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## Motives and social actor positioning: the representation of the Chilean student movement in the national press<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

The student movement has always been at the centre of political change in Chile, which has resulted in tensions with the heavily monopolized media. These tensions have forced the student movement to resort to more alternative media outlets to both disseminate their information and to challenge the criminalization of their movement. In this context, this article sets to explore the attributions of motive in the representation of the Chilean student movement during a three-year period (2011–2013) in the mainstream and alternative press.

Throughout this article, motive is understood as the implicit and/or explicit manifestation of an individual and/or collective's drive or wish to do (or not do) something in a particular context. The corpus comprises over 3,000 news articles, which were analysed in the light of Harré's (2010, 2015) Social Actor Positioning and van Leeuwen's (2000, 2008) legitimation and purpose frameworks. Results show the use of specific ideological narratives that legitimize these actors'

motives in the media representation of this conflict. Similarly, the attribution of motives depends on the actors' role in society and the kind of press analysed. Finally, there are irreconcilable ideological differences in the government's understanding of the students' right and duties and vice versa, which are heavily grounded in the aftermath of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship.

**Keywords**

**Motive, positioning theory, Chilean student movement, mainstream press, alternative press, media representation, narrative accounts.**

### 1. Introduction

The relationship between social movements and the media, either digital or in print, has always been complicated. Until the early 2000s –and despite their overall criminalization– social movements strongly depended on mainstream media to make their causes known (Kennis, 2016; Seguin, 2016; Cohen, 2011; McLeod, 2007). While this dependency has changed thanks to the Internet and various social media platforms, mainstream media still play an important role in how people know about social movements, their causes, their protest actions, and their *motives*. Alternative (or radical) media, on the other hand, have become a

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haven to social movements. Studies confirm that marginalized communities and social activists employ alternative means of communication (e.g. blogs, social platforms, communal radios) to resist and challenge the criminalization and delegitimation of mainstream media (Harlow & Harp, 2013). More importantly, alternative media have had positive effects in how audiences think of these social movements. On this, Harlow and Johnson argue that alternative media offer a “participatory, interactive approach to news coverage that could prompt greater credibility among readers” (2011, p. 1370). Therefore, alternative media have evolved to become sites of resistance to ideological struggles (Gumucio-Dagron, 2012; Sierra Caballero & Gravante, 2016).

The complex dynamic between social movements and the media heightens when the latter are monopolized (cf. Lugo-Ocando, 2008). In Chile, the Copesa and Edwards holdings own, manage, and distribute most print newspapers (and their digital versions) across the country (Monckberg, 2008). Together, this conservative, right-wing leaning *duopoly* concentrates almost 90% of newspapers available to the population, reaching the whole socio-economical readership spectrum (Marin, 2014; Sapiezynska, 2014). In this context, *El Mercurio* and *Las Últimas Noticias* (LUN) (from the Edwards holding); and *La Tercera* and *La Cuarta* (from the Copesa holding) have remained the most widely read newspapers in the country (Valida, 2018).

The power of these media holdings was consolidated during Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship (1973–1990)<sup>2</sup>. Throughout this period, most media outlets –including television, radio, and newspapers– were forced out of business and/or were heavily censored, while journalists who had worked at left-wing leaning media outlets were politically persecuted, tortured, executed and/or forced into exile (Herrera, 2007). This power was further strengthened after the return of democracy as the lack of public policies and State regulation on the matter hindered the emergence, maintenance, and distribution of alternative media. In this context, there has been a strong tendency to marginalize, criminalize and delegitimize the student movement in mainstream media, despite their cultural, social, and political influence (Pérez, 2016; Pérez & Cárdenas, 2018, 2019).

This article explores how similar and/or different the representation of the Chilean student movement is in both the mainstream and alternative press over a three-year span (2011–2013). I focus on how the *motives* of the student collective are (de)legitimized through the narratives constructed in news articles reporting on their protest actions. Throughout this paper, I understand motive as *the implicit and/or explicit manifestation of an individual’s (personal) drive or wish to do (or not do) something in a particular institutional and situational context* (see section 2 below). These aspects can be conveyed and performed differently through the linguistic and discursive resources available to the participants depending on the genre analysed. Therefore, there is a need to combine different methodological approaches to analyse motive in context and interaction.

I argue that the storylines shaping the political and ideological conflict over public education can shed light on how the actors involved (student collective and the government) position themselves in relation to one another in the overall conflict. The article is thus structured as follows. I first overview how motive has been addressed in the Social Sciences and provide a working definition of motive for this study. I then explain why Positioning Theory can be broadened to include the resolution of collective conflict by focusing on the rights and duties actors attribute to themselves and onto others. Third, I explain the corpus

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<sup>2</sup> On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1973, Augusto Pinochet launched a *coup d’état* against democratically elected Communist President Salvador Allende. The regime aimed to eradicate any ideological traits of communism in the country through political persecution, torture and executions. After various political demonstrations and international pressure, the results of a national referendum in 1988 indicated that a transition towards democracy was needed, and presidential elections were allowed in the country once again. Pinochet finally stepped down from office on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1990.

and the methods used to analyse the data, followed by a discussion of the main results. Finally, I address the most salient results from the analysis, acknowledging the contributions and limitations of this study, and the possibility of further research on the subject.

## 2. Motive

Despite its frequent use, talking about motive can be challenging. There has been a tendency to equate motive with other terms, such as *intentionality* (e.g. Edwards, 2008; Stokoe & Edwards, 2008), *blame* (e.g. Housley & Fitzgerald, 2003), *accounts* (e.g. Edwards & Potter, 1992, 1993), and *purpose* (e.g. Van Leeuwen, 2000, 2008), that foreground certain aspects of motive, yet also exclude others. In many cases, motive emerges in the analysis of another feature, which happens to complement (if ever so slightly) the main findings of the representation of a particular social actor and/or their actions or accounts (cf. Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Stokoe, 2010; Morison & Macleod, 2014).

