a ser reportero y luego coordinador de prensa. He trabajado además para la emisora Actualidad del circuito Unión Radio, uno de los más importantes de mi país, en publicaciones impresas especializadas, y como corresponsal internacional para el canal de televisión peruano América TV y para el canal de televisión colombiano Noticias Uno.

2. ¿Qué opinas de la libertad de expresión en relación con tu país?

La libertad de expresión en Venezuela se ejerce con graves amenazas. Existe censura por parte del Estado y autocensura en medios privados y públicos por miedo a las represalias que puede tomar el poder ejecutivo. Durante mi carrera he sido testigo de numerosos ataques directos a la libertad de expresión como derecho humano fundamental. Por ejemplo, cuando
se anunció la muerte del presidente Chávez en marzo de 2013 recuerdo que el ministro para Comunicación e Información, Ernesto Villegas, llamó para amenazar a la directiva del canal donde trabajaba, como yo era personal de confianza y coordinador de prensa, tuve acceso a esa información. El ministro advirtió que debíamos cuidar lo que se transmitía porque si el pueblo chavista se sentía ofendido, el gobierno no podría garantizar nuestra integridad física. Desde mi punto de vista fue una amenaza directa. Conozco a varios colegas que fueron despedidos de sus trabajos después de hacer una pregunta incómoda algún funcionario del gobierno bolivariano. También he sido testigo de cómo el Directorio de Responsabilidad Social de Conatel, órgano que regula las telecomunicaciones en Venezuela, actúa de manera sesgada y proselitista, al sancionar y cerrar medios de comunicación basándose en un criterio político y no legal. Desde que comencé a ejercer el periodismo en Venezuela he visto cómo se han cerrado casi 50 emisoras de radio, cómo se le ha negado el papel periódico a diarios que no están identificados con la línea gubernamental y cómo se cerró Radio Caracas Televisión, el primer canal de televisión que hubo en mi país.

3. ¿Tienes alguna idea de mejora?
Desde mi punto de vista, la única manera de garantizar el libre ejercicio informativo y de expresión, es promoviendo instituciones independientes y autónomas. Por ejemplo, el Directorio de Responsabilidad Social de Conatel, órgano que regula las telecomunicaciones en Venezuela, no debería estar integrado por militantes del partido de gobierno, como en efecto lo está.

4. ¿Siente usted que puede actuar su profesión sin restricciones?
En Venezuela el periodismo se ejerce con muy fuertes restricciones. Durante el año 2015, me encontraba realizando un trabajo para el canal América TV de Perú en el municipio Chacao de Caracas. Mientras grababa una enorme fila de personas que esperaban por alimentos, se me acercaron varios efectivos de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana y exigieron que apagara la cámara y borrara el material que había registrado hasta el momento. Amenazaron con imputarme los siguientes delitos: *terrorismo comunicacional* y *guerra mediática contra la Revolución Bolivariana*; además dijeron que me llevarían detenido al Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia (Sebin).

5. ¿Qué opinas sobre el debate de los medios públicos, quizá cerca del estado, y los medios comercializados más cerca a los conglomerados? ¿Eres consciente de este debate?
Sí, soy consciente de ese debate, aunque pienso que no podría aplicarse a Venezuela en la realidad actual. En el año 2002 el gobierno bolivariano puso en desarrollo un plan para ejercer lo que ellos mismos llamaron públicamente “hegemonía comunicacional”, que consistía en tomar la mayor cantidad posible de medios de comunicación. Coloco este ejemplo: Globovisión fue durante muchos años un canal de televisión independiente a la línea del Estado, pero en 2013 fue vendido a un empresario venezolano vinculado al chavismo. Lo mismo ocurrió con otros medios tradicionales como el diario El Universal, el periódico Últimas Noticias, la página web Noticias 24, entre muchos otros.
Pienso que desde hace varios años no se puede decir que en Venezuela existen medios de comunicación totalmente independientes porque incluso los medios privados reciben grandes presiones políticas por parte del gobierno.

