Who defines the agenda?
The sources of information
in the Argentinian digital press

¿Quién define la agenda? Las fuentes de
información en la prensa digital argentina

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The objective is to analyze the use of the sources of information in Argentina's main digital media. Specifically, it is intended to unravel what types of sources are included in the news, whether there is homogeneity in their use and what level of credit their views take up. Based on a content analysis guided by "indexing" and "standing" hypotheses, the results of this exploratory study demonstrates that government sources dominate the agenda. It is also revealed that "the ruling party" sources are the ones who get the highest level of credit across all media.
KEYWORDS: Sources of information, Indexing, Standing, Agenda, Electronic media.

El objetivo general es analizar el uso de las fuentes de información en los principales medios digitales de la Argentina. Específicamente se pretende desentrañar qué tipos de fuentes son incluidas en las noticias, si existe homogeneidad en su uso y qué nivel de crédito asumen sus puntos de vista. A partir de un análisis de contenido guiado por las hipótesis del indexing y el standing, los resultados de este estudio exploratorio demuestran que las fuentes gubernamentales dominan las agendas. Asimismo, se descubre que las fuentes "oficialistas" son las que mayor nivel de crédito obtienen en todos los medios.
PALABRAS CLAVE: Fuentes de información, Indexing, Standing, Agenda, Medios electrónicos.

INTRODUCTION

Sources of information are a central link in the information production chain. Defined as "people or groups of people, organized or not, who know the facts that the journalist will eventually turn into news" (García Santamaría, 2010, p. 521) they usually maintain a transactional and symbiotic relationship with journalists (Bagdikian, 1985) from which both parties' benefit.

Different studies on the quality of information (Díaz & Mellado, 2017; Gomez Mompart & Palau Sampio, 2013; Pellegrini & Mujica, 2006) consider them to be a central resource that ensures the diversity and plurality of voices, an unavoidable requirement of good journalism, understood as "a public good on whose correct and honest functioning depends the well-being of the democratic development of a nation" (Gómez Mompart & Palau Sampio, 2013, p. 771).

However, the convergent environments promoted by Information and Communication Technologies (ITCs) substantially modified the production routines in the newsrooms (Boczkowski, 2004). The emergence of novel ways and times of news production, promoted a new type of journalist, characterized by the flexibility of his work (Retegui, 2017), based, above all, on the principle of immediacy (Casini, 2017; Igarza, 2008).

Different studies show that, under the regiment that this new way of doing things imposes, the voices of institutional actors –governmental or private– tend to prevail as a source of high level lobbying and/or of public relations development (Amado & Rotelli, 2010; Becerra, Marino & Mastrini, 2012; Bennett & Lawrence, 2007).

In this context, the purpose of this study is to analyze the use of information sources in Argentina's main digital media. It is intended to determine what kind of sources prevails in the news, in relation to the different issues that dominate the agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The results of this research will be key to understanding which actors are able to impose their views on public affairs and to build new hypotheses about the functioning of the editors in the Internet age.

The digital media

Online newspapers are already two decades old. Born in Latin America in 1995, they find themselves now at a time of structural reconfigurations. First, because digitization substantially modified the manner in which we consume information (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2017). Secondly, because this process of restructuration, which has not yet been completed, disrupted the basic foundations of the journalistic profession (Casini, 2017; Martini & Luchessi, 2004; Retegui, 2017; Salaverría, 2016).

While digital media brings together some of the characteristics of the cultural industries resembling the printed press, such as streaming and financing by a dual-market model, based on subscriptions and advertising (Albornoz, 2006), it is true that much of the contents of online newspapers are free of charge. In addition, they are characterized by using audiovisual resources, like audios and videos, and the introduction of hypertexts in each piece (Igarza, 2008) made possible by its digital and immaterial medium (Retegui, 2017).

One of its core features is the weakness of its business models (García-Alonso Montoya, 2014; García Santamaría, Clemente Fernández, & López Aboal, 2013). If in the beginning "free of charge" was the norm, in the 21st century some of the great online newspapers, such as *El País* from Spain, tried to finance themselves through subscriptions. However, the results were not as expected. "The media that opted for this model generally earned very modest subscription revenues, while seeing their online visibility –and thus their influence– plummet" (Salaverria, 2016, p. 31).