In this study, I have drawn from Weber's (1947), Burke's (1935, 1969), and van Leeuwen's (2000, 2008) frameworks to provide a working definition of motive. The reasons why this combination of approaches works for the purposes of this study are threefold. First, Weber (1947) highlights pragmatic, socio-economic, and political factors that can determine people's actions and inactions to various extents. He discusses three types of *contexts* that seem to be neglected in subsequent approaches to motive: 1) the *psychological context* (i.e. the individual's personal experiences and unique characteristics); 2) the *institutional context* (i.e. the social and moral regulations and restrictions the individual is subjected to); and the *situational context* (i.e. temporal and spatial constraints). For instance, there might be various reasons why people start running: to keep mentally and physically fit (e.g. psychological context), to fit current beauty standards (e.g. institutional context), or because it is the trendiest and cheapest form of exercise nowadays (e.g. situational context).

Second, Burke's seminal works on the issue postulate that motives can be understood as narrative episodes. He argues that people's actions can be explained by identifying the elements of a play: *acts* (i.e. what), *scenes* (i.e. where), *agent(s)* (i.e. who), *agency* (i.e. how), and *purpose* (i.e. why) (1945, p. xv). In this vein, motives are central when accounting for past events and/or experiences due to these internal and external factors (cf. Edwards & Potter, 1993; Sacks, 1972a, 1972b; Stokoe, 2010, 2012; Stokoe & Edwards, 2008). In the case of the news genre, for example, news reports are accounts of past events (i.e. why, how, when, and where) and can therefore be understood as narrative episodes (Buttny, 2008 see also Buttny & Morris, 2001, p. 286). News reports seek to describe and explain why events happened and why they are important to their audiences through various strategies and narrative resources in line with their editorial constraints. The accounts of these actions are thus driven by an evaluative component, which de Fina explains as follows:

Since accounts are given when an evaluation by an interlocutor is presupposed, they are eminently explanatory and dialogic. Thus, the original intention of the person who asks the question is not important here, what is important is the way the narrator shapes the narrative and therefore the way s/he perceives the interlocutor's question (2009, p. 240).

Finally, Van Leeuwen's work on purpose (2000, 2008) provides the methodological ground to identify how motive (understood as *narrative accounts* of the psychological, situational, and institutional constraints an individual is subjected to) is represented and attributed in news reports at the clause level. He argues that the representation of purpose is the outcome of power struggles, in that actors and actions can be (de)legitimised depending on who is allowed to make these representations and who are marginalised (2008, p. 135). In this sense, he proposes three (yet not limited to) overarching ways to construct purpose in texts: *goal-oriented* (i.e. the focus is on actors purposefully trying to achieve their objective); *means-oriented* (i.e. agency is backgrounded, foregrounding the means by which an objective is

achieved); or *effect-oriented* (i.e. agency is blurred, in that actors do not have full control on the effects/results their actions can have) (van Leeuwen, 2008). While his framework provides a useful starting point to the analysis of motive, the latter is still understood in terms of functionality. I argue that this emphasis on functionality was enhanced (and determined) by the kind of data he used to build his framework (i.e. first-day-at-school texts). For instance, all his examples are conveyed within the sentence level. Considering the texts were manuals to help parents and children in this personal milestone, the texts had to be straightforward. Motive in other texts (such as news reports), even in interaction, are hardly ever so. Finally, while van Leeuwen's model was originally devised to analyse English data, its foundations can be extrapolated to Spanish as both languages share important similarities when constructing causation at the clause-level (see Lavid, Arús & Zamorano-Mansilla, 2010; García, 2013).

Therefore, the definition of motive provided in the objectives of this study combines these three fundamental approaches to the term in this study. In other words, motive is *the implicit and/or explicit manifestation of an individual and/or collective's (personal) drive or wish to do (or not do) something in a particular institutional and situational context, which in turn can be oriented towards fulfilling a goal, causing an effect, or foregrounding the means (i.e. how) rather than the drive itself.*

### 3. Positioning theory

Positioning theory was developed within the realm of Social Psychology and it has contributed to the solution of interpersonal conflict through the analysis of narratives and storylines individuals use to legitimize their positions and negotiate various meanings in interaction (Harré, 2010; Harré & Slocum, 2003). In Harré's words:

Positioning theory is an approach to the analysis of the patterns of interpersonal actions created by the individuals engaged in the unfolding of a social episode in which rights and duties are created and maintained ad hoc through discursive interactions between the actors present and engaged in the episode (2015, p. 2).

Positioning theory revolves around the identification of what individuals' *believe* their rights and obligations are in a particular conflict through the analysis of their interactions. According to this theory, the identification of these rights and duties can determine these individuals' actions since there are situational, historical, and social factors that can trigger specific moral orders (or panics) which can potentially affect their own perceptions of their roles in the development of the conflict (Harré, Moghaddam, Pilkerton Cairnie, Rothbart & Sabat, 2009, p. 6). This appeal to moral orders (cf. van Leeuwen's moral values, 2008) affect people's perceptions of their own reality because they do not only include "beliefs about which things and actions are good and which are evil [...] but also explicit and tacit beliefs about the distribution of rights and duties to think, speak, act, and even feel in certain ways" (Harré, 2015, p. 5). Therefore, Positioning Theory contributes to identify how motive is attributed and constructed in relation to the analysis of these higher moral orders. How actors position themselves in a particular conflict and the discursive practices they carry out are "a cluster of rights and duties relevant to the actions of a person or group of people" (2015, p. 5) that reflects on the actors' moral background (Harré *et al.*, 2009).