6. ¿Hay alguna restricción ética de actuar tu profesión?
Como periodista y comunicador social, siento que tengo un deber fundamental a decir la verdad. Siento que me debo a la gente, tengo un profundo sentido de justicia social, pero sobre todo un sentido ético de decir exactamente lo que ocurre sin tomar una parcialidad política.

7. ¿Has experimentado algunos cambios en respecto a los medios relacionados con cambios del gobierno, económico o en la política?
Recuerdo que cuando era adolescente veía programas informativos de denuncia donde los periodistas entraban a las cárceles venezolanas y mostraban la realidad de lo que ocurría allí. Eso es algo que no puede hacerse desde hace casi 18 años porque la entrada a recintos penitenciarios está prohibida para los periodistas. Siento que se han incrementado las restricciones a la prensa con los cambios de gobierno. Sufrí censura cuando el presidente Chávez estaba vivo y ahora con el presidente Nicolás Maduro siento que esa censura y esas restricciones al ejercicio del periodismo son mucho más férreas.

8. ¿Cual es en tu opinión la fuente más confiable de noticias?
En Venezuela los medios los internacionales son los más confiables. Las agencias de noticias como Reuters, AFP, AP, CNN Español, porque desarrollan su trabajo de manera independiente y no atienden a las presiones que se ejercen desde el gobierno venezolano.

9. ¿Hay diversidad y grupos externos representados en los medios de comunicación? ¿Sus voces?
En Venezuela sí puedes ver diversidad de actores políticos en los programas de opinión. El problema desde mi punto de vista no está allí, sino en los noticiarios tanto de medios públicos como privados. Por ejemplo, en un noticiario de un medio privado seguramente verás ofreciendo declaraciones a un vocero de la oposición, pero si lo contabilizas te darás cuenta que el tiempo de exposición es mucho menor al tiempo que puede tener un vocero del gobierno. Eso se debe a la autocensura y la presión del gobierno. Hablo de televisión, pero aplica también para las páginas web, los diarios impresos y la radio. Esto que digo, lo digo desde mi experiencia personal.
También puedes darte cuenta que en el Sistema Nacional de Medios Públicos, la oposición es prácticamente inexistente salvo cuando se trata de una información que genera estrictamente una matriz de opinión negativa.
En Venezuela actualmente hay 10 canales de televisión de los cuales 7 pertenecen al Estado o a empresarios vinculados al gobierno:
TVES, canal del gobierno bolivariano.
VTV canal del gobierno bolivariano.
Ávila TV canal del gobierno bolivariano.
Vive TV canal del gobierno bolivariano.
FANB TV canal del gobierno bolivariano.
La Tele Tuya canal privado que pertenece a un empresario chavista.
Globovisión canal privado que pertenece a un empresario chavista.
Venevisión canal privado.
Televen canal privado.
Vale TV canal privado que pertenece a la iglesia venezolana.

10. ¿Hay cambios notables entre el gobierno de Chávez y de Maduro? ¿También en las reformas de los medios, normas, centrada de comunidad? ¿Libertad de expresión?
No creo que haya cambios sustanciales entre la política comunicacional del presidente Chávez y del presidente Maduro. Creo que han actuado en la misma línea de ideas. Cuando Chávez vivía también había agresiones físicas y verbales, robo de equipos a la prensa y censura. Ciertamente ahora es mayor pero pienso que está relacionado con la legitimidad popular. Es decir, a menor apoyo de bases populares, mayor censura y ataque contra medios.

11. ¿Piensas que libertad de expresión es un concepto del Oeste?
Piensó que la Libertad de Expresión es un concepto universal. Creo que se ejerció con muchas más garantías durante el período democrático de mi país.