The misstep generated a return to gratuitousness that on the downside caused a suspension of investment and innovation, also associated with the decline of **Dotcoms** in the early 2000s. Today the trend, implemented in 2011 by *The New York Times*, consists of a mixed or "porous" paywall model.

The model is subscription based and enables access to a limited number of free news pieces, requesting later a payment to enter the entirety of the home page. Generally, the fee includes a bundle that goes

beyond access to content, such as benefit cards, among other reader loyalty strategies.

In Argentina, according to the 2017 Cultural Consumption Survey, digital media has a penetration of 25.6%. While they are still far from the 37.4% of the graphic press (although in frank setback), it should be considered that many of those who report that they inform themselves through social media (23.4%) end up accessing (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2017) news manufactured by traditional media companies that distribute their content across multiple platforms, potentially increasing the level of consumption of digital news to nearly half of the population (Sistema de Información Cultural de la Argentina [SINCA], 2017).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DIGITAL AGENDAS, QUALITY OF INFORMATION AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The media agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) is the result of an intense production process of selection, omission and hierarchy (Roberts, 2005) that occurs at the editorial level (Tuchman, 1978), from which the newspapers configure a theme, giving relevance to some issues to the detriment of others. Relevance "involves visibility and information callback. To achieve this, the media takes into consideration the placement of the news, the larger font size, the disposition of information with respect to others or a higher frequency of coverage of the topic" (Amadeo, 2008, p. 195).

Meanwhile, the theme is defined as a series of related events in the journalistic coverage that are grouped into a broader category. These events, directly observable on the surface of the discourse, constitute topics, that is, labels that summarize the dominance of the social experiences included in a story (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

The (good) use of sources of information is closely associated with the quality of the information, requirement that media and journalists should consider when constructing the news. However, this notion is problematic for journalism studies. Related to the concept of public interest (McQuail, 1998), that is, oriented to the social role of information in the promotion of equality, freedom, order and solidarity,

it has proved difficult to operationalize and measure (Gómez Mompart & Palau Sampio, 2013; Pellegrini, Bridge, Porath, Mujica, & Grassau, 2011). However, most of the research that analyzed the topic of quality of information, characterized information sources as a central input for good practices in the news production process.

According to the information quality index of de Pablos Coello and Mateos Martín (2004), the plurality of sources used and cited, the proportion of corporate voices and the contribution of source documents to the news are indicators of quality.

To that end, Bogart (1989) includes among its 23 indicators of information quality the analysis of the origin of the news and the ways it ends up in editing. Closer in time, the methodological tool developed by the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso called Journalistic Added Value (VAP) proposes to take into account the type of sources present in the news, their contribution to the facts, the alignment and variety of viewpoints (Pellegrini & Mujica, 2006). Some papers that analyzed the media use of information sources came to interesting conclusions that serve as a background to this research.

Pellegrini and Mujica (2006) studied how most Chilean newspaper articles are motivated by initiatives by their sources and not from the media themselves. The same study shows that official sources, especially governmental ones, were among the most cited in Chilean, Peruvian, Argentine and Colombian newspapers. In other words, the power of institutionalization and public relations deployment means that a small group of actors with broad lobbying power will be able to impose their views on the media agenda.

Similar studies concluded that when the news follow the same known routine, official sources tend to impose themselves. These are left free to decide which news to advertise and what point of view to take (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993; Broersma, den Herder, & Schohaus, 2013; Sigal, 1973). From similar findings, Bennett (1990) formulated the Indexing hypothesis. It argues that the media develops an index of voices that dominate their agenda. According to the author, the productive routines of the media and the business climate in which they operate, favor the presence of official sources, especially government one. Thus, "journalists tend to index the range of voices and views

according to the rank expressed by the mainstream of government debate" (Bennett, 1990, p. 106). Consequently, journalism has given governments the role of controlling themselves, which certainly injures democratic quality (Bennett & Lawrence, 2007).

However, Charron (1995) draws attention to a key methodological issue for the study of the sources of information. According to the author, the scale of the presence of sources on the surface of the media's agenda says little of the real influence they have on the establishment of the agenda. According to the author:

> Influence on the public affairs agenda is measured by an actor's ability to impose or condition, through his speech or silence, a certain definition of reality. But nothing can be said on this point if the measurement is limited to counting their presences (Charron, 1995, p. 76).