There are three steps to the analysis of actor positioning: 1) identification of the storyline of the conflict; 2) identification of how meanings have been negotiated, maintained, and contested in their interactions (i.e. speech acts); and 3) the identification of how rights and duties are attributed to each other or to themselves. Let us consider the conflict over public education in Chile between the student movement and the conservative government (2011-2013) as an example (cf. Pérez, 2018). In a context where education is market-regulated and public schools tend to be underfunded, the conflict over the quality and gratuity of education in Chile is predominantly an ideological one. While students talk about the conflict in terms

of fundamental rights and the need for reforming the current system implemented by Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990), the government talks about freedom of education or education as an opportunity (step 1). How these actors frame the conflict sparks differences in what they understand as *education*, for instance (step 2). The framing of the conflict and how they understand what the problem is inevitably determines what actions they *believe* they must do to solve the conflict (step 3).

The study of actor positioning has evolved in the last few years to include the analysis of conflict between abstract and/or collective actors or entities such as institutions, communities, or nations (see Moghaddam, Harré & Lee, 2008; Slocum & van Langenhove, 2003). The following analysis seeks to demonstrate the feasibility of this evolution to the analysis of news reports on the conflict between two collectives: the government and the Chilean student movement.

#### 4. Data and methods

There has been a strong tradition in (Critical) Discourse Studies to study (mainstream) media discourse because of its influential role on the public sphere (e.g. Van Dijk, 1988, 1991). Studies on the printed press have remained particularly popular because, despite the emergence of social media and the digital press, they have remained an important actor in determining the news agenda and our perceptions of reality (Shoemaker, Vos & Reese, 2009). However, this emphasis on mainstream media has often neglected the study of alternative, radical, and/or digital media, regardless of their contribution to the democratization of information and the resistance to hegemonic discourses.

This study aims to compare and contrast the construction of storylines and narratives about the student movement in mainstream and alternative newspapers in Chile. For this purpose, I built a specialized corpus (see McEnery, Xiao & Tono, 2006) limited to news articles on the Chilean student movement during the Chilean academic year (March to December) for a three-year period (2011–2013). This time span corresponds to the most prolific years of the student movement (Pérez, 2018). The search for these articles was determined by a selection of key words, resulting from a pilot study carried out in 2012 (Pérez, 2012). Articles that did not contain these words but were related to the student movement were therefore excluded. The search was limited to seven newspapers in total (both mainstream and alternative), which resulted in the creation of two corpora, one for each kind of press (i.e. CON corpus: mainstream press; ALT corpus: alternative press):

**Table 1:** Corpora description.

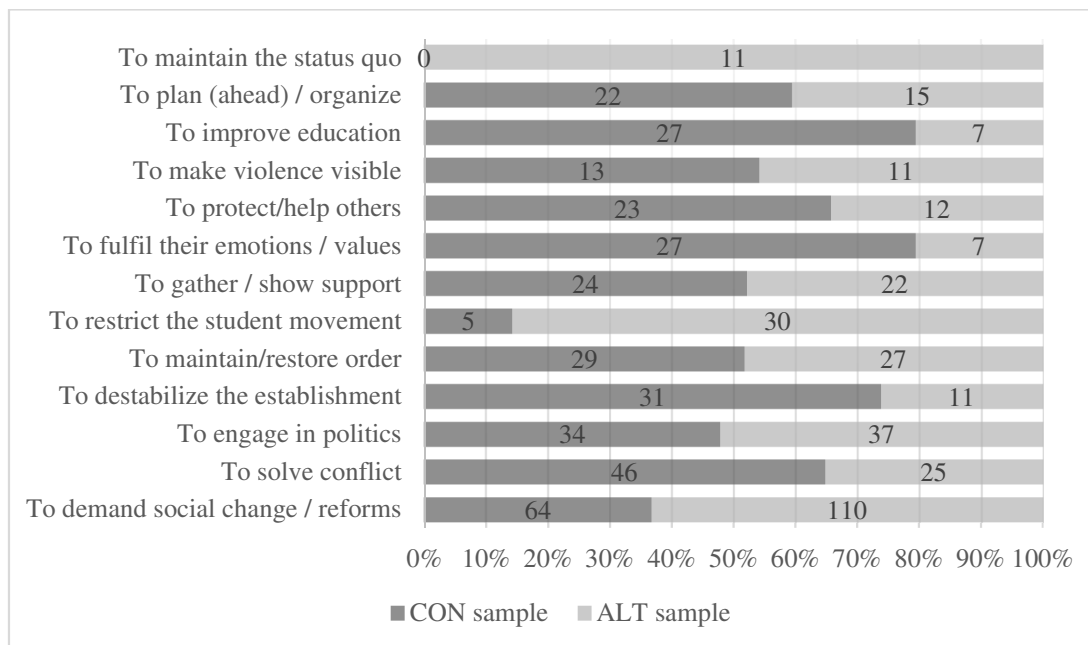
CON CORPUS	Number of articles			ALT CORPUS	Number of articles		
	2011	2012	2013		2011	2012	2013
<i>El Mostrador (EMo)</i>	127	79	179	<i>El Mercurio (EM)</i>	324	124	114
<i>The Clinic (TC)</i>	272	214	193	<i>La Tercera (LT)</i>	194	163	150
<i>El Ciudadano (EC)</i>	261	117	84	<i>La Cuarta (LC)</i>	209	33	23
				<i>Las Últimas Noticias (LUN)</i>	380	50	55
<b>TOTAL ARTICLES</b>	<b>1,526</b>			<b>TOTAL ARTICLES</b>	<b>1,819</b>		
<b>TOTAL WORDS</b>	<b>872,743</b>			<b>TOTAL WORDS</b>	<b>560,577</b>		

Source: Reproduced from "The discursive construction and attributions of motive in relation to the Chilean student movement (2011–2013) in the national news genre" by C. Pérez-Arredondo, 2018, Unpublished doctoral thesis. Personal Copyright.