12. ¿Piensas que las reformas de los medios de Chávez eran ideas socialistas? ¿Fueron exitosas?
Sí. Sin duda alguna la reforma a la Ley de Telecomunicaciones tuvo una base teórica socialista. Pienso que fueron exitosas desde el punto de vista de su objetivo principal, que era el control de los medios de comunicación social. Sin embargo, desde mi perspectiva no creo que haya habido una “democratización” de los medios, creo que esa fue la excusa del gobierno para tomarlos bajo su control, como se demuestra hoy. Por ejemplo, el jueves 1 de junio de este año el gobierno nacional cerró y decomisó todos los equipos radiofónicos de la emisora Radio América 92.1 en el estado Barinas. Esa emisora era abiertamente chavista y socialista, su concesión radioeléctrica fue entregada por el Estado venezolano en ese proceso de “democratización”, pero en los últimos días había asumido una actitud crítica hacia la situación sociopolítica del país, por ese motivo Conatel decidió suspender las operaciones. Pienso que los hechos lo demuestran. Nunca se buscó democratizar sino controlar.

13. ¿Qué piensas sobre TVES y del programa antes RCTV? ¿Los conoces?
Conocí bien la programación de RCTV porque fue el primer canal de televisión en Venezuela. Recuerdo que el presidente Chávez decidió suspender la concesión bajo el argumento de que la programación era basura y no tenía contenidos educativos para la población. Ahora que veo TVES, siento que no hay demasiada diferencia entre el contenido que emite la Televisora Socialista y el que emitía RCTV: programas de concursos, de cocina, salud, mucho entretenimiento en general y poca educación. La diferencia principal es que antes era un canal privado y ahora es un canal del gobierno.
14. ¿Algo más que sepas y quieras decir sobre los medios y la situación de comunicación en Venezuela?
He tenido la oportunidad de hablar con corresponsales extranjeros de otras nacionalidades que se encuentran trabajando aquí en Venezuela, periodistas que han cubierto conflictos bélicos en medio oriente, guerras civiles, y ellos siempre se muestran sorprendidos y preocupados por cómo se ejerce el periodismo aquí en mi país. Dicen que el hostigamiento contra la prensa, la censura y la autocensura es algo que nunca habían visto de esta manera. Ejercer el periodismo en Venezuela es algo difícil y complejo, porque somos blanco directo de agresiones físicas y robo de equipos. Recuerdo por ejemplo que en septiembre del año pasado tres hombres armados sometieron a un equipo de un canal por Internet llamado VivoPlayNet. Apuntándoles con armas de fuego hicieron ponerse de rodillas a la reportera, al camarógrafo y al conductor, los golpearon y les robaron su equipo de trabajo. Los hombres fueron grabados en vídeo por otros medios, están plenamente identificados, son militantes del Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela y trabajaban en la alcaldía del municipio Libertador cuyo alcalde es chavista. Al día de hoy continúan libres. En Venezuela no hay garantías para ejercer la Libertad de Expresión.

**Interview 5**

**VR interviewed on the 26th May 2017**

1. Cúal es tu profesión?
Soy Periodista y profesora universitaria.

2. Qué opinas de la libertad de expresión en relación con Venezuela?
En Venezuela desde hace muchos años que no existe la libertad de expresión, quien piensa distinto es encarcelado, exiliado o asesinado.

3. Tienes alguna idea de mejora?
Por supuesto. Más del 80% de los venezolanos están descontentos con el régimen actual por lo tanto se necesita un cambio necesario e inmediato.

4. Siente usted que puede actuar su profesión sin restricciones? O que sea posible allí?
No. En Venezuela no se puede ejercer el periodismo libremente. Es una profesión de riesgo allí.
5. Que opinas sobre el debate de los medios públicos, quizás cerca del estado, y los medios comercilizados más cerca a los conglomerados? Eres consciente de este debate?

El 90% de los medios de comunicación están en manos del Estado, tanto los públicos como los privados, estos últimos comprados con dinero oscuro, no se sabe quiénes son sus dueños y han cambiado la línea editorial a favor del gobierno. El único debate existente es la verdad de la sociedad versus la mentira gubernamental.