In order to remedy the defects in estimating the actual weight of each source in the definition of a situation, this work takes on the view proposed by Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht (2002) and taken up by Koziner (2018). It is conceived as the credit –or discredit– that the media gives to the views expressed by the sources (Koziner, 2018). Thus, following Charron (1995), this work not only takes into account the different visibility each source has, but also the level of credit that these attain in their treatment. Three scenarios are formulated with regards to the concepts and backgrounds that will guide the research:

H1: There is homogeneity in the use of sources of information among the main online media in Argentina.
H2: Official sources, mainly government ones, are the most referred by digital media.
H3: Official sources get high levels of credit (standing) in coverage.

METHODOLOGY

In regards to the objectives and assumptions, a methodological strategy based on Quantitative Content Analysis is proposed. Used since 1930 with the birth of journalism schools in the United States, it was

conceived as "a research technique designed to formulate, on the basis of certain data, reproducible and valid inferences that can be applied to its context" (Krippendorff, 1990, p. 28).

Specialized literature assigns to content analysis some central characteristics: 1) It is systematic, that is, it is "subject to explicit rules that can be learned or transmitted" (Colle, 2011, p. 27); 2) It is quantitative, since its application allows it to transform a document into a series of numerical results whose purpose is to measure certain variables (Wimmer & Dominick, 1996); and 3) It is objective, since it is intended, through specific techniques, to minimize the analyst's bias on the results of the study (Igartua, 2006).

However, aware of the difficulty of achieving objectivity when part of the notions and categories are built by the researcher, new approaches to content analysis accentuate their strength in their systemicity, sheltered by two central criteria: the intersubjective construction of a category system applicable to the object of study (Colle, 2011; Marradi, Archenti, & Piovani, 2018) and "that once the final version of the coding scheme is defined, it will be applied uniformly by all encoders" (Marradi et al., 2018, p. 428), testing reliability tests.

For this work, which is the result of a whole research team, a code book was built for a year, starting from a qualitative instance consisting of an inductive approach to the analytical material (Krippendorff, 1990), indispensable requirement for the development of the tool.

The coding was deployed on a corpus of N=3 360 news that constitutes the research analysis units. These were coded in real time in two daily cuts coinciding with high-update moments and online media traffic: 09:00 AM and 19:00 PM, in four time cuts of two weeks, each throughout 2017 and 2018 (20/05/2017 to 02/06/2017; 19/08 /2017 to 01/09/2017; 25/11/2017 to 08/12/2017 and 19/05/2018 to 01/06/2018). For the study of the sources, the first five included in each of the pieces were codified, whenever possible. The online newspapers analyzed were: *Clarín* and *La Nación* from the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, *Los Andes* and *Uno* of Mendoza, *La Voz* from Córdoba and *La Capital* from Rosario. The criteria of selection took into account that the newspapers located their headers quarters in the main cities of the country (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Rosario and Mendoza) and that they rated at the top of

the reader's preference, based on the data relied upon by international consultancy ComScore.[2]

In each of the selected cuts, the first five news of the papers homepages were encoded counting from the top down and from left to right, considering that location is a classic criterion of information hierarchy in the digital media. The decision on how to rank online journals is supported by specialized literature (Boczkowsky & Mitchelstein, 2013; Odriozola Chené, 2012) and was ratified in interviews with journalists from the media analyzed.

The selection put forth for analysis was not intended as a representation of a full year, which would have required 187 days of effective study. However, as it is an exploratory study (Marradi et al., 2018) of the Argentine digital press; and by the volume of news analyzed, it is considered that the trends drawn from these observations will be useful for new systematic and representative longitudinal research to which the team is fully committed to.

Units of context

The means analyzed constitute the context units of the investigation. Argentina's first digital newspaper was *Los Andes On Line* of Mendoza. Launched in September 1995, it constituted the digital foray of its namesake on paper, the centenary newspaper of Argentina founded by Adolfo Calle on October 20, 1882 (Smerling, 2012).