For this study, a sample was randomly selected and consisted of 5% of the total corpus. This resulted in 670 instances of motive constructions. The sample was then inductively coded in Atlas.ti and resulted in thirteen codes that broadly identified different types of motives

constructed and attributed (Fig. 1). The codification process also involved the training of an external coder that verified the reliability and validity of the analysis. In all, the agreement between the coder and the researcher reached 99%.

**Figure 1:** Frequency of motive categories.



Source: Adapted from "The discursive construction and attributions of motive in relation to the Chilean student movement (2011-2013) in the national news genre" by C. Pérez-Arredondo, 2018, Unpublished doctoral thesis. Personal Copyright.

The first step in the analysis was to identify the motives actors attributed to themselves and onto others. I adapted van Leeuwen's purpose framework to identify motive constructions in the corpora (cf. 2000, 2008). In this adaptation, purposeful actions (i.e. actions to achieve a purpose) changed to *meaningful actions*<sup>(MA)</sup>; purpose link (i.e. how purposeful actions are linked to purposes) changed to *motive link*<sup>(ML)</sup>; and purpose (i.e. the goal an actor wants to achieve) changed to *motive*<sup>(M)</sup>. These changes allow for more flexibility in the understanding of motive, thus allowing realizations of motive that are not necessarily functional. Consider the following example:

**Example 0:** ALT corpus.

Una manifestante dijo que estaba marchando<sup>(MA)</sup> por<sup>(ML)</sup> la educación de su hijo<sup>(M)</sup> que está en segundo medio. A demonstrator said she was marching<sup>(MA)</sup> for<sup>(ML)</sup> her son's education<sup>(M)</sup> who is in high school.

Source: Reproduced from "Nueva marcha por la educación: Minuto a minuto de la jornada" by *El Ciudadano*, 19 October 2011. Copyright by *El Ciudadano*.

In this extract, a demonstrator is carrying out an action (protesting) to support her son's education. This support is clearly symbolic: the protester is aiming to demand quality education for her son, in line with the demands of the social movement. In this case, her meaningful action<sup>(MA)</sup> and motive<sup>(M)</sup> are explicitly linked by the preposition *por* [for]<sup>(ML)</sup>. This action alone will not get her the kind of education she wants but it contributes to the legitimation of the social collective's demands.

These motives were then sorted into categories. In this study, I only analyse the three most significant motive categories. First, the category *'to demand social change/reforms,'* corresponds to the social reforms the student movement wants to achieve. This code also includes the students' protest actions to address the problems in the educational system. The second category is *'to solve the conflict.'* All instances and practices that foreground dialogue and agreements as the way to achieve change (as opposed to protest actions, for instance) were included in this category. Finally, the last category is *'to maintain the status quo,'* in which motives are grounded in the idea of avoiding structural changes to the educational system in order to preserve the current socio-political and economic system. It also includes negative evaluations to neoliberalism and the detrimental role of Augusto Pinochet in education.

The first two categories are the most recurrent ones in both samples: they account for 37% of the sample and they show the similarities and differences between the corpora. However, the last category is only present in the ALT sample, which highlights the ideological differences in how motive is conveyed and attributed to each actor. Although it only corresponds to 2% of the sample, its occurrence in only one of the corpora is significant to understand how legitimation is carried out. The second step is to identify how actors position themselves in terms of social interactions and moral values using the *position triangle*. This triangle contributes to the identification and analysis of storylines that legitimize the actors' rights and duties which drive their actions through their speech (i.e. speech acts). More importantly, it facilitates the identification of intertextual references in the construction of motive as well as personal and collective narratives. Hence, I analyse 1) how the mainstream and the alternative press position the government and the student collective in relation to this conflict; 2) how the government positions the students in the development of this conflict; and 3) how the students position the government in the conflict.

Speech acts refer to Austin's theory that we use language to both communicate and to *perform* actions (see Austin, 2011; Thomas, 1995; cf. Searle, 1969). He explains that there are three distinguishable steps when we communicate: what we say (locution), the force and/or intention behind what we say (illocution) and the actual effect of that intention (perlocution). In the positioning triangle, scholars pay attention to the illocutionary acts of sentences and statements, that is, the intentions actors convey in the hope of producing an effect in their audience. In this paper, I use Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts to identify how the actors position themselves in terms of their rights and duties in the conflict (Searle, 1969). Therefore, I paid attention to *directives* (i.e. the speaker aims to make someone else do something), *commissives* (i.e. the speaker undertakes the responsibility of doing something), *assertives* (i.e. the speaker represents an event and/or decision as real, therefore contributing to the constructions of beliefs), *expressives* (i.e. these speech acts express feelings), and *declaratives* (i.e. some people, according to their role in society, can change their society because of the powers attributed to them)<sup>3</sup>.

In the case of storylines, I analysed them through the identification of *commonplaces* in the news reports. According to Myers and Macnaughten, commonplaces are rhetorical devices people resort to in arguments and interactions, as evidenced in the focus groups they carried out on environmental sustainability (1998). Commonplaces generate shared understandings and/or knowledge among those involved (Ross, 2013, p. 92), which is why they are often taken for granted among the community.

## 5. The attribution and construction of motives in the national press

The category *'to demand social change'* was more frequently found in the ALT sample than in the CON sample. A key difference in the inclusion of these motives lies on detailed descriptions of these actors' motives and practices:

<sup>3</sup> For example, priests can change the marital status of two people by marrying them.