6. Hay alguna restricción ética de actuar tu profesión en general y también en relación con Venezuela?

La única restricción ética es la autocensura y yo no la tengo.

7. Has experimentado algunos cambios en respecto a los medios relacionados con cambios del gobierno, económico o en la política?

En Venezuela los cambios desde el gobierno son constantes y siempre para peor, las políticas económicas son nefastas, cada día que pasa el Bolívar (moneda venezolana) pierde más valor, los medios -como Telesur y VTV- mienten descaradamente y los políticos chavistas se han convertidos en los carceleros de los venezolanos.

8. Cual es, en tu opinión la fuente más confiable de noticias allí?

Para mí la única fuente confiable es la información que sale directamente desde la MUD (Mesa de la Unidad Democrática).

9. Hay diversidad y grupos externos representados en los medios de comunicación? Sus voces?

Los grupos más marginados (que son más del 80% de la población) no están representados por ningún medio de comunicación en Venezuela. La mayoría de los medios están en manos del Estado y los pocos independientes que quedan son continuamente atacados y censurados por el régimen.

10. Hay cambios notables del Chávez gobierno y lo de Maduro?

También en las reformas de los medios, normas, centrada de comunidad? Libertad de expresión? Los únicos cambios han sido para peor, cada vez hay menos libertados, más crisis, más miseria, más inflación y represión. Maduro lo que ha hecho ha sido radicalizar el proceso que comenzó Hugo Chávez.
11. Piensas que libertad de expresión es un concepto del Occidente?

La libertad de expresión es un derecho ciudadano contemplado en el Artículo 19 de los DDHH y es deber de la sociedad, los gobiernos y los propios periodistas en velar por que ese derecho se respete y no se desvirtúe, tal como está pasando actualmente en el mundo.

12. Piensas que las reformas de los medios de Chavéz eran ideas socialistas? Fueron existosas?

No puede ser exitoso algo que ha llevado a su pueblo a la miseria. En todos los sentidos.

13. Que piensas sobre Tves y del programa antes RCTV? Los conoces?

Por supuesto. RCTV era un canal popular, con muchos años de tradición y TVES es un canal propagandístico del régimen que no tiene más de un 2% de share.

14. Piensas que los medios estan controlado del estado en una manera benefeciario al pluralismo o más para mantener el poder?

Al estar controlados por el Estado es lógico que no beneficien ni a la sociedad ni al pluralismo sino al Gobierno.

15. Algo más que sepas y quieras decir sobre los medios y la situation contemporario de comunicacion en Venezuela?

Una de las cosas que se deberán hacer para reconstruir el país es desmontar todo el aparato propagandístico del gobierno que está sustentado en los medios de comunicación del Estado y comenzar a dejar ejercer libremente la profesión, tal como lo está haciendo la actual Asamblea Nacional.

Interview 6

CZ interviewed on the 26th May 2017

1. ¿Cuál es tu profesión?

Soy estudiante de licenciatura en Idiomas Modernos en la Universidad de los Andes, Venezuela. Además trabajo como Instructor de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera y como Intérprete de Inglés-Español.

2. ¿Qué opinas de la libertad de expresión en relación a tu país?
En mi país la libertad de expresión aún sobrevive y ha encontrado medios alternativos para seguir existiendo, ya que las autoridades estatales han restringido y manipulado la información a su favor en los últimos años, el pueblo ha encontrado fuentes de información más transparentes en las redes sociales.

3. ¿Tienes alguna idea de mejora?

Un ente regulador de telecomunicaciones que no esté al servicio del gobierno sería muy útil para mejorar la libertad de expresión en Venezuela.

4. ¿Sientes que puedes ejercer tu profesión sin restricciones?

Como instructor de inglés e intérprete sí puedo ejercer sin restricciones en mi país.

5. ¿Qué opinas sobre el debate de los medios públicos, quizás cercanos al estado, y los medios comercializados más cercanos a los conglomerados? ¿Eres consciente de este debate?