After the death of its founder in 1918, it remained in the hands of his heirs until 1997, when CIMECO joined its stock package, a company through which *Clarín* and *La Nación* acquired different newspapers from the interior of the country. Currently, *La Nación* sold it the shares of CIMECO, resulting in *Los Andes* been a part of the Clarín Group, with a smaller stake from the Calle family.

La Nación was the first Buenos Aires newspaper to enter the web on December 1, 1995. Thus, another of the country's centenary media, founded by former President Bartholomew Mitre in 1870 (1862-1868), was beginning to have an online presence with an initial average of

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[2] See: https://www.letrap.com.ar/nota/2018-9-20-16-3-0-medios-digitales-en -argentina-la-pelicula-y-la-foto

1 500 visits per day, with a high percentage of readers doing so from abroad (Rost & Bergero, 2016).

On March 10, 1996, *Clarín*, the most read newspaper in the country and one of the most circulated Spanish-speaking newspapers in the word (Albornoz, 2006) arrived on the Internet. Founded by a former congressman of the Independent Socialist Party, Roberto Noble, on August 28, 1945, it is the flagship brand of Argentina's largest multimedia corporation (Becerra, 2015). It was conceived as an online medium designed for online consumption and not simply a place to "dump" the printed version of the newspaper on to a digital platform. From its inception it included chats to interact with the public, 360° photos, live cameras, online interviews and newscasts of Radio Mitre, a radio station of the same media conglomerate (Rost & Bergero, 2016).

Intervoz was the first brand of the online version of the most important newspaper in the province of Córdoba, *La Voz del Interior*. Founded on March 15, 1904 by Silvestre Rafael Remoda, it made its debut on the Internet on September 21, 1996. That same year the Clarín Group, through CIMECO, would also acquire the majority of its stock package.

The arrival on the web of *La Capital* happened a few years later, more precisely in November 2000. On paper, *La Capital* is the senior of the Argentine press. It was founded by Ovid Lagos under the patronage of Justo José de Urquiza on November 15, 1867. However, its online presence would also be under the orbit of the media group that absorbed it. Indeed, in 1997 the multimedia medium Mendocino UNO, owned by the entrepreneurs Daniel Vila and José Luis Manzano, bought its stock package (Smerling, 2012).

Also in 2000, but in October, the newest newspaper of those that make up this study was launched on the web: UNO. Founded in Mendoza on July 27, 1993 under the slogan "A new newspaper for a new Mendoza", the paper coined a name based on the idea of incorporating readers into their identity under the notion that we are all one (Smerling, 2012). Like *La Capital*, *UNO* is part of Grupo América, a conglomerate that, born in the interior of the country, was acquiring media until landing in Capital Federal in 2002, when Daniel Vila entered the shareable

package of Multimedia America and with it, radio and TV Buenos Aires. Today, Grupo América is the second media conglomerate in the country (Becerra, 2015), with a presence in the capital of the country and provinces such as Mendoza, San Juan, La Rioja, Santa Fe and Entre Ríos (Smerling, 2012).

In short, the media analyzed have some related characteristics: the six are at the top of brand preference in their places of origin and at the national level; except *La Nación*, all are part of media conglomerates with a nationwide reach (*The Andes*, *La Voz* and *Clarín* belong to the Clarín Group; and *La Capital* and *Uno* to Grupo América); and they were all born from strong brands in the paper press industry.
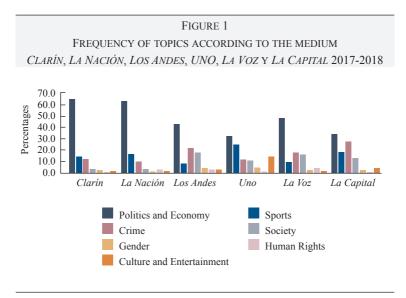
Reliability

The data encoding work was carried out by five encoders during all stages. To establish reliability, 336 news were intercoded, corresponding to 10% of the analyzed corpus that, in this work, represents the entire universe of data. The choice of sample news for intercoding arose from the following stratification strategy: 84 news stories were selected from each of the four stages taking into account that 14 were from each of the newspapers. The selection of the 14 pieces for each online was random.

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient was used to establish the level of reliability of intercoding. Whereas the agreed level for the 52 variables that make up the totality of the investigation was $\rho = 0.871$, the result of the correlation of the 12 variables that are part of this article is equal to $\rho = 0.832$.