**Example 1:** ALT corpus.

Ya participé en muchas marchas. Estoy acá para **luchar por los derechos de la educación chilena<sup>(M1)</sup> y conseguir la educación gratuita y de calidad que necesitamos todos<sup>(M2)</sup>** [Christofer, Liceo Manuel Barros Borgoño]

I already participated in many demonstrations. I am here to **fight for the rights of Chilean education<sup>(M1)</sup> and achieve the free and quality education we all need<sup>(M2)</sup>** [Christofer, Manuel Barros Borgoño High School]

Source: Reproduced from "Más de cien mil personas marcharon en todo Chile" by *El Ciudadano*, 28 June 2012. Copyright by *El Ciudadano*.

Most of the examples of this category in the ALT sample follow this structure. There is a clear motive –two in this case–, which usually highlights the characteristics of the kind of education they want. In Example 1, a demonstrator clearly states the reasons why he is participating in the demonstration and highlights the kind of education he hopes to obtain. Interestingly, he personifies education: education is a social right that needs to be protected, which inevitably entails an enemy: something or someone who threatens it and it is excluded from this motive. These motives suggest that public and higher education is not free, and it is of poor quality, and its defence can benefit everyone.

Conversely, the CON sample broadly and simply refers to these changes as *reforms* or trivializes the protest by including irrelevant details of the actions performed by students (Example 2). Regardless of its frequency, and contrary to expectations, the CON sample does include the students' motives:

**Example 2:** CON corpus.

En Exposición, pasadito de Correos de Chile, un puesto de fritangas se hace el pino vendiendo cantidades industriales de sopaipillas con aceite requeterrecalentado, mientras que a un alumno de un liceo técnico de La Cisterna se le ocurre sentarse en los hombros de un compañerito, **sacarse la polera y protestar a cuero pelado<sup>(M1)</sup>**. Solamente verlo da más frío aún.

In Exposición, a bit past the Chilean Mail Service, a street food truck is hitting it off selling humongous amounts of sopaipillas with overheated oil, while a student from a technical high school from La Cisterna thinks of sitting on the shoulders of a little classmate, proceeds to take his clothes off and **protests in the buff<sup>(M1)</sup>**. Just seeing him makes you feel cold.

Source: Reproduced from "Mas de 40 mil estudiantes le hicieron frente al frio polar" by *Las Últimas Noticias*, 19 August 2011. Copyright by *Las Últimas Noticias*.

In this extract, readers are told that students were protesting, but their motives are suppressed from the report. More importantly, these demonstrators are portrayed as having fun and socializing, as opposed to demanding quality and free access to higher education. While there are not specific delegitimation nor criminalizing strategies at play, it is possible to conclude that the suppression of motives and/or the students' demands do play an important role in the legitimation of this movement. If there are not any identifiable social demands, and the focus is on the individual behaviour of demonstrators who are not actively committed to the social movement, it is easier to delegitimize the students as children who just want to skip school (see students' duties and rights in section 6).

The second most common motive category was '*to solve the conflict*', being most frequently observed in the CON sample than in the ALT one. This category revolved around political and strategic measures undertaken to contain the national mobilization and to restore social order. The reason for this significant contrast in motives lies in the positive emphasis given to the government in pursuing a solution to the conflict. This solution is grounded in scheduling various meetings with relevant political actors (which often exclude students) to implement short-term reforms in education.



**Example 3:** COM corpus.

Además, Chadwick hizo un llamado al Congreso, para **solucionar el conflicto que mantienen movilizados a los estudiantes del país<sup>(M)</sup>**, convocando a los senadores a aprobar las leyes de presupuestos y proyectos que apuntan a *mejorar* la educación.

Also, Chadwick called on the Congress, to **solve the conflict that keeps the students of the country mobilized<sup>(M)</sup>**, calling for the Senators to pass the laws on national budget and projects that aim at *improving* education.

Source: Reproduced from “Andrés Chadwick asegura que la marcha ‘ha sido tranquila’ y que espera que ‘culminen en paz’” by *La Tercera*, 28 August 2012.

Copyright by *La Tercera*.

The focus on the mainstream press is based on the restoration of the status quo and the containment of social unrest. The authority’s intervention is paraphrased to highlight the effects of the government’s solution, namely, how beneficial it will be for everyone, those protesting (students) and those who do not (regular law-abiding citizens). The examples in this category mostly include authorities, which legitimize both the report and the governmental initiatives. In this case, the initiative consists of a series of changes to improve the educational system as opposed to its reformation and actualization.

However, from the students’ point of view, these reforms do not meet their demands nor the issues of free and quality education. The students reject the government’s motives, highlighting that students will not benefit from these reforms and that profit in education will remain benefiting a specific political elite. Some of the examples positively highlight the government’s rationale behind their reforms and actions (Example 4). This suggests preparation and planning ahead from the government so as to prevent accusations of inexperience and incapability to solve a political crisis.

**Example 4:** ALT corpus.

El pasado domingo el presidente Sebastián Piñera **llamó a los estudiantes universitarios y secundarios a retomar el diálogo para destrabar el conflicto estudiantil<sup>(M)</sup>**.

Last Sunday, President Sebastián Piñera **called for university and secondary students to resume the dialogue to untangle the student conflict<sup>(M)</sup>**.

Source: Reproduced from “Secundarios marcharon desde Plaza Italia sin autorización de la Intendencia” by *The Clinic*, 13 October 2011. Copyright by *The Clinic*.

In these instances, the government is represented as a determined actor, actively evaluating alternatives, negotiating with the students, and assessing measures to solve the political conflict. The President, in this particular example, is portrayed as working on a solution on a Sunday, showing how concerned and committed he is to solving the crisis. There are also different attempts to include as many of the actors involved in his solutions as possible (e.g. a distinction between high school and university students).