Actualmente en Venezuela todos los medios comercializados están regulados por el gobierno, así que no muestran toda la verdad, el internet ha sido la única vía hacia la información verás aunque muchas veces éste puede jugar como arma de doble filo pues cualquiera puede publicar información, lo que lleva a las falsas noticias y a la confusión pues la mayoría de las personas que consumen información a través de internet no están acostumbradas a tener que descartar información que podría no ser fidedigna. En los últimos años cada vez más personas mayores de 40 años se han integrado a las redes sociales, ahí, estas personas encuentran un sin fin de información de todo tipo que no puede ser verificada en medios oficiales pues estos solo muestran lo que se les permite.

6. ¿Hay alguna restricción ética al ejercer tu profesión?

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7. ¿Has experimentado algún cambio con respecto a los medios que esté relacionado con cambios de gobierno, económico o en la política?

Por supuesto, los cambios de gobierno han significado un duro golpe a los medios, porque ahora CONATEL obedece a los intereses del gobierno.

8. ¿Cuál es, en tu opinión, la fuente más confiable de noticias?

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Actualmente las fuentes más confiables de información son la prensa digital y las cuentas oficiales de dirigentes políticos y periodistas reconocidos en Twitter y Facebook.

9. ¿Hay diversidad y grupos externos representados en los medios de comunicación? ¿Sus voces?

Junto con la grave situación de Venezuela en este momento, muchos medios de comunicación extranjeros han volteado sus miradas hacia mi país, medios como NTN24 de Colombia y Agence France-Presse, por nombrar un par, han hecho muy buen trabajo informando en el exterior e interior del país acerca de nuestra situación.

10. ¿Hubo cambios notables del Chávez gobierno y lo de Maduro? ¿También en las reformas de los medios, normas, centrada de comunidad? ¿Libertad de expresión?

Sí hubo cambios, a pesar de que en el gobierno de Chávez hubo muchas restricciones de la información, con la mala gestión del gobierno actual las restricciones de la información fueron más agresivas ya que al gobierno no le conviene que el pueblo se informe de lo mal que lo está haciendo.

11. ¿Piensas que libertad de expresión es un concepto del Occidente?

Creo que la libertad de expresión es un concepto que hoy en pleno siglo XXI debería estar implantado en cada rincón del mundo, bien sea Occidente o no, pero para eso tendríamos que deshacernos de prejuicios religiosos, gobiernos dictatoriales y de la corrupción.

12. ¿Piensas que las reformas de los medios de Chávez eran ideas socialistas? ¿Fueron exitosas?

Creo que fueron reformas para poder controlar los medios, no beneficiaron al pueblo y en realidad acabaron con el trabajo de muchos periodistas. Creo que fue exitoso para el gobierno, pues lograron controlar la TV pública nacional.

13. ¿Qué piensas sobre Tves y del antiguo canal RCTV? ¿Los conoces?

Sí conozco Tves, me parece que refleja muy bien la decadencia y la falta de preparación y claridad que tiene el gobierno, este canal fue vendido como “el canal de todos los venezolanos” antes de que saliera al aire pero en realidad cuando finalmente empezó su programación no pasaban más que novelas coreanas y dibujos animados que no eran producidos aquí, una verdadera lástima, hoy en día el canal transmite pero es más bien invisible para los venezolanos, no producen buenos shows e informan de manera restringida ya que a fin de cuentas son un canal del gobierno.
También conocí RCTV, un canal con muchos años de trayectoria que desapareció por hacer su deber: informar con veracidad a Venezuela.

14. Como es el sentimiento entre los estudiantes sobre la situación de los medios? Se sienten robando de sus voces, que por ejemplo no hay un acceso suficiente del internet?

Entre los estudiantes hay mucho descontento ya que es la gente joven la que tiene mayor acceso a la información en internet y la que sobre descartar mucho mejor las falsas informaciones, si sienten que muchas veces no son esuchados aunque si hay medios online que les dan espacio para expresarse.