ANALYSIS

Based on the objectives and the hypothesis of this work, first, the predominant topics were explored in the information agendas of the newspapers *Clarín*, *La Nación*, *Los Andes*, *Uno*, *La Voz* and *La Capital*.

Figure 1 shows that public affairs related to politics and economics dominated the information agendas of all media outlets. If the focus is placed on the differences between newspapers, it is possible to notice that this type of topics is boosted online with headlines in the Buenos Aires papers, while "soft" topics such as sports, law-enforcement or

FIGURE 1

FREQUENCY OF TOPICS ACCORDING TO THE MEDIUM

CLARÍN, *LA NACIÓN*, *LOS ANDES*, *UNO*, *LA VOZ* Y *LA CAPITAL* 2017-2018

Source: The author.

lifestyle increase their frequency of online newspapers from the interior of the country.

The presence of different topics between the newspapers of Federal Capital and the interior, indirectly gives an account of the dissimilarities in the production processes. As Salaverría (2016) argues, the online media has a potential global reach although they restrict their information coverage to the local, an attitude that is explained both by its productive possibilities and by the interests of its readers. Both factors explain that political and economic news arise, primarily, from Buenos Aires, the headquarters of the national government, congress and the main institutions of the central administration, and as such are monopolized by the capital media.

However, once it has been established that public affairs linked to politics and the economy dominate the agendas, it is relevant to enter fully into the central objectives of this research: the sources of information.

First, and based on hypothesis 1, it is explored whether there was homogeneity in the use of sources between the different online media.

TABLE 1

USING INFORMATION SOURCES. PEARSON'S CORRELATION
BETWEEN MEDIA.

CLARÍN, LA NACIÓN, LOS ANDES, UNO, LA VOZ Y LA CAPITAL 2017-2018

	Los Andes	*UNO*	*La Nación*	*La Voz*	*La Capital*	*Clarín*
Los Andes	1	0.868**	0.842**	0.899**	0.903**	.864**
UNO	0.868**	1	0.760**	0.875**	0.876**	.955**
La Nación	0.842**	0.760**	1	0.832**	0.840**	.881**
La Voz	0.899**	0.875**	0.832**	1	0.987**	.870**
La Capital	0.903**	0.876**	0.840**	0.987**	1	.865**
Clarín	0.864**	0.955**	0.881**	0.870**	0.865**	1

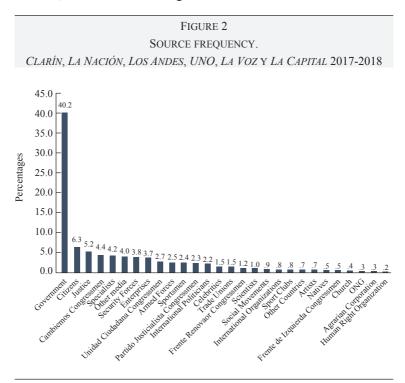**. The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).
Source: The author.

Table 1 expresses Pearson's[3] correlation between the total sources of information referenced by the different media analyzed. High levels of significant correlation show that the six media included not only used the same type of sources but did so in similar proportions. As it can be seen, values range from high to very high levels of correspondence, which in descriptive terms indicates a strong homogeneity.

However, if we analyze this data under the premise that the sources are central to the establishment of topics and views in the media (Bennett & Lawrence, 2007; Berkowitz & Beach, 1993; Díaz & Mellado, 2017) and that homogeneity is at odds with the requirements of diversity and plurality of voices necessary to guarantee quality of information (Gómez Mompart & Palau Sampio, 2013), a first indicator surfaces. That is, while testing hypothesis 1, which supported a homogeneous use of

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[3] The Pearson correlation coefficient is a statistical value that measures the linear relationship between two variables. Value ranges range from +1 to -1. Correlation can be staggered into five categories: very low correlation, from 0 to 0.19; low correlation from 0.20 to 0.39; mean correlation from 0.40 to 0.59; high correlation from 0.60 to 0.79 and very high correlation from 0.80 to 1.

sources, the agendas of the main Argentine online media, regardless of their location, business interests and routines are influenced, in similar proportions, by the same actors.