On the other hand, there are instances in which the governmental attempts to reach an agreement are negatively and overtly delegitimized (Example 5). These instances resort to a more informal register to show students’ exasperation about the government’s inability to meet their demands:

**Example 5:** ALT corpus.

En nada. Después de casi cinco horas de diálogo entre los estudiantes movilizados, el Colegio de Profesores y la Confech, la mesa de trabajo instalada por el Gobierno para **discutir**<sup>(M1)</sup> y **buscar solución en el conflicto de la educación**<sup>(M2)</sup> se fue a negro y quedó en el mismo punto muerto que hace cinco meses, cuando empezaron las movilizaciones.

For nothing. After almost five hours of a dialogue between the mobilized students, the Teachers' Union and Confech, the round table talks set up by the government **to discuss**<sup>(M1)</sup> and **find a solution to the educational conflict**<sup>(M2)</sup> was useless, and remained in the same dead end as five months ago, when the mobilization started.

Source: Reproduced from "Gobierno rechaza gratuidad en educación y se quiebra mesa de diálogo" by *The Clinic*, 6 October 2011. Copyright by *The Clinic*.

In addition, legitimation is carried out through the individualization of the different collectives which constitute the student movement while the government is constructed as a single unit. Hence, the report highlights the diversity in the student movement and their popularity, whereas the government's representation does not, even though they are supposed to be the democratic representatives of the country. Similarly, the government's motives are unclear: why would they hold a five-hour meeting and not reach an agreement?

While this motive might be clearly attributed to the government in the CON sample, the ALT sample uses it to delegitimize the government's authority and capability to solve the conflict by overtly praising the social movement instead. This support becomes clearer when analysing the category 'to maintain the status quo,' which is only attributed to the government in the alternative press. In this case, motives explicitly mention socio-cultural, political and economic features of neoliberalism, and its effects in society and education. These instances also highlight the role of high school and university students in challenging this oppressive system while the government attempt to protect it. This category distinctly discusses issues of inequality, segregation, and oppression, in which the culprits can be easily identified within the government coalition:

**Example 6:** ALT corpus.

Pero el control del orden público a estas alturas no puede contener **la rabia acumulada**<sup>(M1)</sup>. En las calles contiguas a la Alameda los estudiantes improvisan fogatas, paran el tránsito y corean el hit del momento: "**Y va a caer, y va a caer, la educación de Pinochet**"<sup>(M2)</sup>.

But at this point the control of civic order cannot contain **the built-up anger**<sup>(M1)</sup>. In the streets near Alameda the students improvise fire barricades, block the traffic and chant to the hit of the moment: "**And it's gonna fall, and it's gonna fall, the education of Pinochet**"<sup>(M2)</sup>.

Source: Reproduced from "Crónica de una ciudad sitiada" by *El Ciudadano*, 5 August 2011. Copyright by *El Ciudadano*.

Throughout this category, the effect of the dictatorship in education (and social welfare more generally) are personified through Augusto Pinochet. In Example 6, for instance, anger is a legitimate reaction to the government's inefficiency and intransigence, and so is social disobedience. Their motives are condensed into a common protest chant, which foregrounds Pinochet's responsibility in the current state of education. The inclusion of this chant gives them purpose and social validation. Students are thus represented as purposeful actors, with the clear objective of dismantling the current educational system (devised during the dictatorship) and thus challenging the status quo. This motive also allows a re-interpretation of these social practices in relation to the national historical memory, in which emotions are a vehicle for social transformation and validation of traumatic past and present experiences (cf. Achugar, 2016).

## 6. Actor positioning and the development of the educational conflict

There are clear differences between the motives attributed to the two main actors in the educational conflict. Depending on the perspective, these motives prevent these actors from solving the conflict or, at least, negotiating their terms. These differences in motive stem from their –allegedly– legitimate claim to democratic representation, becoming the ground for ideological struggles. These struggles take the form of positive self-representation and negative other-representation of the actors involved. Whoever is at the end of these positive/negative binary, however, is determined by the kind of press analysed and the moral order and values it adheres to.

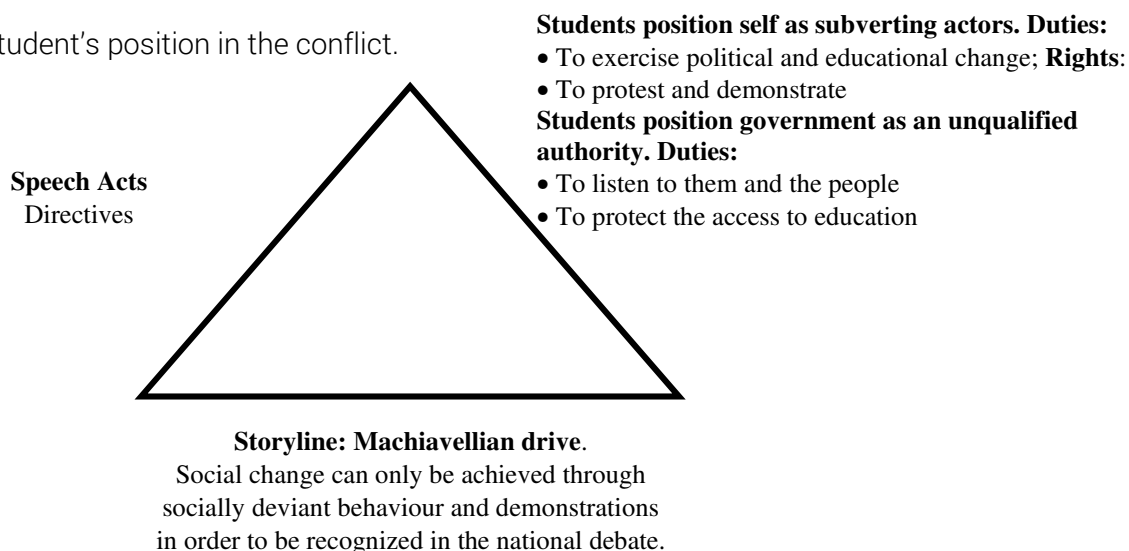
### 6.1. *The mainstream press (CON corpus)*

Section 5 showed that the mainstream press favour the positive self-representation of the government while negatively representing the student collective. According to the CON corpus, the government's position is legitimate because of its authority (i.e. authorisation legitimation).

Throughout the sample, there is a clear emphasis on the authoritative, and therefore legitimate, nature of the government. According to this world view, the government's duty is to protect its citizens, the status quo, and the moral values of the country by abiding by the law and the Constitution. As it is a democratically elected government, it is also supposed to listen to people's concerns and meet their pressing needs through various policies and educational reforms. This is evidenced through the overarching use of *directives* (i.e. reaffirming its authority and the role of the students), *declaratives* (i.e. exercising changes to educational policies), and *commissives* (i.e. promising to address the students' demands) in their statements. These speech acts are constantly and faithfully reproduced in these articles. In all, the government presents these policy projects to show their concern for the students' demands, legitimizing their position as an authority which listens to its citizens. As a result, the government do not understand why students' protest actions continue, and ultimately dismiss their claims. Therefore, the government foreground the students' duties as students instead of acknowledging their duties as citizens.

The fact that social movements (i.e. socially deviant behaviour) challenge the authority through different protest actions is strongly condemned. Students are constantly functionalized in terms of their educational role, which evidences an overall adult-centric approach to the educational conflict. In this context, the government urge students (mostly minors) to return to their duties and abide by the decisions taken by the democratically elected government (i.e. the adults in charge).

This authority legitimation strategy becomes stronger in the mainstream press once their understanding of the students' position in the conflict is considered (Fig. 2). The negative representation of students' position, along with the attribution of negative motives, help construct their collective as solely concerned to achieve their goals regardless the cost (i.e. the end justifies the means). The tendency to resort to anarchist features to foreground socially deviant behaviour is not only a common characteristic of this sample, but in mainstream media more generally (e.g. Pérez & Cárdenas, 2019). They are represented as having an utter disregard for authority and for the government's solutions to the conflict as evidenced by the underlying presence of *directives* (i.e. demanding the government to meet their demands and to undertake an educational reform). This threat to the status quo works in conjunction with the adult-centric approach to the conflict, which immediately dismisses the students' contribution to the national debate. More importantly, they are presented as exercising (abusing) their rights and simultaneously failing to meet their duties of abiding by their social role. Thus, their actions are negatively evaluated as the *wrong* ways of protesting, fostering social condemnation and alienation.

**Figure 2:** Student's position in the conflict.

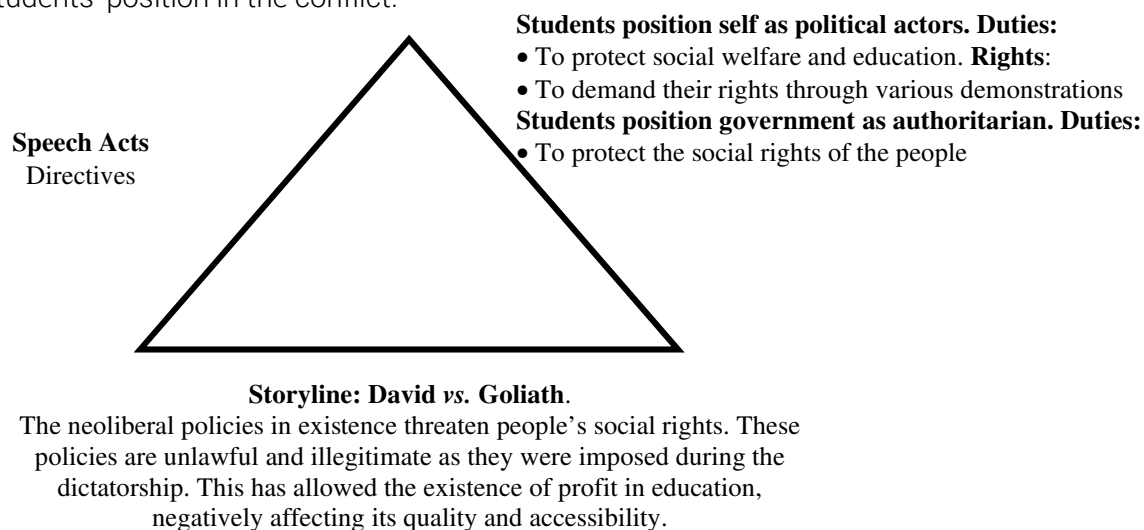
Source: Adapted from "Recent Advances in Positioning Theory" by Harré *et al.*, 2009, *Theory & Psychology*, 19(1), 18, Copyright by Sage Journals.

The Machiavellian narrative shares important similarities to the narrative of juvenile crime. Students are represented as inherently violent and incapable of becoming political actors. This distinction is enhanced by their total disregard for the government's solutions to the conflict: not only are they violent but also irrational.