Now, what were the leading sources?

FIGURE 2

SOURCE FREQUENCY.

CLARÍN, LA NACIÓN, LOS ANDES, UNO, LA VOZ Y *LA CAPITAL* 2017-2018

Source: The author.

Figure 2 expresses two related findings.[4] First, it is noted that the Executive Branch (the national government) is the main source in the media, which would allow it to present its views on the main public affairs. Indeed, while the government appears as a source 40.2% of the time, the rest of the actors of other political parties reach marginal

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4   The frequency of sources of information is expressed in aggregate between the different media resulting from the prior finding of uniformity in their use.

values (*Unidad Ciudadana*, 2.7%; *Partido Justicialista*, 2.3%; *Frente Renovador*, 1.2%; and *Frente de Izquierda* 0.5%). The second sources in order of appearance are citizens (6.3%). However, these are included in the news individually and, most of the time, as victims of criminal situations or as eventual witnesses. That is, they are not taken into account through collective groupings with a unified voice on public affairs. Their voices occasionally appear as isolated subjects who express themselves only on limited topics, especially crime related stories.
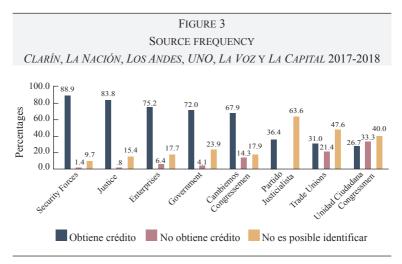
Another interesting edge that arises from this exploration is the differential frequency between official or state sources (Steele, 1997) and unofficial. If the references are grouped according to this criterion, the results are also revealing. In support of hypothesis 2 and in accordance with other works that accounted for similar phenomena in the world press (Bennett & Lawrence, 2007; Berkowitz & Beach, 1993; Deuze, 2003; Diaz & Mellado, 2017), official sources hoarded 68.4% of the citations, relegating unofficial sources to 31.6%.

If the analysis is deepened, it is possible to say that the most institutionalized actors are the ones who manage to influence the media agenda, especially from the construction of public relations events (Amado & Rotelli, 2011; Bennett & Lawrence, 2007). Moreover, if one analyzes the composition of the category "unofficial sources", it is possible to determine a strong presence of actors who, although are not part of the State, are also heavily institutionalized, have a strong lobbying capacity and exercise a great power or veto over public affairs. For example, after citizens, considered in the press in the way that has already been explained, media (4%), entrepreneurs (3.7%) and trade unions (1.5%) are some of those highly influential unofficial actors.

On the other hand, the presence of voices of specialists is not abundant in news coverage (4.2%). The data is not minor, especially given that its inclusion is one of the basic requirements of quality journalism (Gómez Mompart, 2013; Pellegrini et al., 2011).

However, Figure 2 invites another level of analysis. If the colors of the bars are taken into account, the clearly official is identified in yellow; in orange to those who, while coming from other political spaces, are not dissonant with official policies; and finally, in red, the

openly opposing.[5] The results show that the sources of the ruling party "Cambiemos" and other ideologically related actors reach 55.6% of the mentions. If they are added to the "non-dissonant" (13%), it is possible to assert that 68.6% of the sources were official actors or, at least, non-contentious with the powers that be. By contrast, the opposition sources barely reached 6.3% of the mentions, which shows a profound imbalance in the presence acquired by the different actors according to their political-ideological tendencies.

Finally, this work takes to hearth the warnings made by Charron (1995) that the mere presence of sources does not imply that they manage to impose their views on the coverage. In order to unravel the difference between the mention and credit they receive, the contribution of Koziner (2018) who suggests measuring, in addition to the presence, the standing that each of them achieves in the information reportages was taken. Figure 3 shows the results of the level of credit (standing) obtained in digital media by the main official and unofficial actors when were consulted as sources of information.

FIGURE 3

SOURCE FREQUENCY

CLARÍN, LA NACIÓN, LOS ANDES, UNO, LA VOZ Y *LA CAPITAL* 2017-2018

Source: The author.

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5   Blue fonts are fonts that, because of their diversity, cannot be included in the proposed categories.

The results show that law enforcement (88.9%) and judicial sources (83.8%) are the ones who get the most credit. Companies, unofficial but heavily institutionalized sources with high lobbying power, reached 75.2% credit. If we look at the sources that come from the strictly political sphere, again we see a marked difference between official and opposition sources. While the government of "Cambiemos" garnered credit for seven out of ten references, opposition leaders reached standing only three out of ten of the time their voices were included in the news.

Thus, hypothesis 3 is partially confirmed. In Argentina's online media, the government sources are the ones that get the most credibility, albeit with the exception that the administrations double the acceptance values of those of the opposition. These aren't just more visible. At the same time, the media does not usually question their versions of the facts.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of sources of information in the Argentine digital press was discussed in this work. To this end, a content analysis was developed on six of the ten most read online newspapers in the country, taking into account a federal geographic distribution criterion.

First, it was concluded that public affairs, specifically those regarding politics and the economy, dominated the agendas across all media, albeit with sensitive differences between the capital and interior of the country. The possibilities of access by proximity to the news of the federal government, allowed the Buenos Aires newspapers a greater coverage on these events. In provincial portals, however, the capacity to cover the governments' decisions is limited, mainly because of the scarce resources available to maintain a deep national reach. Moreover, most of the national news in the provincial media is built on broadcast cables or intermediate agenda setting processes (Lim, 2006) in which national media serve as a source to the provincial newspapers, many of them with business ties to each other.

Secondly, following the proposal of Díaz and Mellado (2017), it was analyzed whether there was homogeneity in the use of sources between

the different media. Hypothesis 1, which supported its existence, was corroborated by the finding of highly significant correlations between all media, regardless of their scales, geographical locations and business model. The sources cited were very similar, in quantity and volume.

Thirdly, the second hypothesis of the work was corroborated. There was a strong predominance of governmental sources, especially the executive branch in charge of President Mauricio Macri of the Cambiamos Coalition. Four out of ten mentions referred to the president or his officials, gaining a presence five times greater than its most immediate follower. Opposition sources, many of them also state-owned, proved marginal. This shows that while official sources often impose themselves, it is necessary to take into account a second criterion of analysis: those from the federal government or from politically aligned state agencies achieved higher levels of visibility than opposition state sources, which led to an imbalance in the diversity of voices harmful to quality of information (Gómez Mompart, 2013; Gómez Mompart & Palau Sampio, 2013; Pellegrini et al., 2011).

Finally, following the premise of Charron (1995) that the visibility of the sources does not ensure that their views dominate the information agendas, the level of their standing was estimated (Ferree et al., 2002; Koziner, 2018). The findings partially corroborated hypothesis 3, which argued that official sources would achieve higher levels of credibility. While the hypothesis was confirmed, another substantial piece of evidence was revealed: "official" sources were the ones with the most credit from media companies. Meanwhile, other official sources, such as opposing lawmakers, have seized higher levels of rejection by the press about their assessments.

The findings of this work are a breakthrough in the reconstruction of Argentina's online media physiognomy, at the end of the second decade of the 21st century. They also allow some conjectures and new inquiries about the state of the journalistic profession. The finding that the institutionalization and lobbying power of sources is decisive for their media visibility must be taken into account in relation to their political-ideological tendencies and their relationship to information agendas.

As arises from various studies, the routine and symbiotic relationships that journalists establish with government sources and

other powerful actors create an imbalance in the diversity of voices present in the news (Bennett, 1991; Berkowitz & Beach, 1993). Moreover, these relationships jeopardize the basic function of power check by the press, since the press, in terms set by Bennett (2007) was ceded to the governments themselves.

The findings show that, rather than a stage where official sources dominate, we attend a concert of official voices. And this difference is not minor.

The data that materialized from the content analysis generate the need to link these results with other research and to form new questions. What are the factors that explain these findings? What is the specific weight of the commercial interests of media companies which, while controlling governments are largely funded by government funds derived from official advertising (Becerra, 2015)? What kind of routines are taking place in the writings that can explain such a situation?

This study is a core input for new research that can address these broader and more complex inquiries. The ultimate aim is to contribute to the discussion on information quality in convergent contexts, based on a broad conception that persists in regarding journalism as an activity of public interest, socially relevant and linked to the guarantee of communication rights.

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