## 6.2. *The alternative press (ALT corps)*

Contrary to the construction of the mainstream press, the students' rights and duties are legitimated through higher moral values grounded in the concept of democracy and popular support. The students, regardless of their age, are constructed as qualified political actors and can thus exercise their duty to protect themselves against abuses of power and/or capitalist abuse. In fact, their age is positively foregrounded, constructing them as brave heroes fighting for everyone's wellbeing (i.e. David vs Goliath narrative) (Figure 3). Similar to the mainstream press, the most salient speech act in this corpus are *directives* (i.e. asking the government to reform the educational system). However, directives are framed differently in the ALT sample. The alternative press construct them as legitimate demands for social welfare: students are asking for their right to free, quality, and non-profit education. More importantly, directives are almost framed as *declaratives* (i.e. change aspects of society/reality): the students *have* the power to exert change in society as political actors. The mythopoetic biblical story of *David vs Goliath* also supports such legitimate status of political actors. It portrays students as purposefully and legitimately defending their grounds and beliefs against an intransigent giant, which metonymically represents neoliberalism. The importance of this reference is twofold. First, the word neoliberalism is exclusive to the ALT corpus. Second, neoliberalism is often (and almost exclusively) equated to Pinochet's dictatorship in the corpus. The negative representation of the right-wing government is thus grounded in the authoritarian and repressive nature of its predecessor, Augusto Pinochet<sup>4</sup>, and its undemocratic values and practices.

<sup>4</sup> Since the return of democracy, centre-left coalitions were in office for 20 years, until Sebastian Piñera, a successful businessman, won the Presidential elections in 2010.

**Figure 3:** Students' position in the conflict.

Source: Adapted from "Recent Advances in Positioning Theory" by Harré *et al.*, 2009, *Theory & Psychology*, 19(1), 18, Copyright by Sage Journals.

This positive representation of students becomes clearer once compared and contrasted to the representation of the government's rights, duties, and motives. While there is a clear leftist editorial line in the ALT corpus, it is still possible to identify some linguistic strategies that portray the government as an authority. However, this authority is constantly undermined by its ideological links to the dictatorship. There are clear instances of authorization legitimation grounded in the *topos of authority* (cf. Wodak, 2015) and *tradition* (cf. van Leeuwen, 2008). Any challenges to their authority, however legitimate, is to be punished and discouraged, which are arguably undemocratic practices from the ALT corpus' point of view. More importantly, there is a clear inability to meet people's demands on the issues of education and social welfare. This inability is foregrounded through the various conflicts of interests of governmental officials in the business of education.

These references to conflict of interests are *commonplaces* (i.e. rhetorical strategies) in the construction of narratives (cf. Myers & Macnaughten, 1998; Ross, 2013). There are also references to leftist, political, legal discourses that support the undemocratic nature of the right-wing government as well as the legitimate actions undertaken by the students. The government is portrayed using *directives* (i.e. ordering students to resume their duties as students). However, the *commissives* included (i.e. the government promising to modernize the educational system) are questioned by both the students and the reports because of the governments' inability to meet the nation's demands.

In all, the conflict over free, quality, and non-profit education is grounded in an inescapable and asymmetrical relation among the actors and media involved. The scope of the mainstream press' readership is much larger than the alternative one. Hence, considering the mainstream press (and media in general) support and normalize the status quo, these positive representations of the students and their causes, as well as a critical approach to the conflict, remain highly neglected in the public sphere. Also, the ideological struggles at stake stem from the aftermath of Pinochet's dictatorship, and explain the resentment involved in the binary right/left wing.

## 7. Conclusions

The results of this analysis reveal a clear ideological struggle between the actors involved in the conflict, highlighted by both the mainstream and alternative press. The ideological

struggle, however, is asymmetrical. The alternative press, overtly supporting the social cause led by high school and university students, have a more limited readership than the mainstream press, which heavily favour hegemonic discourses. Therefore, the duties and rights discussed in the attributions of motives can be distorted, backgrounded, and/or suppressed depending on the corpus explored.

More importantly, the analysis also shows that motives are in fact included in the mainstream press. Most theories on the representation of social movements (cf. Cohen, 2011 and McLeod, 2007) argue that social movements are presented as irrational (i.e. mobs), which enhances their delegitimation and criminalization. My findings suggest that the superficial inclusion of the students' motives to protest highlight the asymmetrical power relation among these actors, in particular in relation to their age. Their motives are backgrounded and/or framed into an adult-centric perspective, undermining the students' contribution to the national debate on the educational system.

Additionally, there are clear narratives that legitimize the attributions and representations of motive in both corpora. On the one hand, the ALT sample framed the conflict through evaluations, highlighting the actors' ideological characteristics, deeming them as inherently *good* (vindication of social rights) or inherently *evil* (neoliberal government). This framing strategy drew on the Biblical story of David vs Goliath to foreground the power asymmetry between these two actors. In this allegory, the figure of Augusto Pinochet supports the authoritarian and dangerous nature of the government, which allegedly share his ideological grounds. Moreover, the students' motives, rights and duties are clearly contextualized to avoid criminalization of their protest actions.

On the other hand, the CON sample frames the government's actions in a *law and order* narrative. This means that the students should abide by the government's authority and comply with their duties (i.e. go to school and study). While the government recognise their right to protest, they do not recognise the student collective as a legitimate political actor. The students are disregarded because of their age, their allegedly lack of (political) experience, and their ideological stance. From the government's point of view, the reforms they are undertaking go in line with the current socio-political and economic system, which reinforces and protects the status quo.

Motives result to be crucial in the (de)legitimation of social movements. The ideological struggle is evidenced through the constant use of different *moral values* to legitimize the government's and the students' positions in the conflict. The framework proposed in this article contributes to its in-depth analysis through the identification of attributions and representations of motives. However, it also presents some limitations as the corpora excluded regional printed outlets. The inclusion of these regional newspapers (which mostly belong to the Copesa-Edwards duopoly) can provide a better understanding of the current state of the Chilean printed media. Likewise, the corpora only consist of written texts, which inevitably ignores the contribution of images in the representation and attribution of motive as well as the legitimation of the motives conveyed through the written text. A further study should explore the multimodal realizations of motives to obtain a clearer understanding of the conflict dynamics at play between collectives and expand the size of the corpora.

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